

EAGLE LAKE, N.Y. SURVEY, JUNE 2001

The following is a summary of a portion of the data found in the 39 returned questionnaires from a survey of Eagle Lake property owners and users, initiated in the summer of 2001. The data is derived from Items 1 thru 11 and 19 thru 22, and was tabulated by Forrest Lisle, who, also, has prepared this summary in the spring of 2002.

Items 1 thru 3: Who are we? How far do we come to get to the lake? How long have we been coming?

85% of those responding (33 persons) are seasonal residents. The other 15% (6 persons) are year-round residents. Five individuals think of themselves as a sportsman, or sportswoman. 92% have lake-frontage property. 77% (30 residents) travel 300 miles or less to get to the Lake. Indeed, right at one half come from no further than 120 miles (say 2 hours driving time or less). 77% (30) have been on the Lake for 10 years or more. More than half (22) have been users of the Lake for 30 years or more.

Item 4: How do we use our time at the lake? What activities do we participate in? And to what extent? Only one activity, "Relaxing and Aesthetic enjoyment" attracts "high" participation by a majority (77%) of persons (30), but when you combine "High" and "Moderate" frequency together, you also find 82% (33) list swimming. All but 2 responders engage in some form of non-powerboating (canoeing, sailing, etc.), with almost 2/3 (64%) at a high or moderate frequency. Power Boating (including water skiing) also is participated in broadly, with only 3 saying never, and 56% high to moderate. Jet Skiing, on the other hand shows only one participant. Fishing is engaged in by 3/4 of responders, but only 41% at a high to moderate frequency. Only 1/4 ever hunt while at the Lake. 60% picnic some, but only a little over 1/4 at a high to moderate frequency. Almost everyone hikes some, with 64% high to moderate. Less than 1/4 ever ice fish, with only 3 responders saying high to moderate; snowmobiling has similiary low participation, but, after all, most of us are seasonal residents, and that season is apparently not primarily winter. Other activities mentioned by responders were: Wildlife observation (by 3), bicycling and walking (by one), crosscountry skiing and ice skating (by 2), and landscape gardening (by 1). (Note: data on individual fish species was not tabulated yet.)

Item 5: These activities when rated for enjoyment show 77% consider Eagle Lake to provide "Excellent Aesthetic Appeal." All the rest (except 2) say it's at least "good" in that regard. A little more than half say it is "excellent" for swimming, and some 85% of the total say swimming is "good", or "excellent." Canoeing is rated almost as highly, with nearly 60% saying it's "excellent", though fewer list it at the "good" level. Only a little over 1/4 indicate that they sail, but most of those rate

their enjoyment at the "good" or "excellent" level. Power boating on the Lake produces a good to excellent experience for a bit more than half of the participants, and a little over 1/3 find that water skiing is good to excellent, but almost as many say it's only average or poorer. Ice fishing, for those who do it, is generally "good". Scuba diving and snorkeling though only participated in by about 1/4 of responders, of those, 6 thought it was "good" to "excellent". Under additional thoughts about enjoyment, some mentioned the spreading milfoil, jet ski use, and traffic noise. But one person, on a positive note, commented about Eagle lake as "A throwback to a different era", having escaped some of the pressures and problems of many other lakes.

Item 6: This section of the survey asked that we rate the quality of various aspects of Eagle Lake and state whether or not that aspect is important to us. It would appear that every listed aspect has a sizeable constituency of concern, but in the case of the "Boat Launch" only 13 said that it was important to them while 17 said that it was not. Somewhat similar, the "Beach" is important to 18, but not to 11, "fishing" is important to 21, but not to 7. "Convenience to stores, restaurants, entertainment, etc." has 16 considering it important, and 14 not as important. Of the remaining issues "Lake water", "Amount of weeds" in water, "Quiet/Peacefulness" of Lake, and "Scenic surroundings" were unanimously thought to be important, and almost so were "Presence of waterfowl", and "Presence of wildlife."

A little over half of the responders (19) found the lake water quality to be excellent, with almost everyone else declaring it good. Even more are satisfied with the Lake for its scenic surroundings where 24 found this aspect excellent, and the rest (14) said good. Other aspects of the Lake were less dramatically applauded. Fishing was judged excellent only by 4, while 11 said it was good, another 10 said it is merely average, and 4 found fishing only fair. Most rated the boat launch as only fair or average, 9 and 12 respectively. The beach had 6 saying fair, 12 average, and 9 good. Both beach and boat launch had a half dozen who didn't know its quality. It was no surprise that a 54% majority (21) of responders find the Lake poor with regard to the amount of weeds, with another 23% (9) declaring it only fair, and 18% (7) saying it is average. How quiet and peaceful is the Lake? 22% (8) say it is only average, 41% (15) say good, and another 27% (10) say excellent, with the other 4 persons saying only fair or poor. Presence of waterfowl and presence of wild life were judged quite similarly. About 15% to 20% said fair, 1/4 said average, 1/3 said good, and another 20% said excellent for each of these aspects. Convenience to stores, restaurants, etc. were only a little less scattered across the spectrum with about the only difference being a few more placing convenience in the average category.)

