

2013 Bone Lake Survey Summary

A Bone Lake survey was mailed to five hundred thirty (530) property owners of the Bone Lake Management District (BLMD) in late April 2013. The survey had a great response at 43% with two hundred forty three (243) responses. This survey was designed to obtain input on a variety of areas to help direct future BLMD actions. The BLMD will discuss these new actions/responses at the annual meeting on Saturday 9 a.m. August 10 at Wilkens and will also post on the website in August. This is a summary but the detailed results are also available on our website bonelakewi.com.

Property Ownership

Respondents have owned their property on Bone Lake for an average of 23 years. Half of respondents use their property on a seasonal basis (50%) and approximately half (48%) use their property year around. Forty one percent of respondents who use their property seasonally do so only on weekends, vacations, and holidays and 9% use their property seasonally for months at a time. Forty eight percent of respondents use their property year round. However, 7% of respondents who use their property year round leave for all or most of the winter and 29% use their property only on weekends, vacations, and holidays. Only 12% of respondents occupy their property as a year round residence.

Overall, respondents are highly satisfied with owning property on Bone Lake (66%) or somewhat satisfied (29%). Only 4% of respondents are somewhat dissatisfied and a mere 1% is very dissatisfied.

Recreational Use

Survey participants enjoy a variety of recreational activities at Bone Lake. The most highly enjoyed activities include: enjoying the view (95%), enjoying peace and tranquility (93%), motorized boating (87%), swimming (84%), open water fishing (80%), and observing wildlife (75%). Less than half of respondents enjoy the following recreational activities on Bone Lake: non-motorized boating (47%), jet skiing/wakeboarding/waterskiing (46%), snowmobiling (26%), ice fishing (25%), sailing/wind surfing (18%), cross county skiing (18%), and hunting/trapping (12%).

The majority of respondents want to keep having the Bone Lake sponsored fireworks around the 4th of July (80%). Of these respondents, 91% are willing to help pay for the fireworks which rely 100% on donations.

Nearly half of respondents feed birds or other wildlife (46%) and approximately one third put up nesting boxes for birds or other animals (35%).

Changes Impacting Recreational Use

Nearly half of respondents perceive that aquatic plants growth has worsened in the time they have owned their property (46%), over one third perceive no change (37%), and nine percent perceive an improvement.

Approximately one third of respondents described the quality of pan fishing as unchanged (35%) or worse (31%) than when they purchased their property. Seventeen percent of respondents were unsure how to describe changes in the quality of pan fishing and 7% described an improvement.

