



2020 Survey Results

As part of the effort to revise the Lake Plan, we asked registered property owners on Leonard Lake what was important to them.

Here's what they had to say...

Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association



Survey Details

- Leonard Lake has 156 registered property owners
- 244 invitations emailed; 4 paper surveys hand-delivered
- 160 responses were received
- 97 distinct property owners responded (62% of registered property owners on Leonard Lake)

Note: Survey results were independently compiled and reported by a non-board volunteer to minimize bias and ensure data integrity.

Questions about the survey? Email leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com.

Executive Summary

What we enjoy (top 10):

*Relaxing
Swimming
Paddle Sports
Reading
Appreciating Nature
Socializing
Walking/Hiking
Power Boating
Motorized Water Sports*

What contributes (top 5):

*Water Quality (100%)
Scenery (99%)
Fish/Wildlife Habitat
Lake Level
Natural Shorelines*

What detracts (top 5):

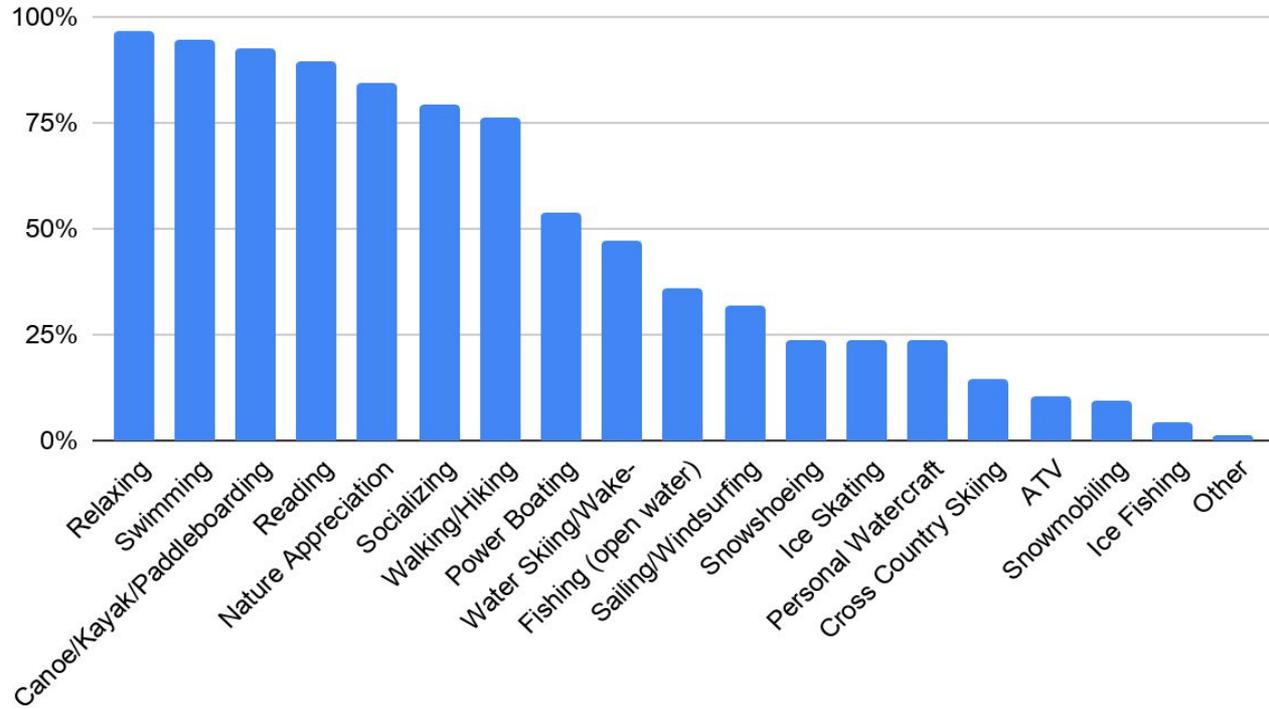
*Development
Light Pollution
Large Wakes
Nighttime Noise
Daytime Noise*

*Water Quality has gotten worse (66%)
Less than 50% state water quality is “good” or “excellent”*

What we should do (top 3):

