



Peppermill Lake District Preliminary 2012 Property Owner Survey

Executive Summary

The survey approved by the District Board was mailed to all property owners of record in mid-January, 2012, with a requested return date of February 15, 2012. A pre-addressed and stamped envelop was provided to facilitate responses. As of the end of March, 2012, 49 responses (51.6% response rate) had been received and were used to compile the Survey Results.

Note: Some of the 2004 survey results have been noted in ***bold italics*** below.

- 87.5% of the respondents indicated that their property was on the lake
- Slightly more respondents indicated their property was on the west end than the east end and on the south shore versus the north shore.
- 25% of the respondents indicated they were year round residents.
- Peace/Solitude, fishing, scenic enjoyment and boating were the top 4 activities listed by the respondents.
- All respondents indicated that they supported and observed the “no wake” ordinance.
- 60.4% of respondents rated the Lake’s water quality as either excellent or very good.
- 81.3% (**55%**) of respondents indicated that the water quality has stayed the same or improved over time. 16.7% (**26%**) felt that it has declined.
- Weeds (79.2% of respondents) and Algae/Scum (60.4% (**48%**) of respondents) were ranked and the biggest water quality issues.
- 27.1% of respondents rated fishing on the lake as either fair or poor. 16.7% of respondents rated fishing on the lake as either excellent or very good.
- 58.5% (**43%**) of respondents indicated that the fishing quality has declined over the years.
- 77.1% of respondents support “catch and release.”
- Over fishing (75% of respondents) and weeds (45.6% of respondents) were the top issue indicated as the reason for a decline in fishing quality. Only 50% of the survey respondents answered this question.

- 73.9% of respondents indicated that there had been no significant change in the lake level over time. 25.6% of respondents would like to see the lake leve raised while 74.4% of respondents do not want any change made to the level of the lake.
- 95.8% of respondents support harvesting. 77.1% support harvesting “native plants, ie lily pads, in addition to EWMF. However 23.9% do not support harvesting “native plants.”
- 83.7% (**64%**) of respondents indicated that “natural undeveloped” described their property where it met the water.
- Of respondents who indicated they have a buffer zone the average depth indicated was: Average = 94ft; Median = 35ft (**16ft**). The average number was skewed due to one respondent indicating their buffer zone was 1000 ft. while another indicated their zone was 750 ft.
- 22.9% of respondents indicated that they were not familiar with Wisconsin statute NR 115 as it applies to impervious surfaces and buffer zones or the Adams County shoreline protection ordinance.

General Comments

1. Respondents generally value Peppermill Lake for its peaceful and quiet atmosphere. They enjoy being able to fish and boat in the clear water without interference from high speed watercraft. Respondents, on the other hand, are very concerned by the aquatic plant (“weeds”), including chara and algae. They are also concerned about over fishing, the size of fish and the general decline in the quality of the fishing experience on the lake. Several respondents suggested stocking larger fish to improve the fishing. Some respondents mentioned that the lake was too shallow and indicated they would like to see the lake dredged in the future to improve the lake.

Survey Results

Peppermill Lake District Survey, January, 2012

Of the 95 surveys mailed to property owners within the Lake District 49 were returned and were included in the following analysis. Where percentage is used to describe the data it is based on the total number of surveys received not on the total number of surveys mailed unless otherwise noted.

1. Where is your property located in relation to the Lake?

On the lake _87.5%_

Within ½ mile 14.5%_

Within 1 mile __0%_

2. What part of the lake is your property nearest to? (Mark all that apply)

East end __33.3%

West End __37.5%

North shore __25%

South shore __33.3%

Note: Exceeds 100% due to respondents using more than one location

3. How long have you owned property on Peppermill Lake?

Years_____ Months_____

*Mean – 18.1 years

Median – 14 years

Range – 4-48 years

4. What best describes the time you spend on Peppermill Lake? (check one that most applies)

Weekends-year round	Weekends-occasional	Year round resident
12.5%	29.2%	25%
Weekends – Summer	Vacations/holidays	Summer time resident
14.6%	6.3%	8.3%

- 5 How do you use Peppermill Lake? (check all that apply)

Fishing	Boating	Peace/solitude	Wildlife observation
79.2%	68.8%	89.6%	60.4%
Scenic enjoyment	Swimming	Entertaining	Walking
77.1%	47.9%	35.4%	47.9%
Ice Skating	Hunting	Sailing	Picnicking
4.2%	6.3%	4.2%	4.2%

6. What is the largest horsepower boat motor you operate on Peppermill Lake?

Motor size _____hp. Have electric motors only _____ Do not use motors of any type _____