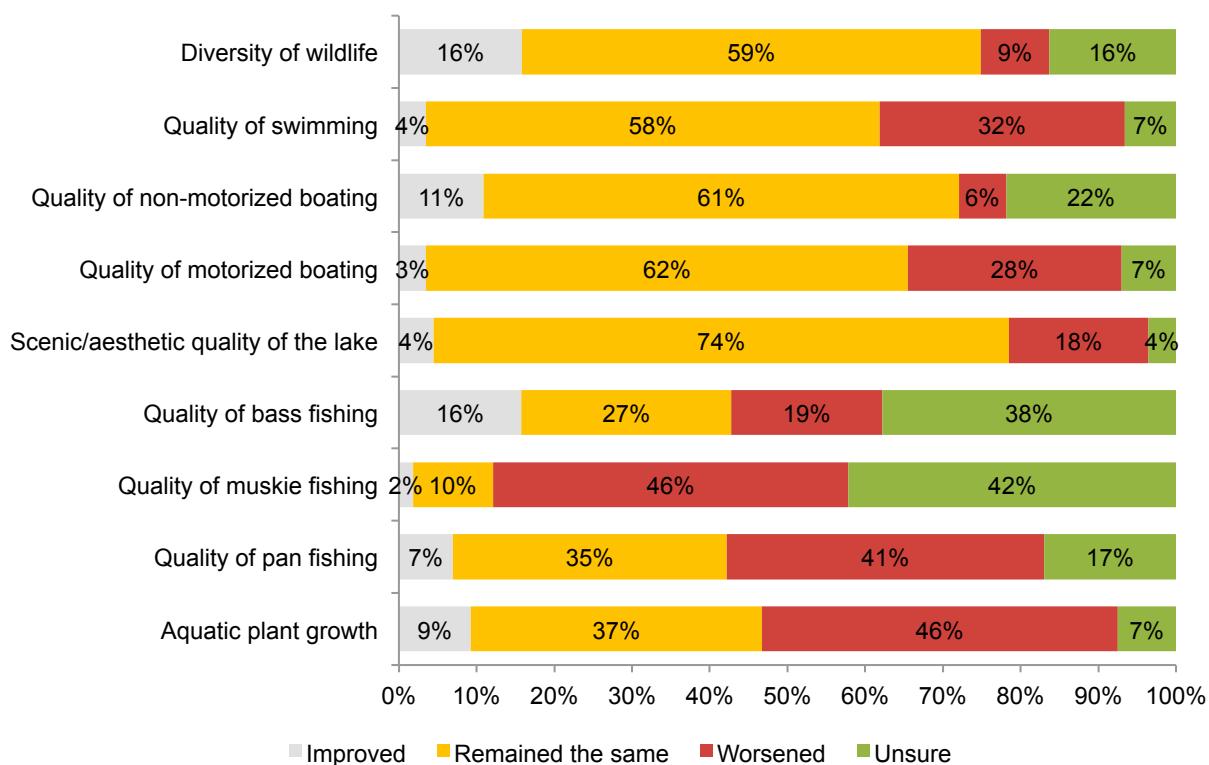
Nearly half of respondents perceive that the quality of muskie fishing has worsened (46%) in the time they have owned their property or were unsure how to describe changes (42%). Ten percent perceive that the quality of muskie fishing has remained unchanged and two percent perceived an improvement.

Respondents were generally unsure how to describe the quality of bass fishing (38%) or feel that bass fishing has remained unchanged in the time since they have owned their property (27%). The remainder of respondents were nearly equally split in describing the quality of bass fishing as having worsened (19%) or improved (16%).

Over half of respondents feel that the scenic/aesthetic quality of the lake (74%), quality of motorized boating (62%), quality of non-motorized boating (61%), diversity of wildlife (59%), and quality of swimming (58%) have remained unchanged in the time they have owned their property.

More respondents perceived that the following characteristics have worsened as compared to improved: quality of swimming (32% versus 4%), quality of motorized boating (28% versus 3%), and scenic/aesthetic quality of the lake (18% versus 4%).

More respondents perceived that the following characteristics have improved as compared to worsened: diversity of wildlife (16% versus 9%) and quality of non-motorized boating (11% versus 6%).



Concerns for Bone Lake

Survey respondents were asked to rank their degree of concern with nine different issues.¹ The issue of greatest concern was new invasive species entering the lake, followed by excessive aquatic plant growth, and lack of water clarity.

Issue	Degree of concern value
<i>New invasive species entering the lake</i>	835
<i>Excessive aquatic plant growth</i>	692
<i>Lack of water clarity</i>	583
<i>Unsafe boat or personal water craft safety</i>	546
<i>Decreased Muskie population</i>	542
<i>Loss of natural scenery/beauty</i>	469
<i>Noise level on the lake</i>	459
<i>Decreased wildlife population</i>	421
<i>Bright shoreline lighting</i>	401

Bone Lake Management Activities

Survey respondents were asked if seven different activities should be continued by the BLMD to improve Bone Lake. For each of the activities over half of respondents felt that the activity should be continued. Over three-quarters of respondents feel that the BLMD should continue to implement programs to deter new aquatic invasive species (95%), continue to treat for curly leaf pondweed (88%), and implement incentives to upgrade non-conforming septic systems (85%).

