

A View from the Lake by Tom Schroeder – President, Beaver Dam Lake Management District

Here it is the middle of the summer and so far it has been a good one with lots of sun and warm weather. Over the 4th of July weekend and the past week, it sure appeared like everyone was having a good time on the lake, with all the tubing, skiing, wake boarding, paddle boarding, pontoon boat rides, etc. While I was sitting on shore or riding on our various watercraft, I did observe some good safe water craft operation - but also some real dumb, careless maneuvers and dangerous operation. Most of the reckless watercraft operation involved operating water craft at speeds greater than “slow-no-wake” within 100 feet of other watercraft, docks, piers, or buoys. Another observation was that many paddle boarders were having fun but lacked either wearing or having an approved PFD (personal floatation device) on the paddle board. Each person on a paddleboard, kayak, canoe, paddle boat must have a PFD with them. In previous articles I have pointed out the danger of allowing riders on a boat to sit on the gunnels or on the front deck while under power. Chances are that the operator could not react fast enough to prevent serious injury should a passenger fall overboard. You may say “so what”, however if law enforcement observes the abovementioned and stops you, the fine can be as much as \$232.00.

On July 10th the BDLMD held its 30th Annual Meeting. There were only 47 persons in attendance. Those present approved the budget for 2021/2022, heard a presentation by Jay Michels – Edmond & Oliver Resources and made many good comments at the “Public Hearing” about the “No Wake “ ordinance related to the buoys on the east end of the lake from the beach area to hwy. 63. Absent any nominations for expiring commissioner positions prior to or at the meeting, Tom Schroeder and John Bavier were re-elected as commissioners. Each will stay on as President and Secretary respectively for the next year.

Following comments from myself on the past, current and future Lake District projects and issues, questions from those present centered on wake boats, shoreline erosion, water craft operation and weeds and algae growth. Large waves are not just produced by wake boats. With the proper motor tilt, speed and weight distribution, many types of water craft can produce large waves, including wave runners. I believe that because the wake boats are specifically designed with the capability to produce large waves that you can surf behind, they are singled out as the problem of large waves on the lake. Currently there is no active effort at the State level to regulate wake boats. And, because of the complexity of the topic, local government bodies (whether at the Lake District, City or County level) are reluctant to legislate on the issue. When the goal is to create large waves and it is done in the wider areas of any lake, often the wave energy is dissipated by the time the wave reaches the shoreline. For now responsible operation of water craft will hopefully hold off unwanted regulation. More on this in a future article.

In early June, various areas of the lake were treated for Eurasian Water Milfoil – EWM. After the unexpected explosion of EWM during 2020, an aggressive yet environmentally sound treatment plan was approved by the WDNR. The post treatment water analysis data shows that we had good residuals which is instrumental in killing EWM. Over this past weekend, the July aquatic plant survey was completed and the preliminary results show that the EWM treatment was very effective. Only several single EWM plants were visually observed and were removed. However, unlike last year when the entire shoreline of Beaver Dam Lake had copious quantities of various pond weeds and other plant growth, currently it is hard to find any weeds other than

lily pads and water shield. The cause for this unusual and unexpected change from last year is being investigated. This year the more than average algae growth has been influenced by the early ice out, the substantial rains during spring increasing phosphorus levels and the lake warming to 75 degrees or higher by early June and remaining above 75F to date. Filamentous and planktonic algae is quite evident especially when the wind blows the floating masses to a bay or shoreline. The filamentous algae is usually associated with good water quality which is what our lake is known for.

With the warm and dry weather since June, the lake is currently about 6 inches lower than normal. The side gates and stop logs at the dam were lowered on Memorial Day and remain in place. With evaporation and no substantial rain in the forecast the lake level is going to continue go down so plan accordingly. The low water has exposed a lot of sand, especially at the peninsulas between Rabbit and Williams Bays. Remember the property west of the opening between Rabbit and Williams Bay is private property and is not for public use. There has been a lot of "beach" traffic with many boats and pontoons pulling up on the sand. Unfortunately there are a few boaters that have left a lot of trash on shore for others to clean up. If you bring things in a cooler, etc. take the cans, bags, etc. with you when you leave.

Although half the summer is past, there are still many good days ahead to enjoy our great lake. Please remind your friends, neighbors and guests of the need for using required PFD. Think about operating your water craft in a safe responsible manner. Please stay in the center of the wider areas of the lake if you are making large waves and please remember to keep passengers from sitting on the gunnels and decks when under power. I'll see you on the Lake.