



Wakaw Lake Values Survey Summary Report

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Submitted to the Carrot River Valley Watershed Association

Provided by Watersheds Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation

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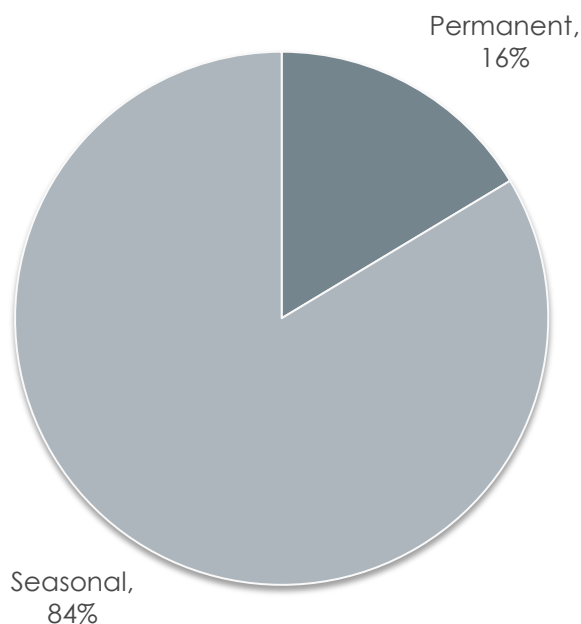
Introduction

As part of the Love Your Lake Shoreline Assessment program, a values survey was conducted to gauge the opinions of residents on Wakaw Lake about major concerns and important qualities of Wakaw Lake. This report summarizes the preliminary results of the survey which was distributed to the 901 shoreline property owners on residents on Wakaw Lake, 116 of whom provided their responses. The results of each survey were compiled in an excel file which were then analyzed by Watersheds Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation in the form of tables and histograms. Conclusions were made based on trends among the responses, and identification of potential stewardship initiatives to help the Carrot River Valley Watershed Association focus their stewardship efforts.

Results

Property Ownership

Types of residents by total number of survey responses



Of the 116 respondents to the values survey, 97 (84%) identified themselves as seasonal residents, and 19 (16%) identified themselves as permanent residents, as shown below.

Time spent on Wakaw Lake varied from 3 years to as many as 75 years, lake with 28 years as the average number of years spent on the lake.

Recreation

The top three recreational activities identified by the 116 survey respondents included fishing, swimming, and power boating.

In order of popularity from most to least popular, the number and percentage of shoreline property owners on Wakaw Lake that participate in recreational activities are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Top recreational activities enjoyed by residents on lake.

Recreational Activities:	# Respondents	% of Respondents
Fishing	96	83%
Swimming	89	77%
Power Boating	77	66%
Socializing	75	65%
Nature Appreciation	71	61%
Canoeing or Kayaking	68	59%
Water Skiing/Wake Boarding	52	45%
Snowmobiling	36	31%
Ice Fishing	35	30%
Jet Skiing	26	22%
Hiking	25	22%
ATVing	20	17%
Other (please specify)	18	16%
Cross-Country Skiing	17	15%
Ice Skating	17	15%
Hunting	12	10%
Sailing	10	9%
Mountain Biking	8	7%
Snow Shoeing	7	6%
Camping	6	5%
Wind Surfing	3	3%
Scuba Diving	2	2%

Values Associated with Personal Enjoyment

The most important elements of Wakaw Lake, valued for their impact on personal enjoyment of the lake, included water quality, scenery/view, and tranquility/quiet. Figure 1 shows the distribution of ranked values for each element, in order of the most valuable to least valuable element. Surveys asked respondents to rate each activity from 1 to 5 with 5 being very important and 1 being not important.