Manage development - Protect water quality - Maintain septic systems

What we love to do at the lake

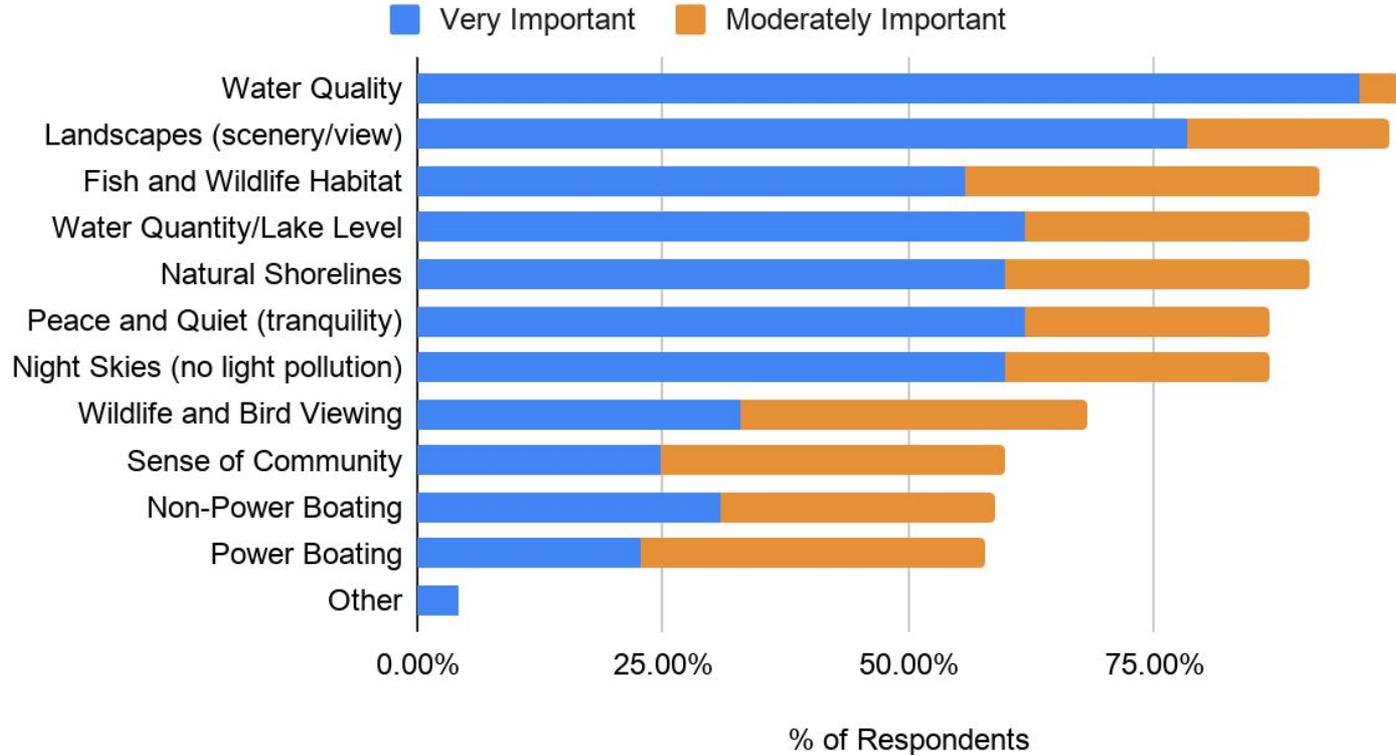


Comments



- The lake means different things to different people. It's great to see the community using the lake in diverse and new ways.
- Quiet is appreciated.
- Look forward to some day being able to come up to LL in the winter and enjoying winter activities.
- With 8 grandchildren between 2 and 11 years, the cottage is developing to a Nature retreat.

