

TOWN OF EAST TROY, WALWORTH COUNTY, WISCONSIN

RESOLUTION 2026-11

**AN ADVISORY RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED ZONES FOR ARTIFICIAL WAKE
ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES ON LAKE BEULAH**

WHEREAS in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare, including the public's interest in preserving natural resources, the Town of East Troy ("Town") puts forth the following resolution:

WHEREAS there exists within the Town a lake known as Lake Beulah; and

WHEREAS the Town of East Troy recognizes the importance of the quality of our waters to its citizens, and

WHEREAS Lake Beulah is integral to the recreational base of the economy of the Town of East Troy, and

WHEREAS artificially enhanced wakes can cause environmental damage to lakes and lakeshore, including resuspension of sediment adding nutrients to the water and increased risk of algal blooms, turbidity, shoreline erosion, aquatic plant habitat, and threats to aquatic life and waterfowl; and

WHEREAS artificially enhanced wakes can cause property damage to shorelines, moored boats, and shoreline structures including docks; and

WHEREAS boats with ballast systems increase the likelihood of aquatic invasive species being introduced and spread on lakes; and

WHEREAS Lake Beulah is a flowage type lake characterized by numerous mid-lake shallow humps, extended shallow underwater points, and extended shallow flats, and

WHEREAS operating boats in a stern down manner creates downward prop wash, disturbing the lake bottom far below the wave zone, more than 25 feet below the surface; and

WHEREAS the Lake Beulah Management District conducted a study by Terra Vigilis in 2025 assessing the impact of wake enhancement on Lake Beulah concluding wake enhancement should not occur in less than 25 feet of water, nor less than 500 feet from shore; and

WHEREAS artificially enhanced wakes can endanger the safety of swimmers, anglers, paddlers and other watercraft; and

WHEREAS the use of ballast and wake enhancing fins can cause unsafe operation by causing the bow to rise obscuring vision forward; and

WHEREAS Lake Beulah, contains Beber Camp and Camp Edwards engaging in various water activities for children, and artificially enhanced wakes can pose a safety issue for these camps; and

WHEREAS other municipalities have passed local ordinances and resolutions on wake enhancement. Including:

- 79 Wisconsin Municipalities have prohibited wake-enhancing equipment on over 400 lakes.
- Oneida, Bayfield, and Jefferson Counties passed advisory resolutions recommending shoreline setbacks (500–700 feet) and depth minimums (30 feet).
- Town of Troy lakes (Booth Lake), Walworth County: Prohibited using equipment to enhance wakes and continuously operate a boat in artificially bow-high manner to enhance a wake.
- Big Cedar Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District on May 19th, 2026, passed an ordinance to restrict wake enhancement to water at least 20 feet deep and 500 feet from shore.
- Town of Ottawa lakes (Hunters, Pretty, School Section), Waukesha County: Prohibit using equipment to enhance wakes and continuously operate boats in artificially bow-high manner to enhance a wake.
- Town of Norway lakes (Long, Waubeesee, Wind), Racine County: Prohibit wake surfing (riding wake without rope connection to boat).
- Ten other lakes within Waukesha, Racine, and Washington County are working on recommendations; and

WHEREAS on April 21st, 2026, at the Annual Meeting of the Electors a motion was made by a town citizen to place restrictions on wake enhancement to water with a minimum depth of 25 feet, and a minimum distance of 500 feet from shore, it was seconded and passed 46 -9 in favor of the motion; and

WHEREAS on April 27th, 2026, the Lake Beulah Management District board voted on, and approved “Recommendations on Wake-Enhancement on Lake Beulah for Ecological and Safety Protection for the 2026 Boating Season”; and

WHEREAS on May 1, 2026, Patrick Bergen, Chairman of the Lake Beulah Management District, sent an email to the East Troy Town Board asking the board to consider the attached recommendations so that Lake Beulah will have some protections for the 2026 summer boating season; and

WHEREAS the Town Board, after considering public comments, determines that adopting this resolution is consistent with promoting public health, safety and welfare, including the public's interest in preserving natural resources; and

WHEREAS the Town Board of East Troy wishes to explore whether the challenges of enhanced wake boating can be controlled by putting in place this Resolution and associated Recommendation for Wake Enhanced Sports Zones;

NOW, THEREFORE, NOW IT BE RESOLVED THAT the Town of East Troy Board of Supervisors recommend:

Section 1: Establishment of Recommended Wake Enhanced Sports Zones

(a) Establishment of Zones. The Town of East Troy shall establish recommended Wake Enhanced Sport Zones ("Recommended Wake Enhanced Sports Zones") in accordance with this section.