*31 respondents had gas motors 13 respondents have no motors 1 respondent didn't know

28.9% Average HP

1 respondent had electric motor only

Range: 4-110HP

7. Do you support the NO WAKE Regulation? Yes _100%_ No _____

8. Do you always observe it? Yes _100%_ No _____

9. What do you like most about Peppermill Lake? (Please list, use a separate sheet if necessary)

*See Appendix A for individual responses

10. What do you like the least about Peppermill Lake? (Please list, use a separate sheet if necessary)

*See Appendix A for individual responses

11. How would you rate the water quality of Peppermill Lake?

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
25%	35.4%	31.3%	8.3%	0%

*All responded

12. Over the time you have owned property near the lake do you feel the water has:

Improved	Stayed the same	Declined
20.8%	62.5%	16.7%

13. In what way has the water quality changed?

*See Appendix A for individual responses

14. What do you think are the major water quality problems facing the lake (check all that apply)

Algae/scum	Litter	Water clarity
60.4%	2.1%	16.7%
Smell/odors	Weeds	Other? (Please describe)
2.1%	79.2%	Muck, Milfoil, Too shallow

15. How would you rate the fishing on the lake?

Excellent	Very Good	Average	Fair	Poor
2.1%	14.6%	45.8%	22.9%	4.2%

*89.2% respondents answered question

16. How long have you fished Peppermill Lake?

Years _____

*16.6 yrs Avg. 13 yrs Median 85.4% responded

17. How has the quality of fishing changed since you started?

Improved	Stayed the same	Declined
12.2%	29.3%	58.5%

*85.5% responded

18. In what ways has the fishing quality changed?

*See Appendix A for individual responses

19. Do you support and practice Catch & Release of predator fish irrespective of size?

Yes _77.1%__

No _10.4%__

*12.5% no response. Of the 6 "no" responses, 5 did not indicate whether they fished or not.

20. If you answered No to Item 19 please provide reasons.

*

- We eat and enjoy fish
- We like to eat fish
- Need to eliminate
- If I catch blue gills I eat them
- When I fish I like to eat what I catch

21. If you indicated that water quality or fishing quality has declined, which of the following issues, in your opinion, may have contributed to the decline. From the list below, provide the top three choices (1-3):

Water Quality Decline:

Ranking					
Air pollution	Fertilizer use	Soil erosion	Development	Heavy recreation	Septic systems
	8%	20%	8%	12%	8%
Herbicides	Agriculture	Over fishing	Weeds	Shoreline damage	
8%		2%	72%	20%	

*25 or 48 respondents responded to this question

Fishing Decline:

Ranking					
Air pollution	Fertilizer use	Soil erosion	Development	Heavy recreation	Septic systems
	12.5 %	4.2%	4.2%	12.5%	4.2%
Herbicides	Agriculture	Over fishing	Weeds	Shoreline damage	
8.3%	4.2%	75%	45.8%	4.2%	

*Other reasons written included: Freeze – 12.5% and Not stocking – 4.2%

*50% of respondents responded to this question

22. Has the lake water level changed in the last several years in your opinion?

Lower	Higher	Not changed significantly
17.4%	8.7%	73.9%

*89.6% responded

23. Should the lake level be adjusted?

No	Raise	Lower
74.4%	25.6%	0%

*89.6% responded

24. Do you have other comments on lake level ?

- Often too low. They say they monitor level but they do not do it often enough
- Is the earth dam leaking?

PLANT HARVESTING

25. Do you support general weed harvesting to improve lake quality?

Yes:95.8%___ No:4.2%___

26. Are you in favor of harvesting native plants (e.g., lily pads) as well as Eurasian milfoil?

Yes: 77.1%___ No: _22.9%__

27. How much and what should we harvest ? (Indicate by %, example 10%)

More plants	Fewer Plants	More lily pads	Chara	Same as now
29.5%	15%	38.9%	35.3	

*19 respondents indicated "Same as now", Not all respondents provided a % as requested and are not included in the numbers above. 41 of 48 respondents answered the question.

28. Do you have comments about weed harvesting?

*See appendix A for individual answers.

29. In your opinion, what other measures should be taken to restore, maintain or improve the lake?

*See appendix A for individual answers.