What contributes to enjoyment

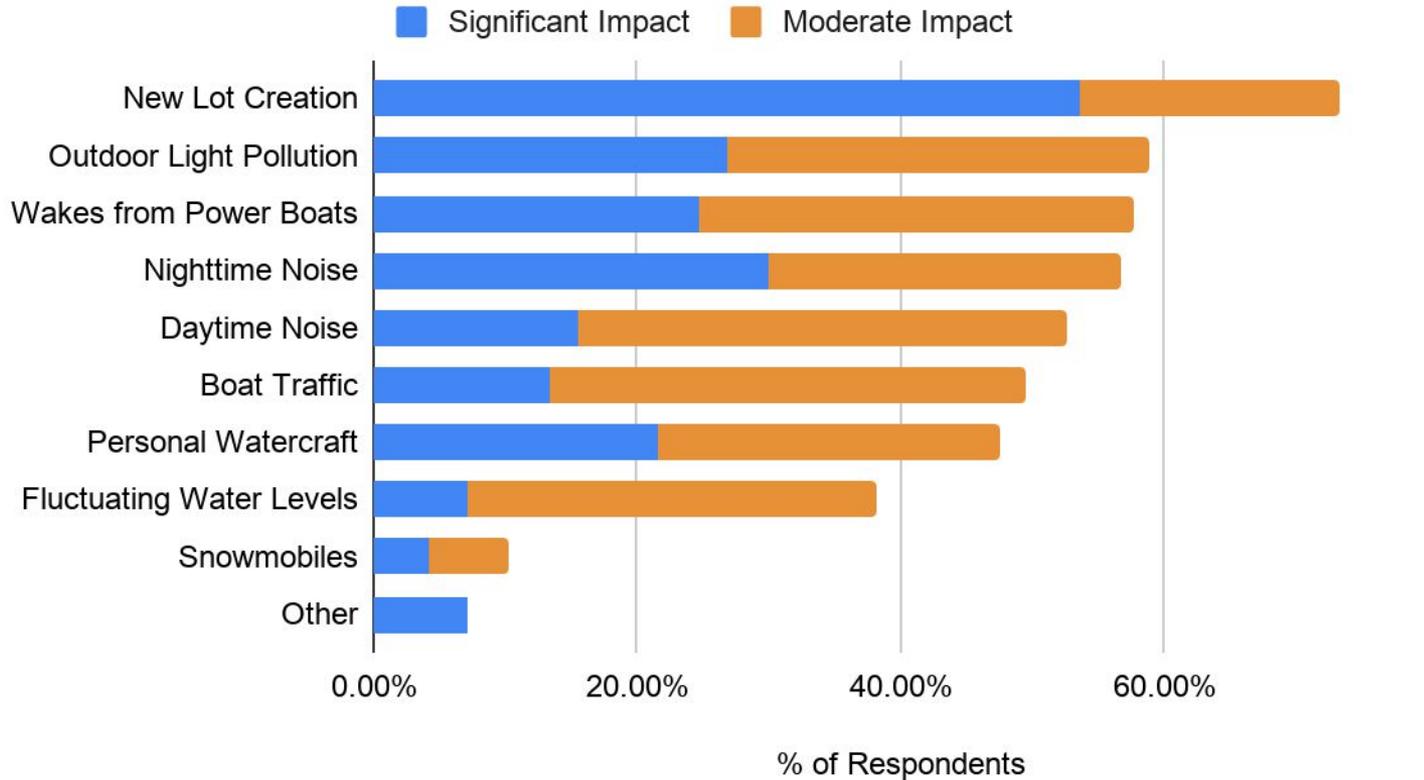


Comments



- Water quality should be the best possible. People should be able to use the lake as it suits their life.
- Our family has enjoyed use of our motor boat for water skiing and wake surfing over the years but have used it less in recent years as we are worried about lake health.
- Family gathering spot.
- Again, if we don't have water quality.....we have nothing!

What impacts enjoyment



Comments

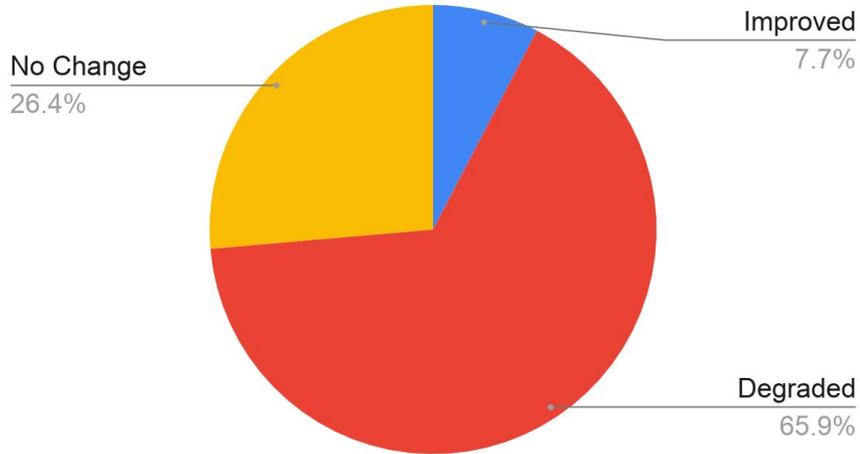


- Too much clear cutting and landscaping of lots. Cottages oversized.
- Personal watercraft are a nuisance.
- Would just like neighbours to respect radio volume as it really does travel on the lake!
- There are definitely some boaters on the lake who do not seem to recognize the negative impact they have on shorelines by zipping into the bay in front of our cottage at higher speeds than allowed in the zone close to shore, causing high wakes to hit the shoreline.