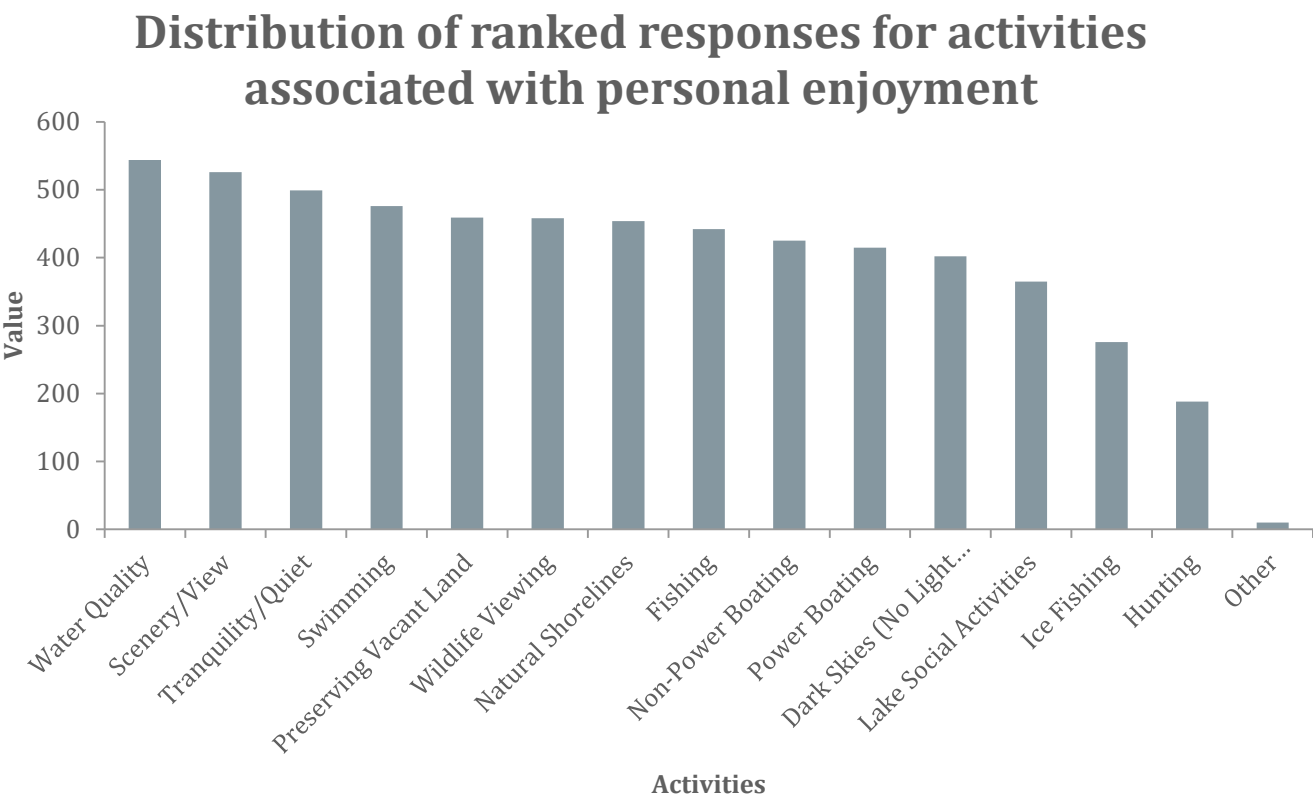


Figure 1. Distribution of Wakaw Lake shoreline property owner responses regarding elements affecting enjoyment of the lake.

Top Issues Facing Wakaw Lake

The most frequently identified issue facing Wakaw Lake provided by the 116 respondents was water quality, followed by water levels, and shoreline development. Table 2 below summarizes the number and percentage of respondents that identified each issue as a top concern. Figure 2 shows the distribution of shoreline property owner responses regarding the top issues facing Wakaw Lake.

Table 2: Top issues facing Wakaw Lake in order of most popular to least popular.

Top Issues:	# Responses	% of Total
Water Quality	100	86%
Water Levels	75	65%
Shoreline Development	38	33%
Faulty or Poorly Maintained Septics	35	30%
Boating	33	28%
Fish Populations	31	27%
Noise Pollution	30	26%
Other (please specify)	21	18%
Cottage Conversions to Permanent Homes	9	8%
Wildlife	4	3%
Light Pollution	4	3%

