



## **FOVLAP BOARD STATEMENT ON REGULATION OF WAKE SPORTS APPROVED NOVEMBER 1, 2021**

The Board of Directors of the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP) recognizes and is concerned about artificially enhanced large wakes and the powerful propeller wash produced during wakeboarding and wake surfing activities. The artificially enhanced large waves and powerful propeller wash produced to facilitate wakeboarding and wake surfing recreation may have many negative impacts if these activities occur in waterbody locations that are too shallow or too close to shore.

Because the extreme waves associated with these activities are larger and travel farther than those from other water sports, the current 200-foot ‘Shoreline Safety Zone’ appears to be inadequate to dissipate the energy and power of these waves and their damaging impacts. According to a data-driven 2021 study in Georgia, at a 200-foot distance from a shoreline, wake surfing waves can be more than twice the height and five times the energy of the waves of a typical ski boat. Among the concerns raised about these waves and the manner in which they are generated are that they have the potential to:

- pose safety hazards to other boaters, anglers, people in the water or near-shore, on docks or moored boats;
- significantly increase the risk of lake-to-lake aquatic invasive species spread due to large capacity ballasts that cannot be fully drained of water and are effectively impossible to inspect or decontaminate;
- erode shorelines, undercutting trees and other vegetation, resulting in nutrient and sediment influxes that degrade water quality;
- damage shoreline property, structures, and moored vessels;
- disrupt the underwater ecology in the littoral zone;
- inundate the nests of loons and other waterfowl; and,
- disrupt wildlife habitats and wetlands.

Interfering waves from multiple enhanced-wake vessels can amplify all the above impacts.

In shallow areas, enhanced wake propulsion systems deliver a powerful, downward-directed propeller jet wash that can scour the lakebed, uproot plants, and re-suspend sediments, re-activating otherwise trapped nutrients. These propeller thrusts can also disturb bottom ecosystems, including fish spawning habitat, and the deep-running propellers can fragment milfoil plants, contributing to their spread to further degrade water quality.

Because the popularity of enhanced wake activities is growing, there is an urgency to provide wise management and regulation. Such regulations should be evidence-based and supported by peer-reviewed scientific studies.

As our waterbody resource utilization changes over time, and when new uses threaten the long-term sustainability of those resources, best management stewardship must adapt to protect Vermont’s lakes and ponds.

For these reasons and consistent with the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds mission to preserve and protect Vermont’s lakes, ponds, and their watersheds for the benefit of this and future generations, the FOVLAP Board strongly supports and urges the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to develop appropriate regulations for the activities associated with wake-enhanced recreation.