

To: The Bayfield County Board of Supervisors
From: The Bayfield County Lakes Forum
Re: Float planes

With regard to the use of float planes on Bayfield County lakes, the Bayfield County Lakes Forum gathered comments from folks in our county. Our position is based on the comments we gathered. I have listed these comments for your information. Following the comments is the BCLF position on float plane use.

Comments, in no particular order:

- Noise is a common concern on lakes frequented by float planes. This noise constitutes a nuisance and should be addressed by the County as such.
- Large bodies of water can accommodate planes better than small. Narrow lakes are a problem because the sound echoes off the shorelines, increasing the loudness.
- Boats area asked to stay 200 feet away from loons. Planes are not but should be.
- The safety of kids swimming and other people fishing, skiing, boating or playing on the water is of great concern. This is a health and safety issue that must be addressed.
- The practice of commuting to work from seasonal lake homes is increasing and is likely to continue to increase in future years.
- If a landowner wants to use his back forty to land his plane, he has to file for airport status, pay fees, file forms, get approval. If he has a lake in his front yard he needs to do none of this. This is wrong.
- Planes are often pulled up into the buffer zone for storage. This damages the near-shore area and creates an eyesore.
- We have rules causing some lakes to be no wake. Planes should not be allowed to disregard the no wake regulations. Boats must stay at no wake when within 100 feet of a dock or other boat for good reason. Planes must be required to follow the same rule.
- Changes in lake levels make the practice of landing and taking off from a lake very dangerous to pilot, passengers and those on the ground.
- The Pigeon Lake Assn discussed this practice at a recent meeting and no objection was made to float plane use on the lake. However, the one plane that uses Pigeon Lake has been stranded there over a year due to low water. The owner intends to put skis on it this winter and remove it from the lake.
- Any lake that contains species listed on the WDNR AIS list should be off limits to float planes due to the inability of the pilot to clean the floats between lakes. There must be no landings or takeoffs from lakes known to be infested with aquatic invasive species.

- Lakes within 30 minutes of an airport should be off limits to float planes as there is no real need to fly to a lake when an airport is close.
- Fuel spills that can be easily addressed at an airport can be impossible to address at a lake.
- The September 2005 helicopter crash on Hammil Lake in Drummond points out the danger of this practice. The pilot hit a power line. He and his two passengers died in the crash.

Based on the above comments, the Bayfield County Lakes Forum position on the use of float planes on county lakes is as follows:

- 1. The Bayfield County Lakes Forum is not opposed to the use of float planes on waterbodies that are large enough to accommodate them in a reasonable and responsible fashion.*
- 2. Any lake that contains species listed on the WDNR AIS list should be off limits to float planes due to the inability of the pilot to clean the floats between lakes. There must be no landings or takeoffs from lakes known to be infested with aquatic invasive species.*
- 3. For safety purposes, WDNR wardens must be advised what lakes will be used by float planes and when this will occur.*
- 4. Pilots should be encouraged to practice landings and take offs only on very large bodies of water.*
- 5. Lakes within 30 minutes of an airport should be off limits to the frequent use of float planes as there is no real need to fly to a lake when an airport is close.*
- 6. All fuel spills must be immediately reported to the Sheriff's office.*
- 7. The County should post a list of those lakes that are acceptable for float plane use.*

The Bayfield County Lakes Forum welcomes the opportunity to engage in planning discussions with pilots and County officials in order to develop reasonable guidelines regarding the use of floatplanes and similar craft on Bayfield County lakes and streams.

Thank you.

Jim Brakken, President
Bayfield County Lakes Forum