

Lake Macbride Water Sports Safety Group (LMWSSG)

Report to Iowa Legislative Study Committee

November 3, 2011

By Bob Burns, Chair LMWSSG

1. Lake Macbride Water Sports Safety Group (LMWSSG) is all about safety on Lake Macbride (LM)
 - a. Formed in 1996 to promote safe use of LM water ways
 - b. 200 members who have provided volunteer and financial support
 - i. Broad base from Johnson, Linn, Cedar, Washington Counties
 - c. Educate public on history of LM and its rules and regulations
 - i. Field days at LM open to public
 1. Public opportunity to try various low impact watercraft
 - ii. Meet with Iowa state legislators to explain safety concerns
 - iii. Maintain 10 HP limit on LM during summer months
 1. High volume of summer watercraft
 - iv. Report categorical violations of rules to DNR officials
2. Positive impact of maintaining 10 HP limit during summer months
 - a. Lake Macbride (1,000 water acres) remains the only state lake in Iowa over 100 water acres with a 10 horse power motor restriction
 - i. Neighboring states have 10 HP lakes
 1. IL, MN, NE, WI
 - b. Unique lake for low impact watercraft, recreation and nature preserve
 - i. Kayaks, canoes, rowboats, sailboats, waterbikes, paddleboats, sailboards, paddleboards, pontoon boats, rowing sculls, racing shells.
 - ii. University of Iowa Sailing Club
 1. 160 members
 2. Will present later to committee
 - iii. Children summer Wild Life Camps on LM
 1. U of I Recreational Services
 2. 1800 students, 200 per week, age K-12
 3. Canoeing, fishing, environmental education, outdoor recreation
 - iv. University of Iowa School of Wild
 1. Scheduled regularly during school year
 2. Elementary schools in area

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- v. Macbride Nature Recreation Area
 - 1. Operated by University of Iowa Recreational Services
 - 2. South side of LM 485 acres
 - 3. Home of the Environmental Education Programs
 - a. School of the Wild
 - b. Wildlife Camps
 - c. Macbride Raptor Project
 - 4. Nature preserve
 - 5. Website at
<http://recserv.uiowa.edu/Apps/Facilities/MacBrideNatureRecreationArea.aspx>
- vi. LM recognized nationally as a leading State Park
 - 1. Governor Branstad at celebration August 2011
 - 2. Sponsored by Coca-Cola Headquarters, Atlanta
 - 3. LM would not have won if it was like every other lake in Iowa
- vii. State leases concession rights at beach to a private operator
 - 1. Provides public access during summer months
 - 2. Total of 56 rentals of low impact watercraft
 - a. 10 pontoons with 10 HP motor
 - b. 10 kayaks
 - c. 6 small fishing boats with 10 HP motors
 - d. 14 canoes
 - e. 16 paddleboats
 - 3. Many are first time users
 - 4. Congestion around center of lake which has several blind corners
- viii. Small motor = slow speed **versus** big motor = fast speed
 - 1. 10 HP motor at wide open is 8 to 10 mph
 - 2. 175 HP bass boat at wide open is 50 to 60 mph
- ix. LM is a quiet, safe and peaceful lake for summer months
 - 1. Coralville Lake is stone's throw away and suited for large motors
 - 2. Diversity between two lakes deserves to be maintained
 - a. LM for 10 HP; Coralville Lake for big motors
- 3. Negative consequences if unlimited horsepower allowed in summer months
 - a. Big Creek State Park, Polk County
 - i. Scouring bottom of lakebed at end of boat ramp causing drop-off at end
 - 1. Gunning big motors to propel boats onto trailers
 - ii. Noticeable increase in number of all types of boats with big motors
 - 1. More and larger wave action causing shoreline erosion
 - iii. Sailors constantly telling big motor boats to slow down
 - b. Carbon build-up and fuel in oil develops in big motors with long periods at idle speed
 - i. Inducement to run engine at higher rpm and higher speeds to clean out carbon
 - 1. Source of information: Mercury Marine, Fond du Lac, WI

