

Lake Ecology & Safe Boating Big Whitefish Lake

For the safety and health of Big Whitefish Lake, please follow these laws and guidelines:

NO FERTILIZER – Pierson Township Ordinance #92-1 bans the use of fertilizer within 300 feet of Big Whitefish Lake.

LOON ALERT – Wildlife needs space. We all love to see wonderful, lovely loons on BWL. Please keep your eyes peeled for them and respect their space; keep your distance.

FISHING – Be considerate to fisherpersons. While fishing, be super cautious near docks, shore stations/boat covers and other property in the water. If you accidentally hook someone's property, be responsible to remove the hook and report any damage to the owner. None of us "owns" the water, so fisherpersons have the right to fish in any area of the lake. If you have personal property in the water and see someone damaging that property you may want to take pictures of the incident and report it.

100 FEET – The law requires all boats and personal watercraft to maintain a minimum of 100 feet from other boats, docks, swimmers, paddleboards, etc.

RIGHT OF WAY – Sailboats, rowboats, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, etc. (non-motorized watercraft) have the right of way. Please do not "cross the bow" of another watercraft.

SUNRISE/SUNSET – No Wake conditions are in effect from 1 hour after sunset and 1 hour before sunrise. Navigation lights are required to be turned on after sunset until sunrise.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT - Hours of operation are 8am – Sunset. PWC do not have navigation lights.

COUNTER-CLOCKWISE – We have a right shaped lake so please operate your vessel in a counter-clockwise manner most of the time, especially when pulling skiers or tubers.

SPOTTER - Be constantly looking out for other vessels and especially for skiers or tubers who have fallen or dropped. Always have at least one person in addition to the operator in the boat spotting skiers or tubers.

PADDLEBOARD LAW – Michigan Law requires all paddleboards to have a personal floatation device on board.

SHALLOW LAKE – Be aware that BWL is classified as a "shallow lake". There are many shallow areas, less than 4 feet deep. Motorboats in shallow areas should operate in a no-wake fashion with the prop trimmed up. (See map on page 2)

High speed motorboat operation in shallow water will harm the boat and harms the lake by scouring the bottom, disturbing fish habitat, uprooting plants and disturbing sediments that can release phosphorus and other nutrients that cause algae blooms.

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WAKE SURFING/WAKE BOATS – Operate Wake/Surfing in a minimum of 15' depth areas and at least 500 feet from shore. See Map – the center of the lake, represented in the lightest color, is the recommended area for Wake Surfing operation.

Wake Surfing and Wake Boats operated in less the 15' and/or too close to shore negatively impact the ecology of the lake, damaging shorelines, property, plant growth, fish habitat and disturbing bottom sediments that can release phosphorus and other nutrients that cause algae blooms.

For more information: <https://www.minnpost.com/environment/2020/03/the-battle-over-wake-surfing-has-made-its-way-to-the-minnesota-legislature/>

Thank you for your staying safe and protecting our lake.

