

## Enjoy Our Waters Safely!

### Water Safety Committee 2020 Post-Season Survey Results

The Water Safety Committee for Manitowish Waters recently invited you to respond to a 2020 post-season survey. We were happy to receive responses from 175 residents (100) and guests (75), which is up from 104 responses to our 2020 pre-season survey. Thank you to all who responded.

Respondents generally feel that our waters are safe, with 79% strongly agreeing or agreeing that they are safe. Most of you (58%) did not witness a serious water violation on our chain last year, and only 40% of you were informed by others about serious safety violations this past season. Furthermore, 40% of you strongly believe or believe that water safety on the chain improved over the previous year, with 42% having no opinion on water safety improvement and only 18% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing.

In terms of the reasons for any increases in water safety improvement, 84% of you believe that an increased police presence had an impact. Increased water safety enforcement (stops, warnings and citations) improved water safety for many of you, with 82% strongly agreeing or agreeing. Another 92% strongly agree or agree that increased education improves water safety.

As far as our water safety patrol, or police, officers are concerned, 26% of you had some contact with them. Generally speaking, you find our officers to be professional and courteous (69% strongly agreeing or agreeing, and 30% having no opinion). As to if our officers do a good job at educating the public on applicable laws, 47% strongly agree or agree that they do, with 46% having no opinion.

On being aware of how to contact our water safety officers, only 31% strongly agree or agree that you know how to do so, and only 25% believe that the current reporting system with the Vilas County Sheriff's dispatch center is adequate. In addition, 65% strongly believe or believe that we should have a direct line to our water safety patrol officers. As a committee, we will be looking at ensuring that you know how to contact our patrol officers. Unfortunately, we have already investigated direct lines to our officers, but with three rotating officers there are logistical challenges.

Moving forward, 44% of you strongly agree or agree that we need a greater water safety patrol presence next year, and only 12% strongly agree or agree that we need a decreased level of a water safety patrol presence next year. However, 59% of you strongly agree or agree that we need greater education efforts next year.

Finally, 90% of you strongly believe or believe that you know exactly what "no wake" speed means. Judging by the comments many of you provided, understanding "slow, no wake" speed is one of our greatest challenges. While we may feel strongly that we understand that "slow, no wake" means traveling at the slowest speed possible while maintaining steerage, the practical application of the term can be challenging to pin down and left to individual interpretation. We are asking our officers to focus on educating around "slow, no wake" speeds, with only very clear violations warranting warnings or fines. We also encourage our residents and guests to take a like view toward perceived "slow, no wake" violations.

Again, thanks to all who completed the survey, including the 70 of you who provided comments, which we have read and are taking into consideration. The water safety committee will use the results as we continue to focus on our education and enforcement efforts moving forward. For any questions on the survey, please contact Frank DiLeonardi at [fdileonardi@icloud.com](mailto:fdileonardi@icloud.com).

The Water Safety Committee

Bob Becker, Chair

John Butler

Frank DiLeonardi

Carla Hameister

Greg Holt

Patrick Solar

Dan Stella