

Separation of Surf/Wake Boats From Shorelines and Watercraft

Whereas, the nearshore area of a lake known as the littoral zone extends from the shore to a depth of about 15 feet and is critically important to the ecology of the lake; and

Whereas, the shallow water, abundant light, and nutrient-rich sediment in the littoral zone provide ideal conditions for aquatic plant growth, which in turn, provides food and habitat for many animals such as fish, frogs, birds, muskrats, turtles, insects, and snails; and

Whereas, protecting the littoral zone is important for the health of fish and wildlife populations in lakes; and

Whereas, watercraft known as “surf/wake boats” are designed to create four to six foot waves to allow recreational wave jumping behind the boats and are becoming more common in Wisconsin’s inland lakes;

Whereas, the large waves created by surf/wake boats in Wisconsin lakes are causing damage to native weed beds in the littoral zone of lakes and are causing erosion of lakeshore properties; and

Whereas, the large waves created by surf/wake boats are also causing danger to other watercraft on Wisconsin lakes including injuries to occupants of other boats.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved: that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its Annual Meeting in Wisconsin Rapids on April 20 and 21, 2018 strongly supports the creation of a 200 foot separation distance between surf/wake boats operating above slow-no-wake speed and shorelines and other watercraft; and

Now Therefore Be It Further Resolved: that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation seek the support of the Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Legislature and Wisconsin Lakes (Association of Wisconsin Lake Districts) to adopt legislation creating a 200 foot separation distance for surf/wake boats and shorelines and other watercraft.

Submitted by WWF Inland Fisheries Committee
Gordy Mertz, Chair