

Introduction

As part of the Love Your Lake Shoreline Assessment program, a values survey was conducted to gauge the opinions of residents regarding their major concerns and the important qualities of Mississippi Lake. This report summarizes the preliminary results of the survey which was distributed to the 1131 shoreline property owners or residents on Mississippi Lake, 72 of whom provided their responses. (72 out of 1131 = 6.4%)

Results

Property Ownership

Of the 72 respondents to the values survey, 24 (33%) identified themselves as seasonal residents, 42 (58%) identified themselves as permanent residents, and 6 (8%) identified themselves as owning vacant property, as shown below. This is probably a good indication of the overall profile.

Time spent on Mississippi Lake varied from half a year to as many as 84 years, with 31 years as the average number of years spent on the lake. Those that responded have been here a while and likely reflect a good sense of ownership of the lake (ie: they have a stake in its future)

Recreation

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

Recreational Activities:	# Responses	% of Total
Swimming	65	90%
Nature Appreciation	48	67%
Fishing	47	65%
Socializing	43	60%
Canoeing or Kayaking	43	60%
Power Boating	42	58%
Water Skiing/Wake Boarding	23	32%
Hiking	19	26%
Cross-Country Skiing	16	22%
Ice Skating	16	22%
Snow Shoeing	13	18%
Ice Fishing	10	14%
Snowmobiling	10	14%
Jet Skiing	9	13%

Hunting	7	10%
Wind Surfing	6	8%
Mountain Biking	6	8%
Sailing	6	8%
Other (please specify)	5	7%
ATVing	2	3%
Scuba Diving	1	1%
Camping	1	1%

Values Associated with Personal Enjoyment

Surveys asked respondents to rate each activity from 1 to 5 with 5 being extremely important and 1 being not important. The resultant ranked values are:

350	Water Quality
340	Scenery/View
330	Swimming
330	Tranquility / Quiet
310	Wildlife Viewing
280	Natural Shorelines
270	Non-Power Boating
265	Dark Skies
250	Power Boating
245	Preserving vacant land
240	Lake Social Activities
225	Fishing
120	Ice Fishing
120	Hunting

Top Issues Facing Mississippi Lake

Top Issues:	# Responses	% of Total
Water Quality	60	83%
Water Levels	38	53%
Faulty or Poorly Maintained Septic	26	36%
Fish Populations	20	28%
Noise Pollution	19	26%
Shoreline Development	19	26%
Wildlife	12	17%
Other (please specify)	9	13%
Boating	8	11%
Cottage Conversions to Permanent Homes	8	11%
Light Pollution	2	3%

Actions to Undertake to benefit Mississippi Lake and Community

Undertake Actions:	Responses:	% of Total:
Engage in a septic re-inspection program	30	42%
Limit boat wakes near shore	26	36%
Provide education to property owners	24	33%
Undertake more water quality testing	24	33%
Undertake a lake management plan	18	25%
Create rules new development	15	21%
Plant trees and shrubs along shore	14	19%
Other (please specify)	13	18%
Create rules for re-development	11	15%
Improve communication between landowners and lake association	9	13%
Stop mowing grass by the shoreline	8	11%
Engage more property owners in lake activities	7	10%
Do Nothing	2	3%

Perceived Water Quality

Of the 68 survey responses concerning water quality perception:

52 (72%)	perceive water quality to be good
7 (10%)	perceive water quality to be poor
7 (10%)	don't know about the water quality, and
2 (3%)	perceive water quality to be excellent.

Top water quality concerns

Water Quality Issues:	Response	Total %
Algae/Aquatic vegetation	63	88%
Bacteria	32	44%
Clarity	25	35%
Some Other Concerns	22	31%
Smell	6	8%
No concerns	2	3%

Shoreline Property Owner Interest in Stewardship Information and Activities

Of the 72 respondents, 58 (81%) 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, 23 respondents (32%) answered “yes”.

Discussion

On the completed surveys, **water quality** was the single most important factor affecting the property owners’ enjoyment of the lake with 83% of respondents placing water quality as one of their top concerns regarding the health of Mississippi Lake.

When shoreline property owners were asked to identify the top actions that would benefit their lake, engage in a **septic re-inspection program was the most**

Residents rate **swimming as the top activity** on Mississippi Lake with 90% saying they participated in this lake activity.

Conclusion

On Mississippi Lake 81% 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 Mississippi Lake.

With only 72 responses out of 1131 requests (6.4%), MLA must guard against misjudging the overall interest in any topic. Is 6-4% statistically significant? Can we assume that the percentage breakdown of interests can be applied for the lake overall?

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 systems
- 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 landowners 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