Item 7: This item asks about observed changes in water quality over time. A small majority, 53% (17), have observed no change

in the last 5 years, with 41% (13) believing it has deteriorated, and the rest, a couple of people, finding it actually has improved. For the last 6 to 10 years observations were only a little different with 52% (16) saying no change, and 48% (15) saying deteriorated. For the last 11 to 20 years, though fewer responders were on the Lake for that period, the results fell out the same, 52% (12) saying no change and 48% (11) declaring deterioration.

Item 8: Who do we think should pay for the cost of preserving or restoring the water quality of the Lake? 60% say State government primarily. Though only 7 responders (18%) should "pay all" of it, that is still the favorite source to at least "pay most" of it, because another 42% come down in that category. Only 37% (14) say the State should "pay some". Not surprisingly, the other listed possible sources, local government, Lake Association members, visitors to the Lake, Lake shore property owners, and everyone in the watershed were not nearly as popular as the primary source of funds. However, a strong majority for each of these categories, ranging from 75% to 88% thought that each should "pay some". Most of the remaining responders, 10% to 23% say these sources should "pay none".

Item 9: How much do we think the water quality in Eagle Lake affects the value of the property? Two thirds say "A great deal", and another 28% say "A moderate amount", leaving only 5% together (1 person each) saying "None", or "Somewhat".

Item 10: The goal of this item was to identify the perceived problems at Eagle Lake and to distinguish the degree of seriousness these problems are believed to be, whether "minor", "moderate", or "serious", along with those felt to be "no problem", and those not understood or known adequate to judge. The only problem judged at the level of "serious" by a majority of respondents, 71% (27 responders) was "Invasive rooted aquatic plants (milfoil)". Another 18% (7) listed it as a "moderate problem", with only 3 saying "minor", and 1 that said it was "no problem". The only other problem considered "serious" by a fairly large number of responders was "Jet skis on the lake" with 38% (14 responders). Seven more thought it was a moderate problem; thus 55% consider it moderate to serious. Twelve consider it a minor problem, leaving only 3 who didn't know, and one who said it was no problem. Nuisance animals (beavers, etc.) was the only other problem that achieved even a bare majority, with moderate and serious combined, reaching 53% (20); but more than 2/3 of those thought it was only at the level of a moderate problem. Poor bottom condition is felt to be at least a minor problem with 70% (26) ranking it as a problem, but almost half of these (12) said only minor. Invasive terrestrial plants (purple loose-strife, etc.) was similarly distributed across the spectrum of opinion, with only a few less saying it is a problem. Slightly over half of the responders (21) said that the lake level, either too high or too low, is at least a minor problem. Waterfowl represent at least a minor problem to 19

responders, but 15 said it was no problem. Swimmers' itch was split between "no problem" and at least a "minor problem", with 17 in each category. Acid rain, also, was perceived to be at least a minor problem by a small majority, 19 responders, but 10 people said they "didn't know" with regard to this issue. That relatively large number of people "not knowing" also applies to other problem categories and suggests areas where group education might be usefully focused in some instances. These are : algae bloom with 11 not knowing, and fish kill (11), but poor fishing (10), public beach too crowded (16), and boat launch inconvenient or deficient (10) probably all represent people who don't fish or who don't use the beach, or boat launch, hence "don't know". Transient Lake users are believed to be at least a minor problem by most responders, 30 out of 36, but a majority of these (17) say it's only minor. The issues of "too many people" and "too many boats" each have only a slight majority declaring them at least a minor problem, but almost all of these fall at the minor level. But the issues of "excessive boat speed", "excessive boat/motor size", and "reckless boaters" pick up a lot more people perceiving them as problems, (boat speed especially). Close to 3/4 (72%) of responders, ^{noted} the case of the boat speed issue, with more than half of these falling at a moderate, even serious, in some instances, problem level. "Unrestricted Lake access for boats" is also seen as at least a minor problem by a strong majority. "Beach too crowded", on the other hand, has only 8 people saying it is any kind of problem, and "boat launch" issues don't seem to concern quite half of the responders. Similarly, the question of "Too much development on/around the lake" stays below a majority of concern, which is true, also, of "Native rooted aquatic plants", "algae blooms", "cloudy water", "Bad water odor/taste", "Fish kills", and "Poor fishing". The issue of least concern of all is "too few commercial enterprises"; 84% say it is no problem.