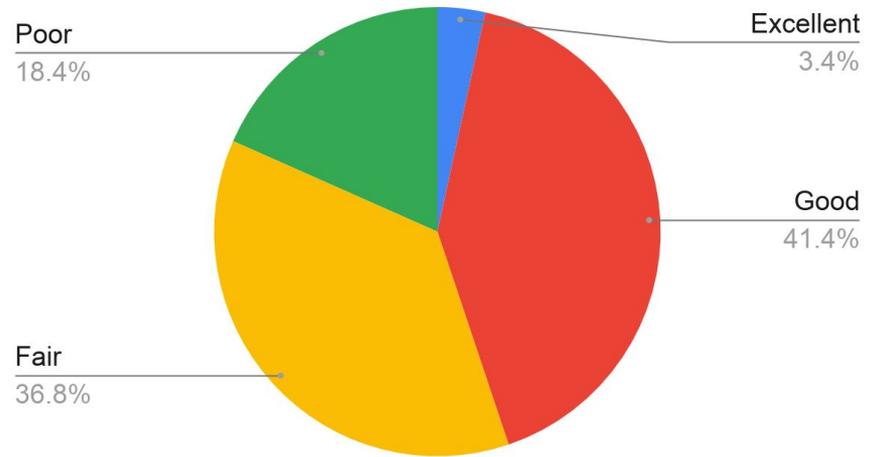
Water Quality



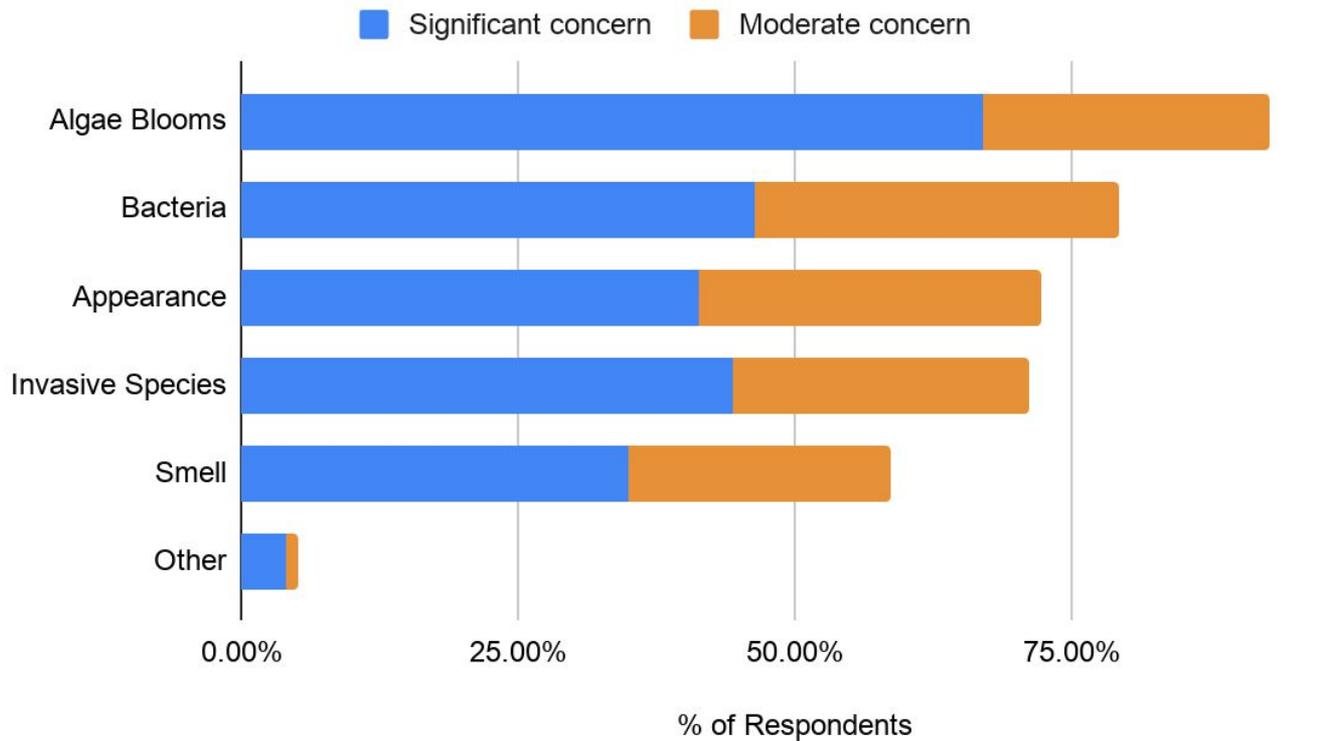
Has Water Quality Changed?



