

April 2022 - Rogers Lake Authority Update

The Rogers Lake Authority (RLA) works to promote health and safety in and on Rogers Lake. The RLA coordinates water testing of the lake water; coordinates bids for weed mitigation; and schedules lake patrol personnel for the summer months to enforce safety, regulation and ordinance adherence.

A significant level of confusion exists within the community surrounding proposed “slow-no wake” buoys the RLA has been investigating. To clear up confusion, a summary update has been prepared.

Summary

For the past three years, the RLA has worked with the State of CT’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to address safety and traffic flow issues, specifically between the islands on the lake. The lack of adherence to the State boating rules is a concern for those on the RLA, and failure to address this may lead to a serious accident. In recent years, the lake patrol boat has observed kayakers and rowers nearly swamped, jet skiers routinely ignoring the personal watercraft rules, and boats traveling in the wrong direction on the lake and around the islands.

The State of CT DEEP boating and personal watercraft regulations state:

- *No person shall operate a motorboat, excluding a personal watercraft, at a speed in excess of Slow-No-Wake within 100 feet of shore, or a dock, pier, float or anchored or moored vessel, unless taking off or landing a water skier.*
- *No person shall operate a personal watercraft at a speed in excess of Slow-No-Wake within 200 feet of shore, or a dock, pier, float or anchored or moored vessel, unless taking off or landing a water skier.*
- *When within 100 feet of buoys marking a restricted swimming area or boat access area, vessels shall be operated at Slow-No-Wake.*

For the full regulations click on this URL: [Connecticut Boaters Guide](#)

In an effort to help the community understand the distances between the shore and islands, the RLA included a map with distances in the annual 2021 newsletter. The RLA has worked with DEEP to install new signage on the lake and at the boat launch to help all on the lake understand the distances and the counterclockwise directional requirement. DEEP suggested that a “no wake” zone be implemented since jet skis cannot maintain the 200’ distance required in six areas of the lake. However, in order to have the zone implemented, the Rogers Lake ordinances must be updated.

Work on the ordinances began in 2021 and continues to date. Once the ordinances are updated; DEEP would need to approve the revised ordinances since DEEP has authority over all boating regulations in the State. Upon DEEP approval, the towns of Lyme and Old Lyme would have to vote on the revised ordinances at a town meeting. If approved through both towns, the buoys can be installed. The buoys would be in place from Memorial Day to Labor Day only.

Objective of the buoys

The purpose of the buoys is to increase awareness and promote safe boating and personal watercraft operation in accordance with State of CT boating regulations and rules.

Timeline

Given the proposed ordinances have not been finalized by the RLA and are still being worked on, and the process required to implement is a long one, the “no wake” buoys will not be in place for 2022. In light of the process, the earliest the buoys could be installed is likely 2024.

Scenarios

The impact of State CT boating regulations as applied to Rogers Lake are best understood when specific scenarios are discussed.

1. You are heading North, approaching Picnic Island on your left. The distance between Picnic Island and the shore (on your right), without a dock or mooring, is 345'.
 - a. If you are driving a boat, you can proceed as you would normally since you have 100' on either side of you.
 - b. If you are driving a jet ski, you must decrease your speed to slow-no-wake since you do not have the required 200' on either side of you.
2. You have passed Picnic Island, heading North and are approaching Blueberry Island. The distance between Blueberry Island and the shore (on your right), without a mooring or dock, is 335'.
 - a. If you are driving a boat, you can proceed as you would normally since you have 100' on either side of you.
 - b. If you are driving a jet ski, you must decrease your speed to slow-no-wake since you do not have the required 200' on either side of you.
3. You continue North and pass Blueberry Island and are approaching Big Dick Island. The distance between Big Dick Island and the shore (again, on your right), without a dock or mooring, is 350'.
 - a. If you are driving a boat, you can proceed as you would normally since you have 100' on either side of you.
 - b. If you are driving a jet ski, you must decrease your speed to slow-no-wake since you do not have the required 200' on either side of you.
4. You are heading South and are approaching Blueberry Island on your left. The distance between the shore (on your right), without a dock or mooring, and Blueberry Island, is 330'.
 - a. If you are driving a boat, you can proceed as you would normally since you have 100' on either side of you.
 - b. If you are driving a jet ski, you must decrease your speed to slow-no-wake since you do not have the required 200' on either side of you.
5. You are heading South and are approaching Picnic Island. You decide you want to bear right. The distance between the shore and Picnic Island is 230'. Since this is a narrow stretch and docks and moorings exist on the right, both boats and jet skis would have to proceed at slow-no-wake given less than 200' distance. However, if you decided to bear left instead:
 - a. If you are driving a boat, you can proceed as you would normally since you have 100' on either side of you.
 - b. If you are driving a jet ski, you must decrease your speed to slow-no-wake since you do not have the required 200' on either side of you.
6. If you are heading South with Picnic Island on your right and want to cut over before Whale Island, know that the distance between Picnic Island and Whale Island is 350'. What this means is:
 - a. If you are driving a boat, you can proceed as you would normally since you have 100' on either side of you.
 - b. If you are driving a jet ski, you must decrease your speed to slow-no-wake since you do not have the required 200' on either side of you.

These State of CT boating regulations exist regardless of whether the buoys are installed. The buoys are simply intended to draw the attention of those using the lake. Please be aware that with any vessel operation, the operator is responsible for any damage or bodily harm their wake causes.