

WASA Safety Advocates – Volunteer committee 2017- 2021

Wasa Area Safety Advocates (WASA) are a group of volunteers trying to ensure that there is a safe area in Wasa Lake for swimmers and paddlers. In 2017, a well-attended public meeting chaired by our RDEK representative addressed Wasa boating safety issues. We discussed strategies to alleviate the increasing risk posed by motorboats to the high concentration of swimmers and paddlers in the North Bay. Since then, Wasa Area Safety Advocates (WASA) consulted with residents and Boating safety Canada. It was decided that our best option is to apply for a Vehicle Operation Restriction Regulation (VORR) in a small, easily defined area of the lake. Therefore, we created 2 boat launch signs and installed 12 buoys in the congested North Bay area as per existing regulations (30 m from shore).

There is an urgent need to make an area of Wasa Lake safer for swimmers and paddlers. One person has been killed by a motorboat in Wasa Lake; at least one other badly injured. On a busy summer day, we see 25 motorboats and as many seadoos, utilizing this 1.1 sq. km lake.

The dangers to swimmers and paddlers continue to intensify due to increasing motorboat traffic, especially in the congested North Bay area. The North Bay has the longest public swimming area, stretching from Main Beach to Horseshoe Beach. The small, shallow area is ecologically sensitive, making up approximately 15% of surface area of this tiny Lake. Swimmers and non-motorized paddlers (kayakers, canoers, wind-surfers, SUPs) heavily utilize this area. A 10-km/hr speed-limit zone within the North Bay area would greatly increase the safety of many swimmers and non-motorized paddlers, without compromising the enjoyment of motorized craft users.

Public consultations are the next official step towards obtaining a Vehicle Operation Restriction Regulation (VORR) of 10 km/hr for the North Bay area. Feedback is being collected from a wide range of lake users, including residents, recreational users, the Ktunaxa, and local business owners. Boating Safety Canada states that this is likely a 3-4 year process.

Your input on the proposed 10km/hour speed limit for the North Bay of Wasa Lake can be included in the paper survey found in the Trivillage Buzz, and left in the survey box at the post office for collection. The link for the online version of the survey, open from May 10- July 10, 2021, will be in the next Buzz June 2021.