

Rice Lake Watercraft Reminders

August 2019

The Rice Lake Board has received a higher number of boating related complaints this year. We're not sure if its related, but we also had low member attendance at the 2019 annual meeting. Either way, we'd like to remind all members (and their children) about guidelines for boating on Rice Lake. Even though Rice Lake does not have Public Access, all Minnesota State Boating Laws apply to our lake.

PWC (Personal Water Craft)

Most of the complaints are related to PWC use. PWC operators should keep the following PWC State Laws in mind:

1. May only operate between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and one hour before sunset. Please remember that sunset occurs earlier as we progress into the Fall. While motorboats are allowed to operate after sunset, PWC are not.
2. May not weave through congested watercraft traffic or jump the wake of another water- craft within 150 feet of the other boat. Note that this still applies even if both watercraft belong to the same person (e.g. child jumping wake of parents boat).
3. Must travel at slow-no wake speed (5 mph or less) within 150 feet of: shore (except when a PWC is launching or landing a water skier by the most direct route to open water), docks, swimmers, swimming rafts, any moored or anchored watercraft or non-motorized watercraft. A common Rice Lake complaint here is PWC operating at high speed on the creek. The creek is a no-wake zone for both PWC and other watercraft.
4. PWC Operators must be at least 21 years old. Operators 14-17 years old must have either an operator's permit or someone at least 21 years old with them. Operators less than 13 years old are not allowed to operate PWC – even when accompanied by an adult.

Motorboats

Complaints about motorboats are almost always skier and wake related. Since Rice Lake is man-made, our shoreline is fragile. It is even more fragile during high water periods such as those that occur after heavy rains.

The creek is always a No Wake Zone. When pulling skiers / tubers on the lake, it should be done away from the shoreline. We've had some instances where the wake caused by skiers pushed a boat off its lift. Please be courteous to other RLAA members and keep wake causing activities well away from the shoreline.

For more detailed information, feel free to view these Minnesota DNR brochures:

PWC: https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/education_safety/safety/boatwater/pwc-brochure.pdf

Boaters: <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/boatwater/boatingguide.pdf>

Tubers: Minnesota DNR recommends that only 1 tube be towed by a water craft at a time. See pages 38-39 of the Boatingguide.pdf for details and other related information.

- Links to recent tubing accidents on Minnesota lakes:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zeDjy1eruaQ>
 - <https://bringmethenews.com/minnesota-news/girl-airlifted-to-hospital-after-freak-accident-tubing-on-lake-in-minnesota>