Top issues facing lake

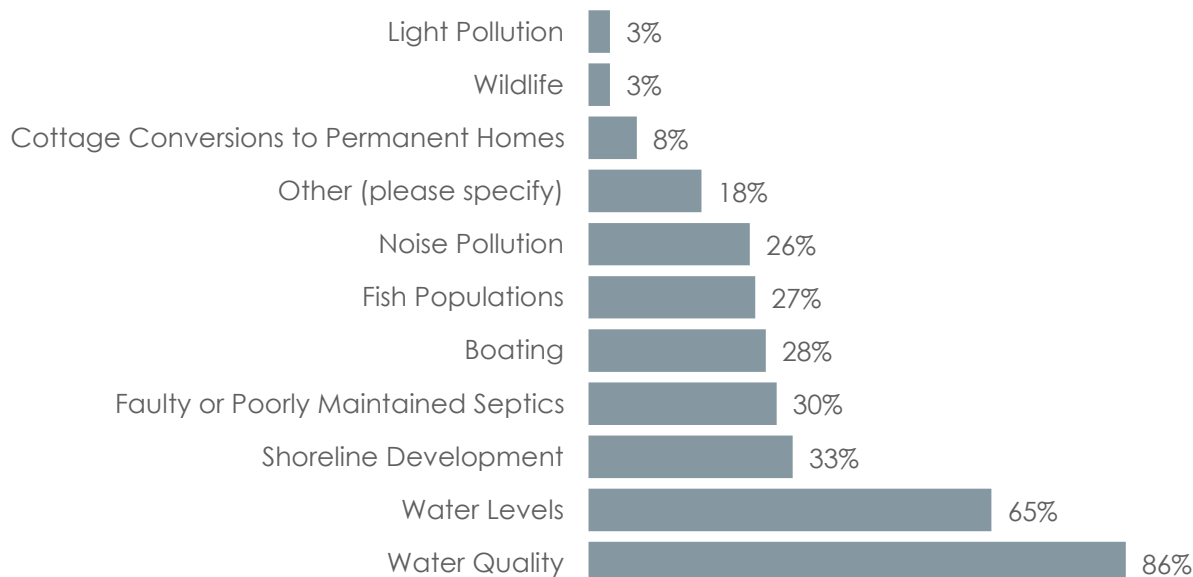


Figure 2. Distribution of shoreline property owner responses identifying the top issues faced by Wakaw Lake.

Actions to Undertake to benefit Wakaw Lake and Community

The most frequently identified actions shoreline property owners on Wakaw Lake believe would benefit the lake and community include:

- Undertake more water quality testing
- Limit boat wakes near shore
- Create rules for new development

Table 3: Actions to benefit Wakaw Lake and the community as identified by shoreline property owners.

Undertake Actions:	Responses:	% of Total:
Undertake more water quality testing	56	48%
Limit boat wakes near shore	52	45%
Create rules new development	49	42%
Engage in a septic re-inspection program	40	34%
Undertake a lake management plan	31	27%
Improve communication between land owners and lake association	26	22%
Provide education to property owners	24	21%
Create rules for re-development	20	17%
Plant trees and shrubs along shore	9	8%
Engage more property owners in lake activities	7	6%
Do Nothing	5	4%
Stop mowing grass by the shoreline	5	4%
Other	5	4%

Perceived Water Quality Concerns

Of the 116 survey respondents, 48 (41%) perceive water quality to be good, 59 (51%) perceive water quality to be poor, 8 (7%) don't know about the water quality, and 1 (1%) perceive water quality to be excellent.

The top concerns expressed about water quality were algae/aquatic vegetation, some other concerns such as chemical contamination, and smell. Table 4 summarizes the number and percentage of responses identifying each water quality concern for Wakaw Lake. Figure 3 shows the distribution of shoreline property owner responses regarding water quality concerns on Wakaw Lake.

Table 4: Top water quality concerns.

Water Quality Issues:	Responses:	Percentage:
Algae/Aquatic vegetation	93	80%
Some Other Concerns	60	52%
Smell	51	44%
Clarity	47	41%
Bacteria	27	23%
No concerns	5	4%

Top water quality concerns

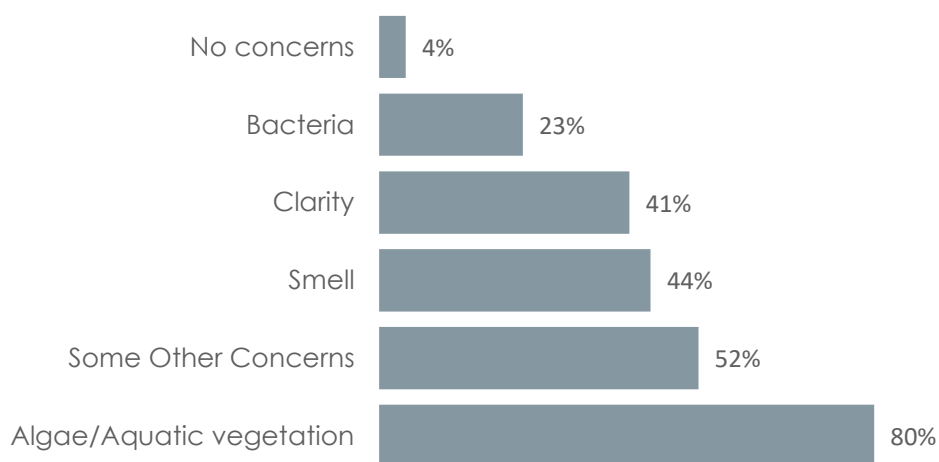


Figure 3. Ranking of top water quality concerns.

Shoreline Property Owner Interest in Stewardship Information and Activities

Of the 116 respondents, 89 (77%) said they were interested to learn more about their activities and how it affects water quality, wildlife habitat, and the overall health of the lake. When asked whether they would be interested in participating in stewardship activities around the lake, 43 respondents (37%) answered "yes".