In general, very few respondents felt that activities should not be continued (1-16%). However, approximately one quarter of respondents were unsure if the BLMD should continue lake fairs to share information (32%), programs to reduce waterfront runoff from properties (25%), programs to reduce water runoff from the watershed (25%), and improvements to the north boat landing (24%).

	Yes	No	Unsure
<i>Continue to treat curly leaf pondweed</i>	88%	4%	9%
<i>Programs to encourage rain gardens and waterfront plantings to reduce waterfront runoff from properties</i>	70%	5%	25%
<i>Programs to control stream bank stabilization to reduce harmful water runoff from the watershed</i>	74%	2%	25%
<i>Programs such as boat inspections and lake monitoring to help deter new aquatic invasive species</i>	95%	1%	3%
<i>Lake fairs to share information on activities</i>	59%	9%	32%
<i>Improve boat north landing</i>	61%	16%	24%
<i>Incentives to upgrade non-conforming septic systems</i>	85%	6%	9%

¹ The following values were assigned to each degree of concern: issue doesn't exist = 0, exists but not a concern = 1, low concern = 2, medium concern = 3 or high concern = 4. Values were summed to determine a total for each issue.

Survey respondents were also asked if the BLMD should consider increasing the acreage of curly leaf pondweed herbicide treatment, increasing jet ski regulation enforcement, and increasing boating regulation enforcement.

Approximately two thirds of respondents agree that the BLMD should increase the acreage of curly leaf pondweed herbicide treatment (67%), and around one quarter are unsure (28%). The remaining 6% of respondents do not think the BLMD should increase the acreage of treatment.

Over half of respondents feel that the BLMD should increase jet ski enforcement (54%), over one quarter feel that the BLMD should not increase jet ski enforcement (28%), and the remaining 18% are unsure.

Less than half of respondents feel the BLMD should increase boating regulation enforcement (43%), around a third feel the BLMD should not increase boating regulation (32%), and the remaining quarter of respondents are unsure (24%).

	Yes	No	Unsure
<i>Increase acreage of curly leaf pondweed herbicide treatment</i>	67%	6%	28%
<i>Increase boating regulation enforcement</i>	43%	32%	24%
<i>Increase jet ski regulation enforcement</i>	54%	28%	18%

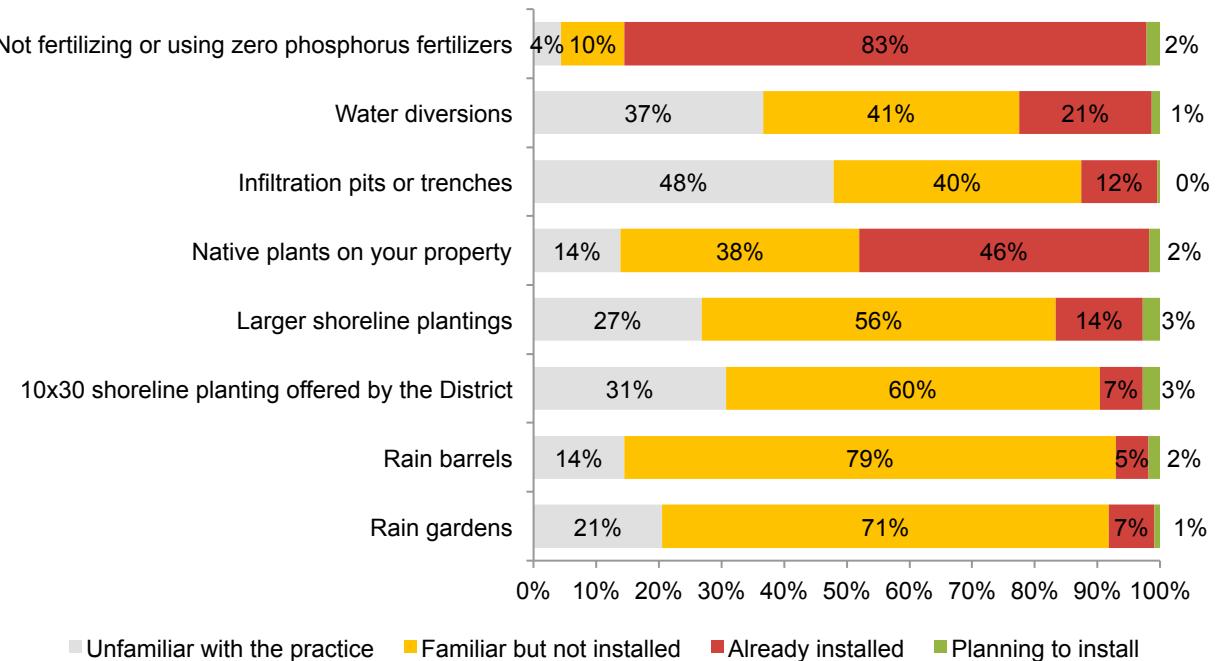
Familiarity with Practices to Reduce Waterfront Runoff