Current Water Quality



Water Quality Concerns



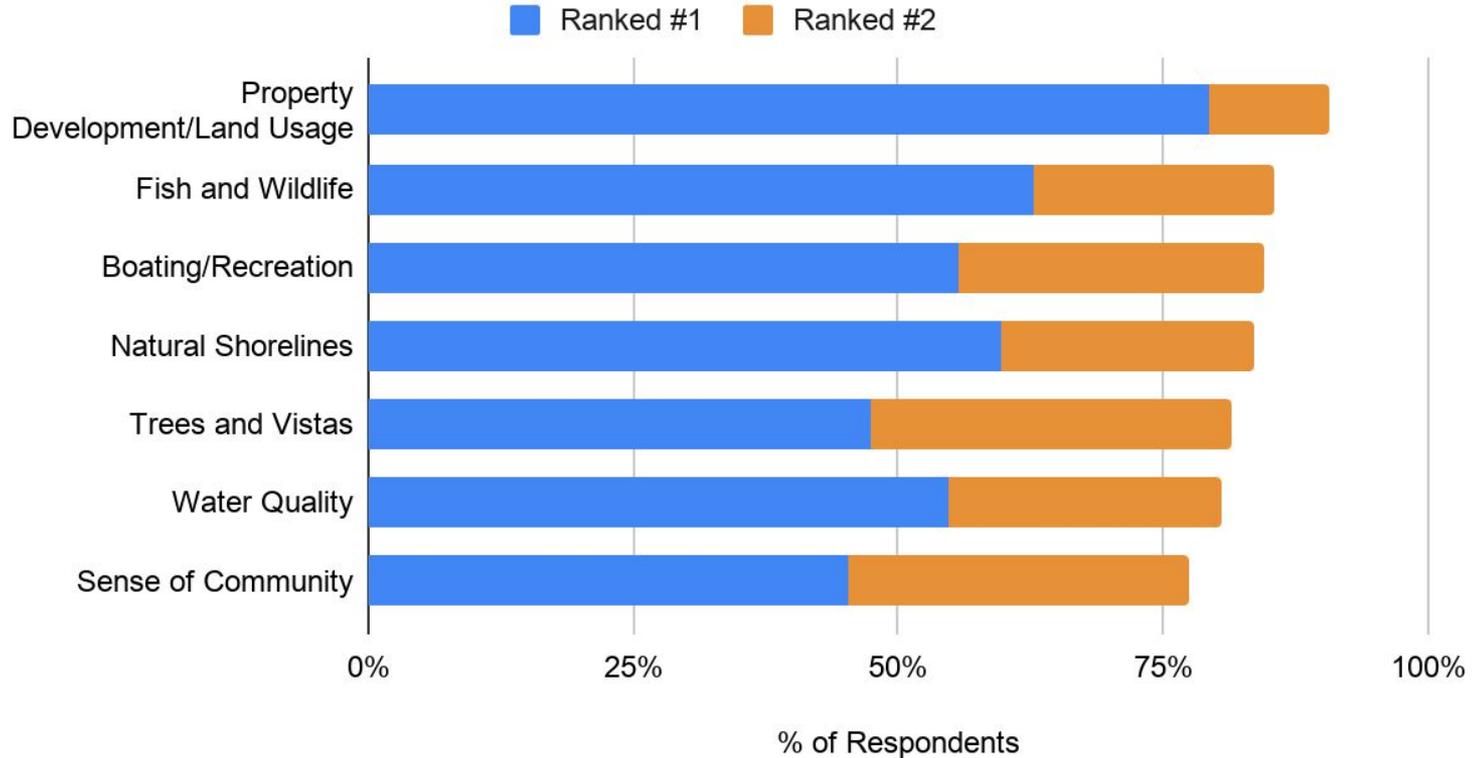
Comments

- 19 of 26 comments about current water quality specifically mentioned algae:
 - Blue green algae blooms last year, and now this spring whatever this new stuff is..... our lake does not have the water that it once had.
 - The current "unknown" condition of the lake (colour, visible elements, pollen ?) is worrisome for me.
 - We are worried to swim and allow our dog in the lake as well until we know more.