Item 11: (Note: Only 28 responders adhered to the instructions on this item. Those are the ones used in the tabulations shown here.) This item focuses more specifically on water quality issues, trying to identify what is believed to be the sources of greatest threat to the lake water. Of the seven issues listed, two came forth most prominently. In first place, as the greatest threat, with an average rank of 2.11 is "Exotic species" (Milfoil, zebra mussels, etc.). But close behind with an average rank of 2.46 is "Failing Septic Systems". These are followed by "Gasoline or oil from boats and jet skis", in third place with a score of 3.39, and then "Oil, sand, and salt runoff from roads" in a close 4th place at 3.46. (It should be noted that these last two 3rd and 4th places flip-flop positions or order when all responses were attempted to be included in the calculations, but that means that the tabulator had to make some arbitrary judgements, for there was more than one way he could have proceeded. That was the reason he felt the best result came from using only the 28 responders who adhered to the instruction.) In 5th place is "Fertilizer", well back at 5.11, trailed by "Excessive waterfowl" in 6th place at 5.61, and, believed to be

the least threatening of all, is "Turbidity from boats", with an average rank of 8.21.

(Note: At this point, the tabulator skipped to Item 19.)

Item 12 Do you feel that present DEC and APA land use regulations are adequate to protect the water quality of Eagle Lake?

17 people didn't know about the regulations or were undecided (2) while 14 thought that they were adequate or more than adequate and 2 thought they weren't. One answer was between undecided and adequate.

Item 13 Do you feel that enforcement of land use regulations are adequate to protect the water quality of Eagle Lake?

17 people didn't know about the enforcement of the regulations (4) were undecided (4), while 12 were on the adequate/more adequate side and 4 on the not/somewhat adequate side. One comment stated, "Not fair. APA is not enforcing people w/_\$ or from other states".

Item 14 Do you feel that enforcement of water use regulations are adequate to protect the water quality of Eagle Lake?

Again 17 didn't know about the enforcement of regulations, one person asked where a "No-wake" zone was on the lake, and 3 were undecided. The other answers were split 9 for not adequate/somewhat adequate and 8 for adequate/more adequate.

Item 15 How much would you contribute per year to keep Eagle Lake in top condition?

While 2 people would not contribute any money and 3 felt that \$1-50 was sufficient, the majority of people felt that \$51-100 (14) and up \$100-500 (9), \$501-1000 (2) was possible. One person wanted to know what top condition meant, 2 people said it depended on the action taken, and 2 people said that as long as the lake was a public lake the state and local governments should contribute.

Item 16 In what volunteer capacity could you help protect Eagle Lake?

The majority of respondents (28) were willing to help out in some capacity and 11 did not respond to this question. Some people commented that their schedule was uncertain, that they were here only a little time in the summer, or that they would help when they retired.

The address portion with the respondent's name was missing from many forms. Therefore, it is difficult to follow up on all of the responses (but the board and administration appreciate the many responses and hope that the individuals who said they would volunteer will step forward).

Item 17 What would be your reaction if the following changes were made to the boat launch?

While several people made written comments that they didn't use or know much about the boat launch and 11 were neutral on the subject, 17 people favored/strongly favored leaving it as it is and only 5 opposed doing so. If changes were to be made, however, the majority of voters (24) wanted a boat wash installed. Only 6 people were opposed to this, the rest were neutral or made no comment. One written statement said that while a boat wash was desirable, it was not doable without power.

The only issue without opposition was to maintain the outhouse (15 for, 23 neutral or no response). The only issue with 1 favorable vote was to pave the parking area. Only 5 wanted to increase the parking area, and one person wanted the parking area marked so that people don't park their trucks and trailers in the turn around area. One person was concerned with the ruts and the problems they caused. On the question of paving the launch area, the majority by far opposed the move (22 against, 7 for, 10 neutral). Only 5 people favored providing picnic tables, while 20 opposed such a move.

Four issues seemed to be fairly even in opinions:

- 1) Grading the launch (14 for, 13 against, 12 neutral, no response)
- 2) Monitoring boats (14 for, 9 against, 16 neutral, no r.)
- 3) Closing the launch (13 for, 16 against, 10 neutral, no r.)
- 4) Charging a boat fee (12 for, 11 against, 16 neutral, no r.)