In general survey respondents are familiar with landscaping practices designed to reduce runoff from their property. However, with the exception of a few practices, respondents have not installed or are not planning to install these practices. Less than 3% of respondents are planning on installing any given practice.

Over half of respondents are familiar with, but have not installed the following practices: rain barrels (79%), rain gardens (71%), 10x30 shoreline plantings offered by the BLMD (60%), and larger shoreline plantings (56%).

The landscaping practices most often installed by respondents include not fertilizing/using zero phosphorus fertilizer (83%) and native plants on property (46%).

The practices that survey respondents are generally unfamiliar with include: infiltration pits or trenches (48%), water diversions (37%), 10x30 shoreline plantings offered by the BLMD (31%), and larger shoreline plantings (27%).



Factors Preventing the Installation of Practices to Reduce Waterfront Runoff

Nearly one third of respondents haven't installed practices to reduce waterfront runoff on their property because they believe their property doesn't impact the lake (31%). Approximately one quarter of respondents haven't installed practices because they are cost prohibitive (24%) or they are unsure how to install a practice (21%).

Reasons preventing fewer respondents from installing a practice include: lack of space on their lot (12%), the belief that practices won't help improve water clarity (7%), the time necessary to install a practice (4%), and concerns with neighbors not liking the practice (3%).

Factors Motivating the Installation of Practices to Reduce Waterfront Runoff

Survey respondents were also asked which factors would help motivate or convince them to install a practice to reduce waterfront runoff on their property. The factors which are most likely to convince respondents to install a practice include: improving the water quality of Bone Lake (51%) and improving the water quality around their property's shoreline (42%).

Factors such as providing habitat for fish (39%), providing better habitat for birds and wildlife (34%), and increasing natural beauty of property (31%) would motivate around a third of respondents to install a practice to reduce waterfront runoff.

Around a quarter would be motivated to install a practice by how-to information (30%), financial assistance (29%), and no cost technical assistance (23%).

Approximately a quarter of respondents have no interest in installing water quality practices on their property (23%).

Over two thirds of respondents (68%) are aware that the BLMD offers free no obligation site visits by their consultant to help members identify practices on their property which would reduce runoff and help improve Bone Lake's water clarity.

Factors motivating or convincing respondents to install a practice to reduce waterfront runoff on their property	Percent
Improving the water quality of Bone Lake	51%
Improving the water quality around your property's shoreline	42%
Providing better habitat for fish	39%
Providing better habitat for birds and wildlife	34%
Increasing the natural beauty of your property	31%
More how-to information about landscaping for water quality practices	30%
Financial assistance that pays a portion of the cost of installation	29%
No cost technical assistance that would identify appropriate practices to install	23%
I have no interest in installing water quality practice on my property	23%
Setting an example for other lake residents	20%
Training to learn how to install a practice	13%
Less lawn mowing time	10%

Shoreline Perceptions

Survey respondents were asked what they considered the most desirable shoreline to own and what they considered the most desirable shoreline to see what looking across the lake. Although the survey directed respondents to check only one choice, many respondents picked more than one choice for these two questions.