(b) Location of Zones. There shall be two Wake Enhanced Sport Zones established in water that is greater than 25 feet deep and greater than 500 feet from shore. One Wake Enhanced Sport Zone shall be established in the Long Lake Section of Lake Beulah in the area that is at least 25 feet deep and at least 500 feet from shore. A second Wake Enhanced Sport Zone shall be established in the Big Lake Section of Lake Beulah in the area that is at least 25 feet deep and at least 500 feet from shore.

(c) Mapping of Wake Enhanced Sport Zones. By a majority vote, the Town of East Troy shall order and post at all public landings, signage of the Wake Enhanced Sport Zone Recommendations, including an updated official lake map detailing the wake enhancement zones, using Lakes and Ponds Map that contracted by the Lake Beulah Management District, and was created by an independent source using sonar auto charting to accurately define the unique mid lake bathymetric characteristics of Lake Beulah. This map was created in early April of 2026 to more accurately chart the lake bottom before new weed growth emerged.

Section 2: Certain Artificial Wake Enhancement Recommendation

(a) Recommended Equipment. Outside of a Wake Enhanced Sport Zone, it is recommended but not mandated that no person may use or employ ballast tanks, ballast bags or fins to cause a boat to operate in a bow-high manner, or which increases or enhances a boat's wake.

(b) Recommended Operation. Outside of a Wake Enhanced Sport Zone, it is recommended but not mandated that no person may operate a boat in an artificially bow-high manner having the effect of increasing the boat's wake. Such recommended operation shall include wake enhancement by use of ballast tanks, or ballast bags or fins, or continuous operation at transition speed (the speed below planing speed in which a boat is operating in plowing mode).

For the purpose of this provision, "continuous operation" shall mean operation that is not acceleration for the purpose of achieving a state of planing."

Section 3: Effective Date.

This resolution shall take effect upon a majority vote by the Town Board and shall remain in force until September 30, 2026.

Section 4: Nothing in this Instrument Precludes the Town Board from later adopting any ordinance regarding enhanced wakes on Lake Beulah, should the Town Board acting in its unfettered discretion determine that such an ordinance is warranted.

Enacted: June 8, 2026, Town of East Troy, Walworth County, Wisconsin.



JOSEPH G. JONES, Chairman



JEAN LOTH, Clerk/Treasurer

Lake Beulah Wake Enhancement Zones

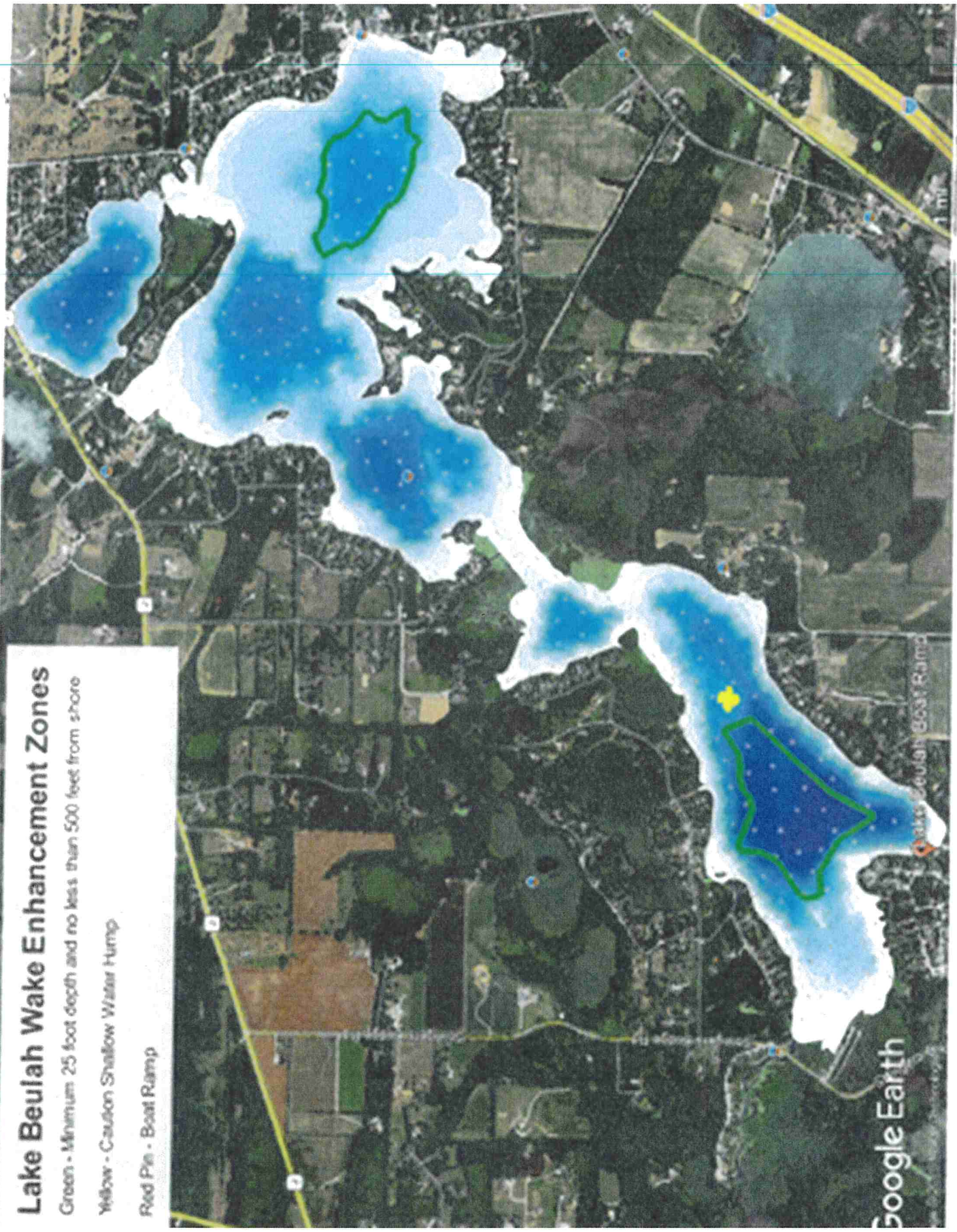
Green - Minimum 25 foot depth and no less than 500 feet from shore