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- c. Big motors have potential to run at higher speeds
 - i. Bass boat with 175 HP can run at 60 miles per hour (mph)
 - ii. Safety hazard to other watercraft on LM
 - iii. High speeds are too much of a risk to safety
- d. Many blind corners on Lake Macbride because of irregular shoreline
 - i. Speeding boat may not see smaller boats
 - 1. This has occurred at neighboring Coralville Lake, resulting in death
 - ii. Speeding boat will not have time to react
- e. Increase in fishing tournaments on LM
 - i. Contests are timed events; incentive to speed between fishing spots
- f. Swimmers from beach at state park are swimming across lake to opposite shore
 - i. Danger of speeding boat hitting a swimmer
 - ii. No DNR supervision of beach either due to budget constraints
- 4. Rebuttal of arguments made to eliminate 10 HP summer limit
 - a. Argument: We don't get to fish LM in summer
 - i. Rebuttal: Use electric trolling motor
 - 1. MinnKota, largest manufacturer; email states it can achieve speeds of four miles per hour on a bass fishing boat
 - 2. Testimonial of bass fishermen reaching 5 miles per hour on MinnKota website
 - 3. Why do they need a larger motor?
 - 4. See pictures of bass fishing boats using electric trolling motor to fish LM
 - b. Argument: We pay taxes and should have the right to use big motors on LM
 - i. Rebuttal: Many other uses are restricted in the same manner
 - 1. Millions of dollars of taxpayer money spent on constructing bicycle trails in Johnson County
 - 2. Bicycle trails restrict use of motorized vehicles such as ATVs, motorcycles and snowmobiles and limit use to bicycles and pedestrians..
 - c. Argument: We don't want to buy a 10 horse power motor.
 - i. Rebuttal: The rest of us have to buy one! Why should someone be exempt just because they own a bigger motor?
 - d. Argument: We will drive our big motors at 5 miles per hour.
 - i. Rebuttal: History has shown us during the 9 months when big motors are allowed on LM that this is not always the case
 - 1. See photographs of boats at wide open speed taken in May
 - 2. Well intended but risky
 - a. Lack of enforcement officials
 - b. Only takes one to cause accident
 - c. Boat with 175 HP motor speeds up to 60 mph
 - i. Pontoon with 10 HP goes 8 mph wide open
 - e. Argument: Other lakes in Iowa allow big motors
 - i. Rebuttal: Other lakes do not have Coralville Lake next door

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5. History of small motors on Lake Macbride
 - a. Lake Macbride dedicated Memorial Day 1934
 - b. No motors allowed on lake initially
 - c. Motor size went to 3HP, then 6 HP by 1969
 - d. Currently 10 HP limit in summer months, June, July and August
 - e. Currently no motor limit after Labor Day (September) and before Memorial Day (May)
 - f. Originally regulated as “no wake,” currently a 5 mile per hour limit
6. **Lake Users** are the “eyes and ears” to monitor compliance with rules
 - a. DNR enforcement is limited due to budget constraints of available personnel
 - b. Residents around the lake must follow all the same laws too and do not have any special privileges.
 - c. Residents of the Cottage Reserve are legacy of original lot owners
 - i. See the lake every day, watching like a farmer
 - ii. Financing of entire state park and lake was through sale of 132 cottage sites
 1. When lake construction completed, the entire park was deeded to the State **without cost.**
 2. Federal funds constructed dam by Civilian Conservation Corps.
 - d. Residences around the lake have expanded and also monitor lake activity
 - e. DNR lease docks at north arm of LM to summer users, primarily pontoons
7. Legislation currently in place for a long time
 - a. Issues and arguments are the same
 - b. When originally adopted, solution was a compromise.
 - i. Big motors are allowed on LM nine months of the year
 - ii. 10 horse power limit in place during summer months of June, July and August
 - c. Keep the current law in place