Close to half of respondents prefer to own shoreline that is either managed natural vegetation (43%) or trees and shrubs with cabins/lake homes that blend into environment (42%). Fewer respondents prefer to own shoreline that is mowed/manicured lawn (34%) and unmanaged natural vegetation (10%).

When looking across the lake, over half of respondents would prefer to see trees and shrubs with cabins/lake homes that blend into environment (58%) and approximately one third of respondents prefer to see managed natural vegetation (33%) or mowed/manicured lawn (31%). Fewer respondents would like to see unmanaged natural vegetation (14%).

Communication Outlets

The most preferred method for receiving information from the BLMD is the newsletter (82%), followed by email (41%), websites (20%), and the annual meeting (16%).

Ninety-five percent of respondents receive the newsletter, 52% are aware of the BLMD website, 40% have attended at least one annual meeting in the past five years, and 18% receive Bone Lake email announcements.

Newsletter

The newsletter is the most preferred method of receiving information and is read in its entirety by the vast majority of recipients (91%). Respondents rated the newsletter articles as either very interesting (59%) or somewhat interesting (40%).

Over half of respondents would like to see bone lake history/photos (87%) and property value improvement articles (68%) included in the newsletter. Fewer respondents would like to see fishing tips (48%), lakeside cooking/recipes (41%), photos or drawings by residents (29%), guest columns (19%), children's columns (13%), and teen columns (8%) included.

Email Announcements

The BLMD publishes timely email announcements at bonelakewi.com to subscribers. Although 41% of respondents prefer to receive information by email, less than one third of respondents are aware of the email announcements (28%) and less than a quarter have subscribed to the email list (18%). Combined, nearly three quarters of respondents that were unaware of the email announcements indicated that they would subscribe now that they are aware of the list (73%).

Website

Over half of respondents are aware of the BLMD website (52%) and in the past year have visited the website an average of four times. Most respondents agree that the website is easy to use (100%), easy to find information on (96%) contains useful information (95%), contains interesting information (94%), contains high quality information (87%), and is up to date (67%).

Approximately one third of respondents that are aware of the website have read and/or downloaded informative brochures and articles from the website (31%). The topics that were of most interest to visitors include the Bone Lake Management Plan (65%), the Bone Lake Aquatic Plant Management Plan (60%), native plant brochures (53%), bird survey results (48%), and the Bone Lake Newsletter (45%).

Fewer respondents were interested in sensitive area surveys (38%), BLMD budgets and minutes (35%), lighting and light pollution reprints (18%), and wildlife and wildlife management reprints (18%).

Annual Meeting

The majority of respondents have not attended the BLMD Annual Meeting in the past five years (59%). Fourteen percent of respondents have attended a few of the meetings, 9% have attended some, 12% have attended most, and 5% have attended all of the meetings. The most common factors preventing respondents from attending the Annual Meeting are conflicts with the date and time (64%), forgetting the date/time/location (25%), and being too busy (25%).

Fewer respondents have conflicts with the location of the meeting (11%), feel that the meeting isn't beneficial (5%), find it difficult to hear the speakers (3%), and feel that the meeting isn't worth their time (2%).

Eighteen percent of respondents indicated that none of the above would encourage them to come to the meeting.

The meeting would be improved/respondents would be encouraged to come if they received a reminder post card containing the meeting date and proposed agenda (51%) or if the meeting was shorter (38%). Fewer respondents indicated the meeting would be improved/they would be encouraged to come if the meeting included guest speakers (21%), a free lunch (12%), raffles/door prizes (10%), or activities for children (4%).

Willingness to Volunteer

Approximately one third of respondents would like to learn more about available volunteer activities (38%).