Discussion

On the completed surveys, water quality was the single most important factor affecting the property owners' enjoyment of the lake with 92 respondents rating it as a "very important" factor. As well, 86% of respondents placed water quality as one of their top concerns regarding the health of Wakaw Lake.

When shoreline property owners were asked to identify the top actions that would benefit their lake, undertake more water quality testing was the most recommended followed by limit boat wakes near shore, and create rules for new development. The Carrot River Valley Watershed Association may consider gathering more information on this as well as getting opinions from more residents on Wakaw Lake.

Residents rate fishing as the top activity on Wakaw Lake with 83% saying they participated in this lake activity. This result provides an opportunity to the Carrot River Valley Watershed Association for more stewardship initiatives by showing that the suitability of the environment for recreational activities could be jeopardized if current issues are not addressed.

When asked about the overall water quality, residents seem to be conflicted. 51% seem to think that Wakaw Lake has poor water quality and 41% think that the lake has good water quality.

Conclusion

The main concern seems to be water quality among lake residents. Other main concerns were water levels, shoreline development, and faulty or poorly maintained septic.

On Wakaw Lake 77% of respondents are willing to learn more about how to help the health of the lake. There appears to be opportunity for planning and stewardship programs to help restore and preserve Wakaw Lake. By engaging with all interest groups and landowners in a coordinated effort, the protection of Wakaw Lake can be improved.

Appendix A: Questions Asked in Values Survey

1. Which of the following apply to you? (Check all that apply.)
 - Permanent Resident
 - Seasonal Resident
 - Own Vacant Property
 - Operate a Farm
 - Operate a Business
 - Other (please specify)

2. If you are a seasonal resident, do you plan on making this your permanent residence sometime in the future?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

3. How long have you or your family been on your lake?
 - _____ Years

4. What types of recreational activity do you participate in at the lake? (Select as many as apply.)
 - ATVing
 - Cross-Country Skiing
 - Hiking
 - Jet Skiing
 - Power Boating
 - Snowmobiling
 - Camping
 - Fishing
 - Ice Fishing
 - Mountain Biking
 - Sailing
 - Snow Shoeing
 - Wind Surfing
 - Canoeing or Kayaking
 - Hunting
 - Ice Skating
 - Nature Appreciation
 - Scuba Diving
 - Socializing
 - Water Skiing/Wake Boarding

5. Please rate how the following 15 elements add to your personal enjoyment of your lake. Please circle only one number for each value.

Element	Not Important 1	2	3	4	Extremely Important 5	Don't Know
Water Quality	1	2	3	4	5	0
Natural Shorelines	1	2	3	4	5	0
Scenery/View	1	2	3	4	5	0
Wildlife Viewing	1	2	3	4	5	0
Dark Skies (No Light Pollution)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Tranquility/Quiet	1	2	3	4	5	0
Fishing	1	2	3	4	5	0
Ice Fishing	1	2	3	4	5	0
Preserving Vacant Land	1	2	3	4	5	0
Hunting	1	2	3	4	5	0
Swimming	1	2	3	4	5	0
Power Boating	1	2	3	4	5	0
Non-Power Boating	1	2	3	4	5	0
Lake Social Activities	1	2	3	4	5	0
Other (Please Identify)	1	2	3	4	5	0

6. What do you see as the top five issues facing your lake and your lake use?

- Water quality
- Water levels
- Declining fish populations
- Boating
- Cottage conversions to permanent homes
- Shoreline development
- Faulty or poorly maintained septic
- Noise pollution
- Light pollution
- Wildlife
- Other

7. Please identify the top three actions you believe should be undertaken to benefit your lake and lake community.

- Stop mowing grass by the shoreline
- Plant trees and shrubs along shore

- Limit boat wakes near shore
- Engage in a septic re-inspection program
- Provide education materials to property owners on a variety of subjects
- Undertake more water quality testing
- Create or enforce stricter rules for new development
- Create or enforce stricter rules for re-development (cottage conversions)
- Improve communication between land owners and lake association
- Engage more property owners in lake activities
- Undertake a lake management plan
- Nothing
- Other

8. In your opinion, describe your lake water quality.

- Excellent
- Good
- Poor
- Don't Know

9. What are your particular concerns with respect to water quality?

- Bacteria
- Smell
- Algae/Aquatic vegetation
- Clarity
- Pollution
- No Concerns
- Other

10. Are you interested in learning more about how your activities as a landowner can affect water quality, wildlife habitat, and the overall health of your lake?

- Yes
- No

11. Would you be interested in participating in stewardship projects/activities related to your lake?

- Yes
- No