One written comment said that monitoring boats was a great idea, but impractical. One person wanted to know who would collect the fees while another suggested that only non-residents should pay the fee. No one made a written statement about closing the launch, but several voiced concern about the expansion of the boat launch. One felt that the launch could be graded, but did not feel that expansion was needed to prevent too many boaters from using the lake at one time. Another person felt that the current launch was adequate for the number of boaters the lake can handle. One person favored actions that precluded or delayed admission of zebra mussels to the lake. Another commented that making improvements would encourage more boaters and fishermen and their accompanying problems (trash, noise, lower water quality, etc). One respondent feels that we should keep the area natural.

Item 18 What would be your reaction if the following changes were made to the State beach and campground?

In response to leaving the beach and campgrounds the way it is, 14 people were for it, 11 neutral, 2 opposed, and 12 no response. On the positive side, people favored repairing/replacing the fireplace (15), providing a clean-up (21), better monitoring (19), and better signage (20). 23 people favored or moderately favored maintaining the outhouses, while 23 opposed removing them. The other issues most concern people were against providing a boatdock (15) and against providing more lean-tos (15). Several people commented that they have never seen and or used the campground/beach area.

Item 23 What are your reactions to our Web page?

Of those who responded to this question, 18 knew the web page existed but had not visited it yet, 6 found it useful, and 7 found the access good. Many people said that they had no computers or no internet access or could not afford it. Others were concerned that it would draw unwarranted attention to Eagle Lake ("burgaler's catalogue if photos were published" and outweighs benefits to property owners). Two comments dealt with publicity (should have been publicized in local papers and the survey should have listed the web address as part of the survey), while one comment said that the web page was most useful if updated frequently.

Item 24 If or when zebra mussels are detected in Eagle Lake, how should we respond?

Many people (27) wanted a boat cleaning station and many more wanted a co-ordinated educational effort for all lake users (31), but only 7 believed providing town water services would be a possible response if zebra mussels are detected. In fact, many of the comments indicated that while it would be nice to have town water, it was impractical or would be a problem to do so. Some people wanted more information on zebra mussels; others thought we should be actively trying to prevent the introduction of them into the lake, both by volunteer activity and by monitoring the lake and all access points to the lake, both private and public.

Item 25 Eagle Lake dues.

18 people responded that Eagle Lake dues are adequate, one said it was not and 23 would support a higher amount and again 1 would not. Most felt that we get our money's worth from our dues, but 12 people felt we should have more services for our money. Not everyone replied to this question so it was hard to know how representative these answers were. The comments ranged from suggestions on what to spend the dues (more fire and emergency \$ donated, sonar treatment, no plaques or funeral flowers or gift t-shirts), to amazement at how much is done with the present amount we give, to paying more if there was an identifiable need.

Item 26 I am a paying member because:

Most of the answers ranged from loving/caring about the lake to staying informed about it to caring about its quality and future. Many people felt it was their civic duty and wanted to work with the association as an organized effort to maintain the high quality of Eagle Lake.

Item 27 I am not a paying member because:

Only 2 people who answered this survey were not paying members. One was a contributing member(?) and had given the property to the daughter and the other stated "I will not be a party to Sonar decision

Item 28 Is the Annual Meeting date suitable for you?

21 people responded that the date was good, 7 did not like it, and 3 felt that mid-July was a better time. Other people responded that they usually had commitments then or on weekends.

Item 29 Is the location of the Annual Meeting suitable?

21 people liked the meeting place and 2 did not. One person said it was good to have an indoor place in case of rain and one responded that it needs "sound attenuation".

Item 30 Any other issues you would care to raise?

(The following is a list of issues raised by concerned individuals and is not in any order of priority).

1. I would like more consideration for my concerns than the Board has shown to this time. For instance, this survey though purporting to be comprehensive ignores completely those who use the lake as a source of household water supply and grounds irrigation. It ignores the problem of sonar being put into septic systems where it won't be degraded by ultra-violet light and thus affects plants and trees from the ground.
2. Years of talk about milfoil, with no intent to take action, grows tiresome.
3. No expenses we can't afford--i.e. web page.
4. Please make it clear what the membership level options are on the renewal solicitation. As a non-property owner, evidently I overpaid and sent in a proxy not realizing what the options were for nonproperty owning members. Past renewal forms and proxies have made this clear.
5. Thank you, thank you, and thank you to all of you who work so hard for the benefit of all of us. Our family really appreciates everything you do.
6. I could use more information about questions 12-14 and the correct answers to #11.
7. No--thanks for the effort this took.
8. The heavy truck traffic along Rt 74 is problematic because the posted speed limit is seldom followed. Our house shakes when a fully loaded 18 wheeler goes by at 55 MPH.
9. Thanks for your efforts.
10. Heavy truck traffic.
11. Many thanks to all who are involved in ELOPI and all who make this lake such a nice place to live.