- Concerns:
 - Whatever happened to the loons?
 - Safety of lake water for swimming, showering, and using for other non drinking purposes.
 - Too much development of more accommodation on existing lots, and the adding of development on the north shore will add to the stress on water quality.
 - Invasive Species - Would be concerned and support strong avoidance practices.

- How water quality has changed:
 - We are 30 years on the lake and have noticed more residue on rocks, ladders, boats, etc. from when we first arrived. My primary concerns are old septic systems and recent influx of geese.
 - We have only been on the lake for 11 years, but we have definitely seen more in the way of algae blooms over these years.
 - I believe that the departure of loons spoke volumes about changes that have occurred on the lake (along with the arrival of other types of birds).

Importance of Lake Plan Initiatives



Comments



- Water Quality:
 - Without quality water, everything else is less important. Our lake is not big or deep and cannot withstand the stressors cottagers put on it.
 - We are way past the tipping point. The lake will continue to degrade - the goal should be to slow this degradation
 - Already too many cottages on the lake...DO NOT NEED MORE!

- Fish & Wildlife:
 - The children - and I suspect the children's children - enjoy fishing.
 - This is connected to water quality and shoreline habitat preservation.
 - It is my opinion that many want to treat wildlife like pets.

- Natural Shorelines:
 - Maintenance of the natural shoreline will go a long way to maintaining and improving water quality.
 - Support protection not necessarily rehabilitation.
 - Would also like to see less grass on properties. Let's promote more mulch and natural ground cover.

Comments *(continued)*



- Trees and Vistas:
 - We're up here to see nature! Not tons of buildings! :)
 - The planting of lawns with weed killer and fertilizer and cutting and trimming is nuts. Too many clear cuts of trees to accommodate big cottages.
 - People will continue to build within the Bylaws allowed. That is out of our control. Light pollution is a separate and more pressing issue.

- Property Development/Land Usage:
 - The lake is twice its sustainable carrying capacity. Development and redevelopment needs to stop or the downward slope will sharpen.
 - If families want to sever their lots and it is within the Bylaws then they should be allowed to.
 - I am equally concerned with cottage replacement as new development, tear down a cottage and replace with a much larger home, this is the same as lot creation in many respects.

