



# District of Powers Lake NEWSLETTER

Published for all those who use and love Powers Lake

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## WHEN LAKES FREEZE LATE

Lately, we ran across some interesting weather info and conditions around the Madison area lakes referring mostly to Lake Mendota and Lake Monona.

The average freeze over date for Lake Mendota is December 20th. That fact came from the Wisconsin State Climatology Office that is affiliated with the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Studies. Their online sites provide some interesting reading on cold nights. On that date in most years, the lake is completely ice covered. For Powers Lake this year, it was around January 13th. This certainly supports the common quote "It's Wisconsin, so expect the unexpected".

Each year, many of our area lakes will have ice on bays but will have open water in areas farther out until later in the year. Online this site also notes, "It's not unheard of, since 1856, there have been 24 years when the lake froze (first) in January. However, late freezes are becoming more common."

Mendota's average freeze date is December 18th for the first 125 years of data, from 1856 to 1980. But warm weather in the past few decades has tipped the calendar by more than a week. Since 1980, the average freeze date has been December 27th. Since 1990, the lake has frozen in January in seven years, which is 29% of all the lake freezes in only 20 years. The latest freeze over date was in the winter of 1931-1932 when Lake Mendota was sloshing around until January 30th. The earliest freeze was in 1880, on November 23rd.

The earliest Lake Mendota ice has ever opened was on February 27th in 1998. Another factor to watch for is the wind because wave action can really eat the ice. This year the date we are using for ice on was January 13th. Temperatures in the upper 50's and high winds took the ice off the lake on March 7th.

## MORE 2010 SURVEY RESULTS ANGLING USE

About one third of the respondents reported fishing during spring, summer and fall, while less than 10% reported ice fishing. 36% of the anglers responding felt that the fishing quality of the Lake was good while

60% felt that the quality was fair. These responses were virtually unchanged from those provided during the 2000 survey, but indicated a somewhat greater degree of satisfaction with the quality of the fishing experience than reported during the 1990 survey.

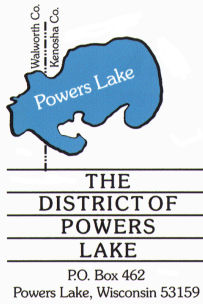
## BOATING USE

In 2010, over 60% reported power boating and nearly 50% reported waterskiing.

In 2010, engine size of respondents' ski boats averaged over 200 HP, pontoons averaged over 65 HP, fishing boats averaged over 85 HP, and PWC averaged over 100 HP. These sizes represent an increase in size from the 2000 survey at which time ski boats averaged about 190 HP, pontoons averaged about 65 HP, fishing boats averaged about 80 HP, and PWC averaged just over 80 HP.

## OTHER RECREATIONAL USES

In-lake active recreational uses such as swimming, walking and jogging continued to be enjoyed. Passive recreational uses such as picnicking, barbequing and bird watching were also enjoyed. There was a slight shift from active to passive pursuits which is consistent with the demographic characteristics of the community. The majority of the respondents have been residents for more than a decade, while the consistency observed in the numbers of participants and days of operation of PWC's, for example, are likely to reflect the presence of a younger generation. In some cases, this dichotomy can be explained by a previous generation passing the "lake house" to their children or to an older generation, including children and grandchildren, in the mix of occupants. This latter, more inclusive, concept of a household is supported, in part, by the number of respondents (more than 25%) who are weekend residents, suggesting that they are actively engaged elsewhere during the week. Conversely, the large number of part-year residents is consistent with an older population, who may winter in a climate warmer than is typically the case in Wisconsin. Less than 10% reported engaging in snowmobiling or cross-country skiing. Of all recreational activities mentioned on the 2010 survey, the three receiving the highest ranking of relative importance to respondents were power boating, swimming, and walking/jogging.



**Elected Commissioners:**  
Jim Michels, Chair  
Nancy Michael, Sec.  
Brooke Jensen, Treas.  
Neal Kuhn  
Colleen Keating

**Appointed Commissioners:**  
Judy Jooss, Kenosha Co.  
Michael Halvorson, Randall Twp.

### Other Recreational Uses (cont'd)

We will continue to inform you of survey results and analysis in upcoming newsletters. For those of you who wish to view the entire Lake Protection Plan see links below.

It is titled Memorandum Report No. 193 on the SEWRPC homepage under "Recent Publications": <http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC.htm>

It can also be found on the Lake and Stream Management page, right-side navigation, under the "Lake Protection Plans" heading <http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/Environment/LakeandStreamManagement.htm>

### QUARTERLY MEETING

Our next meeting will be held Friday, March 23rd, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting is open to the public at the Randall Town Hall, 34530 Bassett Road, Bassett, WI.



### DISTRICT OF POWERS LAKE MISSION STATEMENT

Within the scope of the powers vested in it under Chapter 33 and in furtherance of the Public Trust Doctrine of Wisconsin, the mission of the District of Powers Lake is:

To support, protect, preserve and enhance the native ecosystem of the watershed, shoreline, and waters of Powers Lake as a natural resource for generations to come;

To be responsive to the interests and concerns of the district residents and the public; and

To proactively advocate when faced with potential damage to Powers Lake's environmental values, wildlife, natural beauty, peacefulness, safety and/or recreational value.