Item 30 Con't.-Comments

12. I would like to see the banning of jet skis due to noise and water pollution and safety.

13. Thank you for all your dedication and hard work.

14. Please leave Eagle Lake as natural as possible:
no cable towers
no loud music
no killing beavers, etc.
no macadem parking lot

The most urgent problem is people want to bring modern day technology to the mountains when they come here to get away. Leave toys at home.

15. Serious conservationists and ecologists generally favor biological controls over chemical controls in environmental situations. In this case we have evidence that a natural infusion of acentria moths is occurring in the lake. Given time, there is a good scientific indication, likelihood, that they will control the water milfoil infestation on their own, if not interfered with (by such things as introducing sonar or other herbicides that would remove their primary food source, water milfoil). Environmental conservatives and fiscal conservatives should both find the monetary cost free solution (moths) vastly preferable to a very expensive and uncertain chemical herbicide treatment that will bring collateral damage to native aquatic plant species and almost certainly still not provide a permanent eradication of the milfoil. This should be a "no-brainer". Let Moth-er nature have her way.

16. Traffic noise is negative.

Item 19: Item 19 focuses on possible changes to the Rt. 74 causeway and bridge as to whether these changes are favored or opposed and to what degree. The strongest, clearest majority came on the non-change choice "Leave it as it is." 62% (21 responders) "strongly favor" leaving it as it is, with 6 more moderately favoring no change, meaning 79% of the 34 who responded to this would like to see it left as it is. On this question, 3 were neutral, 3 opposed, and one was strongly opposed to leaving it as it is. Providing "additional boat clearance" is "strongly opposed" by 53% (19) of responders and "opposed" by an additional 5 persons, raising the opposition to 2/3 of those surveyed. Each of the other choices received 4 votes, meaning only 8 people favor raising the bridge. Providing "Better fishing access" gained a little more support, but still a majority oppose this; 58% either oppose (8) or strongly oppose (13) with 5 neutral, 8 moderately favoring, and only 2 strongly favoring. Providing "Parking" is even more opposed than raising the bridge, with 19 responders strongly opposed, and 7 more opposed, putting parking opposition at 70%. Three were neutral, with 4 favoring, and 4 strongly favoring. Providing a "Bike or foot path" is the only change that is favored by a majority of responders; 64% (21 responders) either strongly favor (7) or moderately favor (14) this change. Another 8 are neutral. Only 4 people are in opposition, with those 4 all strongly opposed.

Item 20: This item asks responders about their feelings regarding continued planning for milfoil control with the herbicide SONAR, now that accentria moths have been identified in the Lake.

The first choice asks ("Yes or No?"), should there be "continued planning for SONAR treatment of the milfoil, regardless of the moths?" 18 responders said yes, continue, and 6 said no, don't continue.

The second choice was should ELPOI (wait?) for a period of time to see what impact moths will continue to have on the milfoil; 17 responders said yes, wait, and 10 said no, don't wait.

The third choice was should ELPOI "Research an integrated solution combining both moths and SONAR?" 27 responders said yes, and 5 said no.

The tabulator did not tabulate the choices dealing with the question of who should be involved in making this decision.

Item 21: This item asks about a group of issues that are more or less related to governmental services.

Less than 1/4 (9) consider trespass on their property to be a problem while they are at the Lake, but almost half (16) say that people have been reported trespassing on their property. Thus a strong majority (27) believe a neighborhood watch program should be explored. Only 4 people said no to the neighborhood watch exploration. Only 2 people thought that the adopt-a-highway program was failing to keep Rt. 74 clean. Fire protection is believed to be adequate on and around Eagle Lake by 3/4 of the responders. Emergency medical services is judged

adequate by an even larger majority, more than 80%. Even though 5% of responders feel highway signs along Rt. 74 are adequate and appropriate, 68% feel that speed enforcement there is not adequate. Finally, 87% of responders say that they would support an end-of-summer social event.

Item 22: This item asks if the individual feels informed adequately on several issues. A very strong majority, 84%, say yes with regard to invasive plants, with an even larger majority, 90%, saying yes regarding methods for milfoil control. Only a few less, 73%, feel adequately informed about exotic aquatic life with the smallest majority, 61%, feeling adequately informed about invasive insects.

This concludes the summary of items that Forrest Lisle tabulated.