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Be #WakeAware this long weekend: boaters and Marine Ambassadors are coming 'on-board'

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 17, 2022 (ONTARIO)

Cottage country boaters, lake associations, and marinas from Lake Erie to Sudbury to the Thousand Islands are all pledging to [Be #WakeAware](#) this May long weekend and throughout the boating season. You can too.

Closed borders and isolating away from urban centres led to huge increases in the use of Ontario's waterways over the past two years, and new 'staycationing' incentives will keep the heat on cottage country this year. There were nearly 200,000 new Pleasure Craft Operator Cards (PCOCs) issued in 2021, after a peak of 237,000 issued in the first year of the global pandemic!

"With the sixth wave waning, we're finally hoping for a return to a more 'normal' cottage country experience this year," says Terry Rees, Executive Director of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA). "We all can't wait to get back on the water this long weekend, but let's do it safely and responsibly. Everyone needs to [Be #WakeAware](#)."

Why is wake an issue?

Wake is a danger to swimmers, canoes and paddleboarders. It can also swamp loon nests, particularly at this time of year when eggs are being laid. According to a University of Windsor study published in the North American Lake Management Association's journal, *Lake and Reservoir Management*, wake generated by recreational boats has the potential to erode the shoreline, damage infrastructure like docks, or disrupt aquatic ecosystems. Over one summer season on Whitestone Lake in Ontario's cottage country, the authors wrote, "recreational boat wakes accounted for ~61% of total wave energy" at the study site.*

How to be #WakeAware when boating

Potentially damaging wakes are caused by plowing boats leaving a boat launch or marina, or sudden deceleration or turns near shore. Look behind your boat to ensure you minimize the impact of your wake on shorelines and docks. Always reduce speed near shore and when approaching narrows. Boaters need to be aware of the size of their wake during displacement (travelling low in the water) and transition (with the bow up) to getting on plane (coasting with little drag). Position passengers throughout the boat to reduce the time spent in transition and get on plane as soon as possible. Take waterski, surf and wakeboard fun 200 metres or more away from shorelines. These are small changes that have a big impact and are at the core of what it means to [Be #WakeAware](#).

About the #WakeAware campaign

The [Be #WakeAware](#) campaign was launched in 2021 as a joint initiative of the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA), Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL), and the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA). The campaign prompts boaters to watch wake impacts and move any 'big wake' fun to an appropriate area of the lake, far away from shorelines.

What's new? Leading into the 2022 May 24 long weekend, marina operators across Ontario are coming on board as [#WakeAware Marine Ambassadors](#) to spread the word at the water's edge to new and long-time boaters. Dawn Campbell of Balsam RPM in the

Kawarthas was one of the first to sign on to the campaign. "A lot of people don't realize when they whip out of here," she says, "how much damage their wake does to docks and other boats." All marina operators are encouraged to join the campaign, and pledge to spread the word by signing up here: <https://www.bewakeaware.com/#marine-ambassadors>.

Here's where YOU come in

Everyone who loves Ontario cottage country is encouraged to learn more about wake impacts in a quick one-minute video posted to the campaign webpage: <https://www.bewakeaware.com/>.

Then, share the news with 2 or more friends this long weekend. Use the hashtag [#WakeAware](#) on social media, and remember to thank your local marina when you see them proudly displaying their Marine Ambassador sign. If your local marina is not on the Marine Ambassadors list yet, talk to them about it.

Together, we are all part of the solution for waterfront Ontario.

** journal citation above: "Relative importance of recreational boat wakes on an inland lake", C. Houser, A. Smith, J. Lilly, **Lake and Reservoir Management**, 2021, Vol. 37, No. 3, 227-234.*

This media release is sent on behalf of the [#WakeAware](#) Campaign partners:



And our inaugural [#WakeAware](#) Marine Ambassadors:



Haliburton, Coboconk & Minden



in Bath, west of Kingston



Clear Lake, Kawarthas



Pointe Au Baril



Big Bald Lake, Kawarthas



KETTLE CREEK MARINA

Port Stanley, Lake Erie



Trent Canal, Balsam Lake



Detroit River, LaSalle



A not-for-profit member-owned marina serving cottagers and the community.

Catchacoma Lake, Kawarthas



Be #WakeAware
Marine Ambassador

Become a Marine Ambassador:

<https://www.bewakeaware.com/>

To join FOCA's regular e-list for monthly cottage country updates, [please opt-in here](#).

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