30. Do you maintain a lawn on your property?

Yes _82.6%_____ No _17.2%_____

*46 of 48 respondents answered question

31. Percentage of lot in mowed lawn? _____%

*28.7% Average

20% Median

32. If you use fertilizer, how often do you fertilizer each year? (times per year)

Times per year?_4 responded__1.5 times/yr average_ Do not fertilize __38__responded_

* 6 respondents did not answer question

33. What best describes the location where your property meets the lake? Pick one only.

Natural-undeveloped __83.7%__ Lawn __2.3%_ Rock/Rip-rap ____

Natural-restored _9.3%__ Retaining wall _2.3%__ Landscaped-(shrubs/flowers etc.)2.3%

34. If you have an undeveloped buffer strip how far from the lake into the property does it extend?
_____ft.

*94 ft. Average, 35 ft. Median. One respondent responded with 1000 ft and another with 750 ft.

35. Are you familiar with the requirements of Wisconsin Statute NR 115 relating to shoreline buffer zones and impervious surfaces? Yes _64.6%__ No 22.9%_____

*No response = 12.5%

36. Are you familiar with the requirements of the Adams County shoreline protection ordinance?

Yes_62.5%__ No__22.9%__

*No response = 14.6%

General Comments? Please attach additional pages if necessary.

*See appendix A for individual responses.

Appendix A

Question #9

Its beauty and silence

The quiet. No Jet ski, no skiing makes a great relaxing time on the water

Peace and quiet and the beauty

Fishing and lazy rides on the pontoon. Kids and grandkids swim

Quiet and Solitude of the surrounding area. Not much traffic

Solitude, the lake, the wildlife

Solitude

Beauty, nature, solitude

The nature of it and peaceful

Fishing, no wake, scenery, quiet

Peace and quiet and beauty of the lake

Peaceful in the early morning

Fishing and quiet

Community, peacefulness

Quiet, clear water, fishing

Tranquil and peaceful, yet close to the other activities

It's a beautiful place to live

It's a god given piece of property

Fishing

No congestion from too many boats. Most homes are hidden and well back from the shoreline. Nature shoreline.

Quiet, scenic, solitude

quiet, wildlife

It's usually quiet and peaceful and most people are very friendly. It's rural and rustic enough that wildlife is frequently close by.

Quiet.

Quiet during the week and winter

It is quiet, tranquil, secluded, beautiful, natural surrounding, good friends.

clean water, space, scenic walks

Remoteness, not seen well from roads, beauty, fishing

That it is a no wake lake. I like that we don't have jet skis and speed boats zipping around

Scenery, tranquility

Nice and quiet. No tourists

Relaxing, being on the water

Peaceful, scenic, neighbors

Can swim in it, fishing

Natural setting. Not over developed.

Clean water, close to the house, scenery.

Clean water, natural shoreline

No wake. Nice place to have a lake home that is easy to get to from my main residence.

Peace and quiet, natural beauty

It's a fishing lake only. Not a speed boat lake. The beauty.

Peace

Quiet, clear water, wildlife, variety of trees

The efforts of the lake district to keep our lake and properties in a healthy condition

Question #10

That so few property owners take part in the functions of the lake district

Too many lily pads;, rise of muck in the last year, mosquitoes

Goose crap and gunfire.

That is has a very accessive public landing

Oak leaf wilt, chara

Only a few lake residents who attend the annual meeting to elect board members, hear the proposed budget, express any concerns, etc.

small size

No wake law.

Too shallow, mucky shoreline.

Too small, too many weeds (most of the time), Launch fee, not very deep

Upkeep

Weeds

Taxes

It feels like the fishing isn't as great the past few years. We catch and release but don't seem to see as many large bass and pike

Extreme weeds

Oak wilt

Not enough depth to the lake

Dirt bike and target practice on north shore. Noise from gas generators on north shore.

Politics!

Weeds, chara especially

Muskrats

Growing too old to be able to enjoy anymore

Some people beefing about what's going on

Weeds

Too many aquatic plants, small pan fish

Weeds in the lake, boat launch

Too many restrictions

Too shallow, too weedy

Too much water vegetation

Remoteness from shopping

Weeds

Smoke from fires and woodstoves. Lots used for storage and accumulation of junk. People not cleaning up after their pets.

Mucky bottom

Too many weeds and lily pads. Too shallow.

Depth of lake and sometime weed problems.

Outside fishing pressure

Loud weekends.

