

Potters Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District
PO Box 808
East Troy, WI 53120
February 17, 2026

Town Board for the Town of East Troy
N9330 Stewart School Road
East Troy, WI 53120

Subject: Wake-enhanced boating on Town lakes

Dear Chairman Joe Jones, Supervisors Barbara Church, Michele Reyes, Ty Leonard, Brian Johnson, and Clerk-Treasurer Jean Loth,

The members of the PLPRD Board are aware that wake-enhanced boating was discussed at the Town of East Troy meeting on 2/11/2026. At this meeting, three options for regulating Wake Enhanced Surfing were presented. During the discussion of proposals focused solely on Lake Beulah, a suggestion was made that any ordinance include Potter Lake and Army Lake as well as Beulah. It was stated that *Potter Lake did not appear to have concerns about this topic*. This is the reason for this communication.

While our riparian owners do not currently have many immediate concerns about wake-enhanced boating on Potter Lake, it is not accurate to say there are no concerns. Many riparian owners are concerned about the negative impacts of wake-enhanced boating on the lakebed. It has been noted that phosphorus from the lake bottom may be stirred up and released into the lake. Additionally, due to the shallowness of the lake and the fact that there is no "flow-through", Potter Lake is already not as clear as a larger lake, such as Beulah. There is concern that it could be negatively impacted by additional wake-enhanced boating. There is concern that if the Town enacts an ordinance for Lake Beulah only, the implication would be that Potter Lake is unrestricted, which could result in more wake-boat traffic on our lake.

For the past two years, the PLPRD has maintained that we are not taking a position on wake-enhanced boating at this time, though we are monitoring what is being shared locally and statewide in Wisconsin. We recognize that this is a more volatile issue on Lake Beulah, which is much larger, and that reports indicate multiple wake boats operating simultaneously. We have two, or possibly three, riparian owners on Potter Lake who have wake boats. These boats are used infrequently in wake mode. This has been the basis for our wait-and-see approach to restrictions on wake-enhanced boating.

At the PLPRD Spring meeting last year on May 17, 2025, the topic was discussed during a Q&A with Jeff Stelzer from Lake and Pond. He noted that this is a hot issue right now, but there appear to be negative effects on vegetation and a potential for invasive species to be introduced. He clarified that these negative effects are not caused by the boats themselves but by the actions of those using them. Attendees appeared to understand that wake-enhanced boating activity on Potter Lake is limited, but

remained worried about the possibility of future damage to the lake. As a reminder, our Potter Lake meeting took place just over a month after the Meeting of the Electors in the Town of East Troy, where the advisory vote called for a complete ban on Lake Beulah. Concerns were raised that restricting wake-enhanced boating on Lake Beulah alone could increase activity on Potter Lake, which people want to avoid. There was also discussion about how this issue has become contentious on Lake Beulah, leading to neighbor-versus-neighbor disputes. Comments made on various social media pages and the high level of emotion surrounding this topic were mentioned. During our meeting, we reaffirmed that the PLPRD was not taking a position on this issue and was closely monitoring the situation in the Town.

Since the spring of 2025, there has been much more information available on wake-enhanced recreation. Scientific studies show that wake-enhanced boating on shallow lakes causes damage. There has also been heightened animosity, expressed mainly on social media, between those on opposite sides of the issue. While our riparian owners have not generally gotten involved in those discussions, they are aware of them. I am sure they will be very concerned if restrictions are imposed on Lake Beulah but not on Potter Lake, thereby making Potter Lake more open to wake-boat traffic.

As the Town Board considers options for creating an ordinance, it should understand the realities of our lake compared to Lake Beulah. First, Potter Lake has not experienced wake boats entering from the boat launch. Wake boats owned by riparian owners are only on Potter Lake, reducing concerns about invasive species from ballast tanks that cannot be fully drained. This concern would increase if outside wake boats were permitted to enter our lake. Potter Lake is much shallower than Lake Beulah. I have attached the 2021 Sonar Survey of Potter Lake conducted by Lake and Pond Solutions. There are no areas of Potter Lake that are 25 feet deep. There is a small area of approximately 5 acres, 20 feet deep, and 300 feet from shore.

In conclusion, we ask that any decisions regarding an ordinance on wake-surfing for Lake Beulah take into account the ramifications for Potter Lake. It would be a mistake to assume that because our riparian owners have not voiced their concerns publicly, they do not have them.

Sincerely,

Cathy Schulz, Chairperson

chairperson@potterslake.org

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