

Boater Ahoy! Ahoy!



The lakes and watershed are ecosystems rich and teeming with life. Besides the boaters and lake residents, there are also fish, amphibians, insects and animals that share our habitat. Since the receding of the glaciers, algae, bacteria, plants and animals colonized diverse aquatic areas, and a fragile equilibrium was created, this, in which permits each and every one of us to benefit from the quality and quantity of our water resources.

However, water and recreational activities can have different repercussions on the state and health of our waterways.

Sediment disturbances

A boat navigating in shallow water, up to 3 meters deep, contributes to the lifting of particles that were on the bottom of the lake. In this zone, the phenomenon is accentuated proportional to the size of the boat motor and its speed. The phosphate is disturbed as well in the water and proliferates photosynthesis of the organisms such as plants and algae.

Erosion of the shorelines

The amplitude of waves formed by these water craft, augments with the crashing of waves against the shoreline and contributes to their erosion. This erosion elevates the sediments in lakes and enhances the turpitude of the water.

Contamination by hydrocarbons

A few drops of fuel or oil accidentally spilled into the water, can greatly affect its quality.

Disturbances of fish and bird habitats

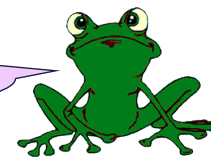
Deposits of sediment can affect the fish spawning beds by inhibiting the insemination of fish eggs. Boat usage in these sensitive zones affects the spawning of certain species of fish and the nesting habits of many bird species, such as the ring-necked loon.

Do you realize that this in turn affects the socio-economy?



When the natural environment degrades, recreational activities and residents around the lakes are affected. The consequences may vary: loss of land due to the phenomenon of erosion, loss in property values that are related to the degradation of water quality, and loss of tourism because of the deterioration of the landscape.

And the noise factor in all of this?



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Protect our lakes while enjoying them!

For more informations on healthy water practices, read our next column.



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Summer is the season to engage in different recreational activities. Watershed areas are places where residents and vacationers share in the practice water sports, such as swimming, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, fishing, wake-boating or simply navigating pleasantly along a waterway. However, conflicting usages of these areas are more and more frequent.

Here are some recommendations for adopting healthy practices which are respectful of the environment and others users of the same areas:



Is the watershed area that you are navigating, adapted to the proper motor power of your boat and the usage you require from it?

Boaters responsibilities



Lower the noise of the motor
Do not throw your garbage, used water or hydrocarbons overboard
Respect the wildlife and its habitat

Use 4-stroke motors or electric motors

Refrain from erratic motor-boating practices

Respect other users (swimmers, canoes and other pleasure boaters)

Use marine boats and wake-boats in deeper waters
Limit the creating of waves

Lower the launching speed, particularly approaching or departing from the launch pad

Respect safe boating practices

Inspect the boat hull at launch: to inhibit invasive species from contaminating he lake

Careful of sensitive zones (shorelines, spawning beds, wetlands, etc.)

In other words, users of watershed areas should act with respect, prudence and civility!



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