Yellow - Caution Shallow Water Hump

Red Pin - Boat Ramp

Google Earth

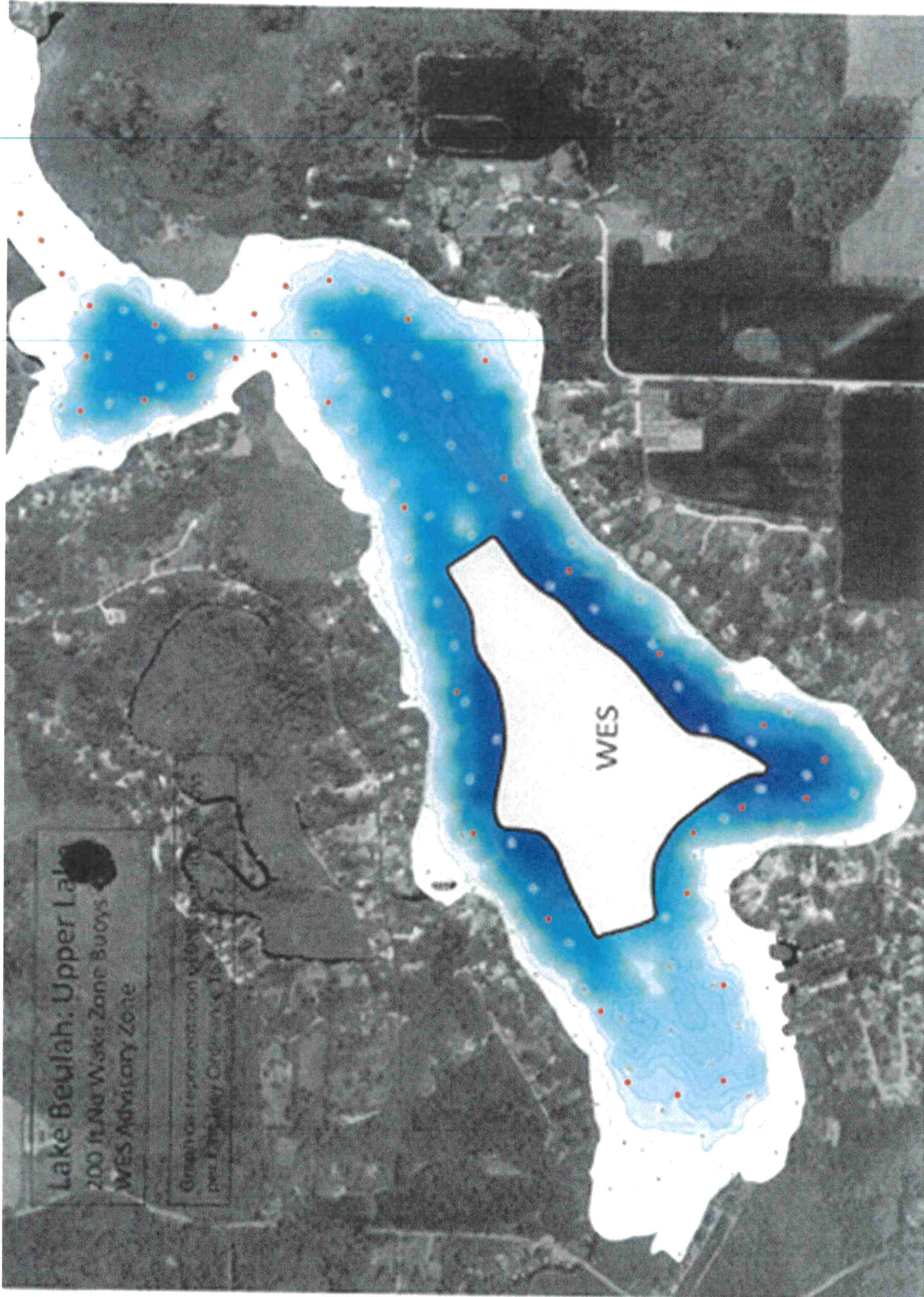
Lake Beulah Boat Ramp

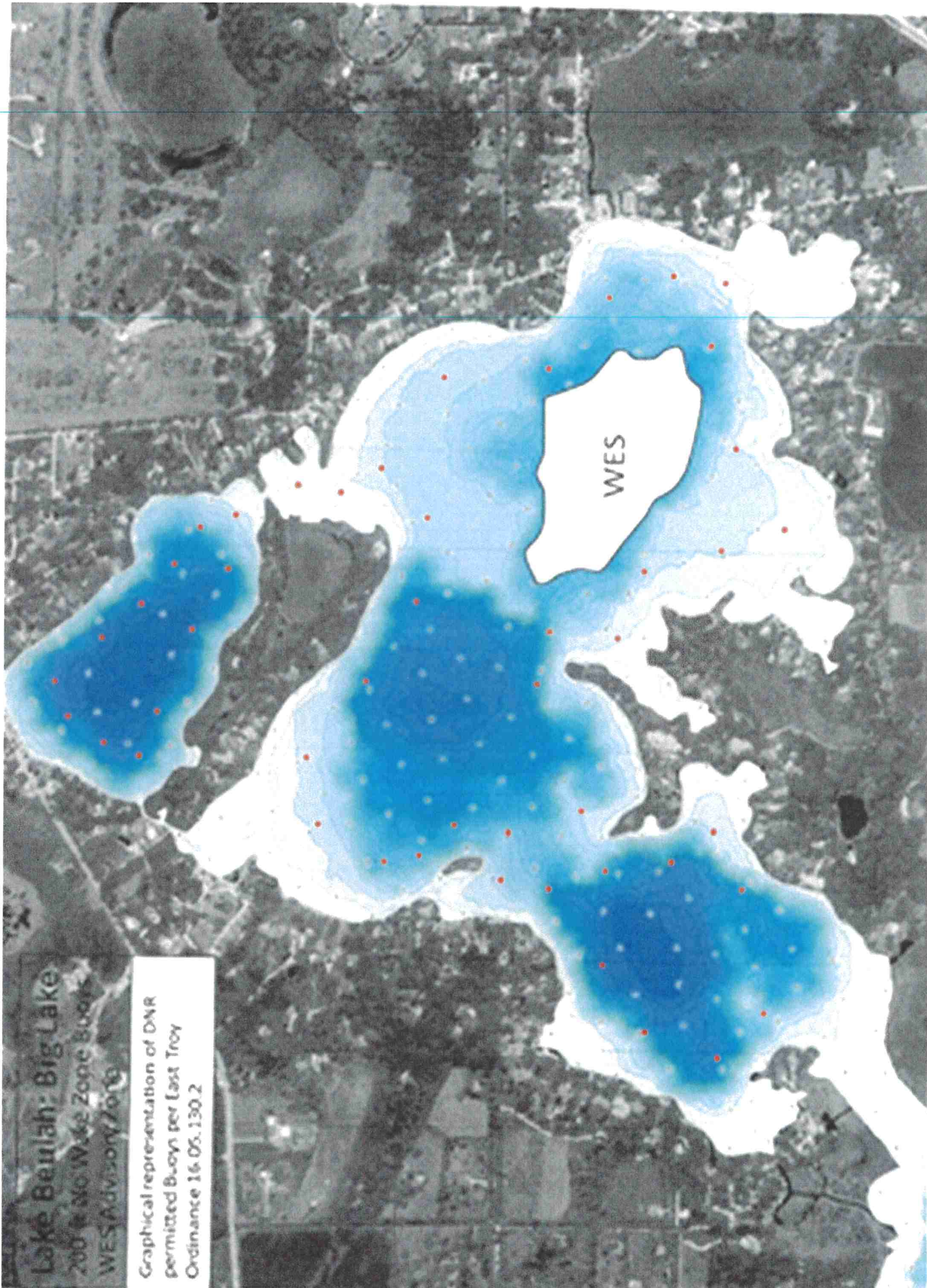


Lake Beulah: Upper Lake
200 ft No Wake Zone Buoys
WES Advisory Zone

Graphic representation of 200 ft No Wake Zone Buoys
per Emergency Ordinance 510

WES





Lake Beulah, Big Lake
200 ft No Wake Zone Buoy
WES Advisory Zone

Graphical representation of DNR
permitted Buoy per Last Troy
Ordinance 16-06.130.2