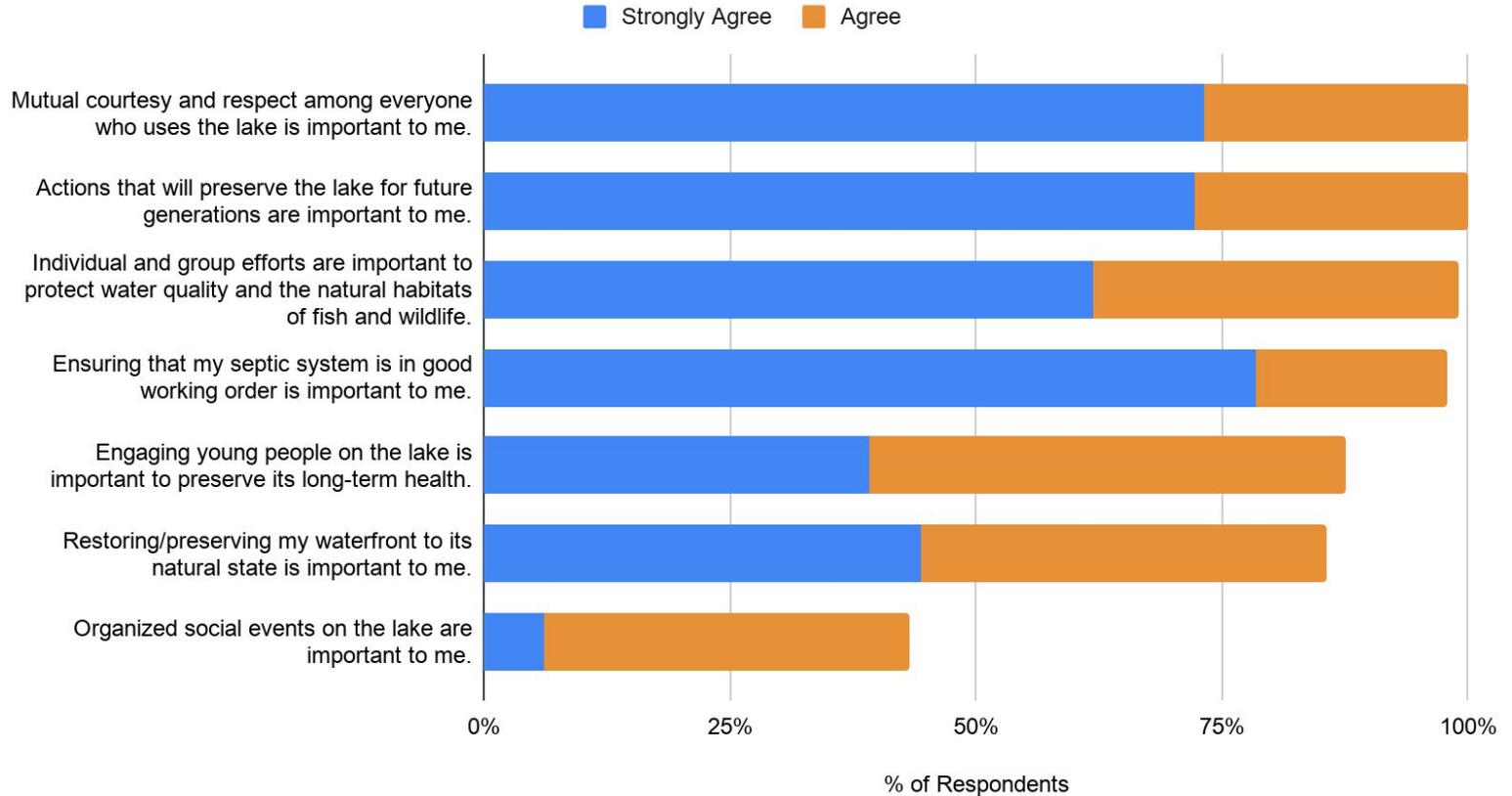
Comments *(continued)*



- Boating/Recreation
 - It's actually not a huge area, respect and consideration of others is critical.
 - Non-motorized boating is much preferred. Our lake is too small. Canoe and sail priority.
 - Being entirely cynical, this question skirts the real objectives of some which is to drive off power craft. That is a non-starter.

- Sense of Community
 - We need to stand together to protect our lake and the surrounding area for future generations to enjoy.
 - The degree of activity on the lake is generational - it ebbs and flows as children and grandchildren age.
 - I have little in common with many.

Lake Plan Value Statements



Comments



- Septic systems should be closely monitored and action taken to fix defective systems. That is crucial.
- One thing I'd like to note is that I think the lake association should have a list of recommendations for renters.
- While mutual courtesy and respect are important to me it is evident that this is not the case for everyone.
- By no means do I agree with the "lakefront must consist of natural habitat only: dogma. If the objective is to require natural front only as a part of an official binding plan, there may have to be organized resistance inclusive of court challenge.

Top 3 Action Items Suggested



1. Development (58 suggestions)

No new lot creation; responsible redevelopment; respect lake capacity - no commercial business such as resorts, marinas and campgrounds; no new boathouses.

2. Water (49 suggestions)

Maintaining water quality and continued testing; education regarding unhealthy practices; early warnings and information when harmful algae is detected; increasing water levels.

3. Septic Systems (23 suggestions)

All respondents want increased focus on monitoring, maintaining and upgrading septic systems around the lake to help water quality.

Other Top Actions with lower number of responses included:

Keeping large boats and wake boats away from shorelines and vulnerable areas; preserving the shoreline; education and policies for rental properties; expanded communication; and noise issues.

Anything else to add?