Question #13

Less Eurasian water milfoil and lily pads

It seems clearer, fewer weeds

More algae, depends on weather conditions

More weeds

Lake is shallower

More weeds

Less clear, more

algae

Too many weeds, often murky from sediment

Clarity

Not as clean as it was 25 years ago

a bit lower

More weeds, not as clear
More weeds
Not quite as clear
More lily pads, more muck

Question #18

Small fish
Improved
It has to do with restocking process or non-process with public accessibility and winter kill.
A lot of small blue gill
Larger fish
Less fish
Smaller northerns, no more crappie or musky.
25 years ago the fishing pressure was not as high as it is now
Fewer pan fish to catch. Fewer bass, however was better last summer
Just not as many large bass and northern pike
Fewer fish, fewer big fish
Needs to be stocked more often
Freeze out has killed some on east end in 2008 (east air supply not working)
Smaller number of bass and northern
The lake is over fished since installation of the boat ramp
Too many small fish; we've lost our variety (no rock bass, very few crappies, no bullheads)
Smaller pan fish
Less fish
Don't catch any keeper size fish
Weeds and more fisherman taking them
Fewer bass, more pan fish
Lake is over fished, winter fish kill
Not enough fish, I believe they die off
More fish, esp. quality bass and
Pike
Fish kill round lake
Less fish- no big ones. Lots of little pan fish
Less game fish
Not enough people practicing catch and release. Outside fishing pressure. Not enough big fish
No bullheads

Question #28

The harvester leaves too much debris
Continue with what has been done in the past
Not done often enough
They need to find ways to get closer to shore and go deeper where feasible
Sometimes the cuttings float into our shoreline

Non destructive is best

Only done in selective spots, seems to be preferential

Does not get close enough to docks and shoreline

More harvesting when weeds are really bad

Is there only one person that has the equipment and his time constraints ? And cost?

More harvesting when weeds are really bad

More weeds need to be removed

We harvest too many lily pads. With development on the north shore (docks and boat lanes) there is no need for more harvesting of pads.

Should harvest only as needed each summer. Could harvest some more lily pads.

Remove more from middle areas, leave more near shorelines.

Don't get carried away and harvest too much

We like it

Good job

More!

Access to piers (only in those areas)

Question #29

Restock fish

Less Lawns

Encourage catch and release

Our lake association does a great job

Make sure aerators are on to prevent fish kill

Less is more

Drain it in order to dredge 5-10 ftl dredge deeper and start over

Harvest chara mounds when hinder navigation

More tree drops, stock some larger fish

Is it possible to do any dredging?

Have water tested for toxic or other pollutants

Perhaps a 5-10 year plan for a draw down and redredging

Watch fishing closer during spawn time

Maintain existing water level or improve!

Chemical treatment in shallow areas. It is our opinion that chemical treatment is what defeats Eurasian milfoil. Cutting spreads pieces that take root.

Make it a catch and release lake for everybody

The west end bay is filling in with sediment and I believe it needs to be dredged, but coming up with funding for that would be next to impossible.

If weeds are solid to the bottom how can you fish.

Leave natural shoreline to nature

Question #37

14 respondents included the following comments

Keep up the good work!! Thank you all

As with most things now adays-over regulated

Ice fishing takes out a lot of large predator fish. If that could be limited maybe we could have a healthy balance again. 25 years ago it was easy to catch 18"

bass after an hour of fishing and this was AFTER we had 3 previous fish kills. We started the aeration system mainly because the DNR/Scott Ironsides

Said they wouldn't stock fish unless we had an aeration system. Now they say they won't stock because it doesn't make sense. Another thought: the aeration could be a double edged sword- I counted 50+ geese enjoying the open water last week. That's not going to help water quality. Maybe if we saved the cost of the electricity and used the money to stock some large fish to offset fish being taken out would be a better idea.

1. Too many large pontoon boats being driven too fast and too close to shore. These boats displace a lot of water which creates an effect similar to a tsunami.

They disturb a deep column of water, not just a surface wave. This disturbs a lot of muck and dirt.

2. Too many locals keeping everything they catch. How do we enforce catch and release on them?

3. Is it possible to consider some limited re-dredging like in the main channels? The deeper spots are filling in with the moving sediment and weed detritus.

Would raising the lake level 6inchs give a similar effect or would that flood too many sensitive areas?

Need to get more lake residents willing to volunteer to manage the lake like clean waters/clean boats.

Those who complain about the lake or what the board is doing should volunteer to help with the lake, attend the annual meeting to exercise their rights, run for the board, attend the Lake Advisory Committee to express their ideas and concerns.

Love the lake, Need to keep the No Wake Rule as it is! Some fish stocking as Needed. Aerators failing! Thank you for your efforts!

Thanks for the survey & consideration to make improvements.

During winter time, the 2 aerators that are on the lake, are they really enough or should there be more to prevent winter kill?

Main concerns, lake depth, weeds

Keep up the good work!

Thank you for taking the time to provide this survey.

Would like the lake district to consider stocking trout.

Kill weeds not just harvest them.

Can't fish bottom of the lake to many weeds, pan fish stunted