

Topic: Boating Restriction Regulations

Introduction:

This report provides information on process for establishing boating restrictions on lakes.

Facts (Background Information):

Parkland County is fortunate to have a number of navigable water bodies where residents and visitors alike enjoy various water sport activities with the use of water craft being the most popular activity. Regulations regarding the use and operation of water craft fall under the federal governments Transport Canada's – Office of Boating Safety. They administer several regulations which are designed to ensure the safety of watercraft operators, as well as the safe operation of their watercraft. One of these regulations is the Boating Restriction Regulation. This regulation allows the federal government to establish boating restrictions on specific water bodies which address primarily safety issues; they can also be imposed to address environmental issues or other issues in the best interest of the public.

Restrictions which can be imposed include:

- Prohibition of all boats
- Limitation of propulsion power or type of propulsion
- Imposition of speed limits
- Restriction of towing activities such as waterskiing or regattas

Current boating restrictions on water bodies within Parkland County include:

Waters on which all vessels are prohibited:

- Wabamun Lake, as indicated by signs
- Jackfish lake, as indicated by signs
- Isle Lake, as indicated by signs
- Hasse Lake, as indicated by signs

Waters on which power driven vessels are prohibited:

- Chickakoo Lake
- Hubbles Lake
- Sauer Lake
- Star Lake

Waters on which power driven vessels and vessels driven by electrical propulsion are subject to a maximum speed limit:

- Hasse Lake 12km
- Mink Lake 12 km
- Spring Lake 12 km

- Wabamun Lake, as indicated by signs 12 km
- Muir Lake 12 km
- Mere Lake 12 km
- Jackfish Lake, as indicated by signs 12 km
- Mayatan Lake 12 km

Enforcement of these restrictions falls under federal jurisdiction. It should be noted that it is unknown when or who applied these restrictions; and that very little, or no signage exists to indicate these restrictions.

Only a level of government may apply for a boating restriction.

Analysis:

Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety (OBS) strongly encourages the use of alternative measures/options to address boating issues prior to pursuing a boating restriction. Alternative measures may vary depending on the issue, but common methods OBS has seen include the use of various types of signage, public awareness of proper vessel operation or current boating restrictions and the implementation of a code of conduct for lake users.

If a level of government wishes to pursue the implementation of a boating restriction on a water body they may make application to the federal government. The application made must include the following information:

- Clear identification of the problem
- Identification of all known contributing causes to the problem
- Identification of non regulatory alternatives that were examined or attempted
- An outline and documentation of public consultation carried out
- Documentation as to why a regulation is the only alternative
- Documentation of impact assessments and cost benefit analyses based on the decision to regulate
- Ensure the nominated water body has been accurately identified in terms easily understood by stakeholders
- ensure suitable methods are in place to allow compliance with regulations
- identification that enforcement is practical and that this responsibility is accepted by an appropriate enforcement authority

Public engagement is paramount as part of this process; all stakeholders must be involved for each individual water body and extensive recording and tracking of the process and results are required as part of the application. Further detail is provided in the "Local Authorities Guide to Boating Restriction Regulations".

Timeline for establishing a boating restriction is difficult to determine. Essentially once an application is received and has been approved by the federal government it can take up to a year for that restriction to come into effect. This does not include time for development of the application including the public engagement activity, or the time required by the federal government for review and decision.

If a restriction is approved the level of government that applied for it is responsible for public notification of the restriction. Things like signage are the responsibility of the applying body and must be designed to federal government specifications.

Conclusion/Summary:

Administration respectfully provides this report as information for the Governance and Priorities Committee..

Alternatives:

Summary:

Boating restrictions are encouraged as a last resort after all other options to address issues have been explored. The process is a very extensive process requiring significant resources and time to complete.