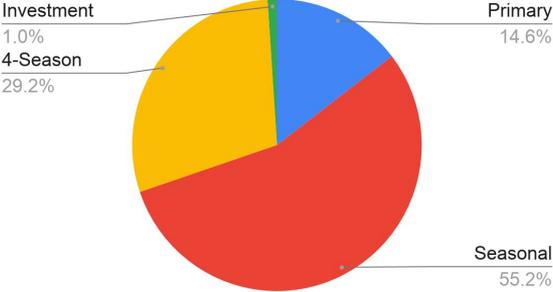


- Whether we agree or disagree on any particular issue, I do greatly appreciate the time that your group spends on the lake. If we don't have water quality, we have nothing.
- I hope I don't sound too negative but I have watched the water quality and wildlife decline over many years. It is very concerning and very sad to see!
- I wanted to stress the banning or restrictions on short term rentals/AirBNB.
- Not much really, just enforcement of by-laws and Township attention.

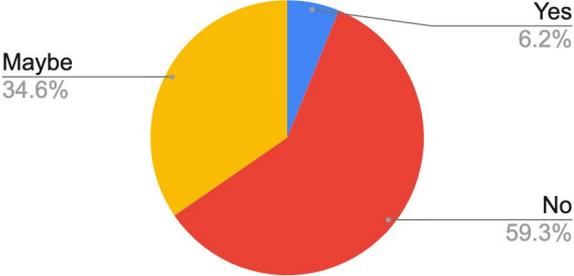
About respondents



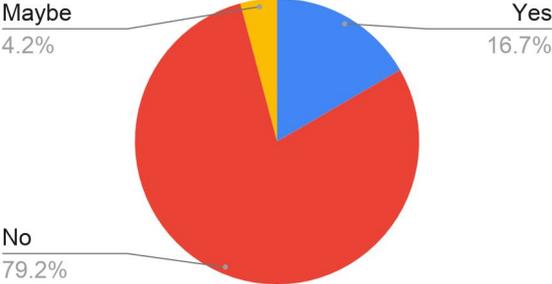
Property Usage



Do you plan at some point to make it your primary residence?



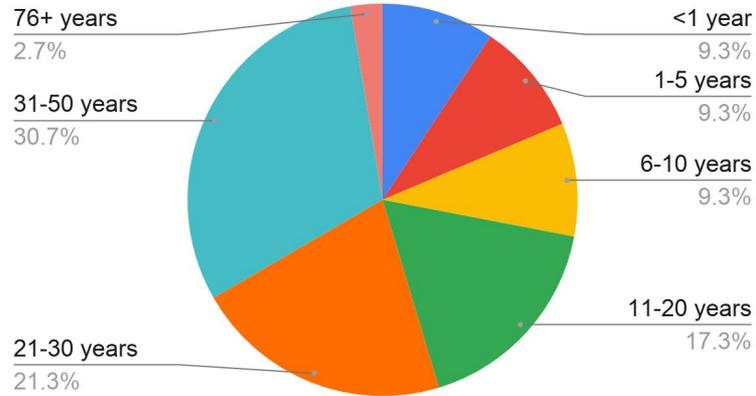
Do you ever rent or loan out your cottage?



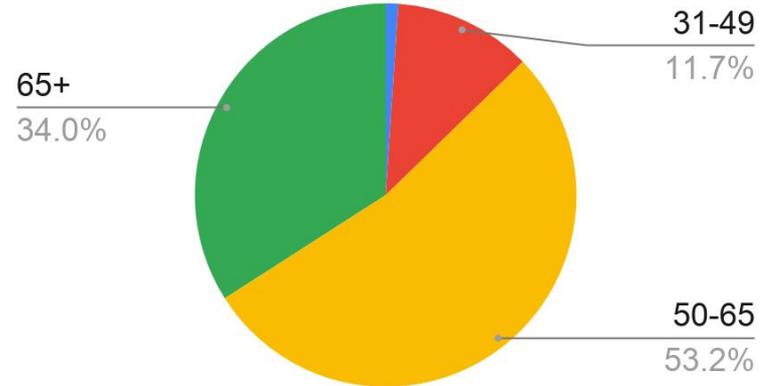
About respondents *(continued)*



How long has your family has been on the lake?



Age of Respondents





Next Steps

Thank you to all the stakeholders who took the time to respond to the survey. We value your opinions and will continue to respect your privacy. Your ideas and feedback will help shape the revised Leonard Lake Plan and inform discussions with the Township of Muskoka Lakes.

The complete survey data and comments are posted (anonymously, of course) on the website.

Questions/comments about the lake plan or survey? Email leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com.