

*(Letter submitted to the ANR this autumn on behalf of my constituents)*

Dear Agency of Natural Resources,

I am writing this letter in support of the petition to ban wake sports from Lake Parker in West Glover, Vermont. I live on Lake Parker Road, on the hill overlooking the lake and my family, including two young children, enjoy spending our time on the lake at our shoreside family lakehouse each summer, swimming, boating, and relaxing in the unplugged peace and quiet.

As I am sure you are aware, Lake Parker is one of Vermont's smaller lakes, with a maximum depth of only 48 feet. It is a beautiful rural lake, and in addition to being the home of many part-time and full-time residents, it is also the home of many loons. We love to watch the loons raise their babies there summer after summer, and to hear their wild calls at night. It's also the home to many geese, and we have marked our lives by watching them arrive each spring and leave in the fall, saluting us goodbye with their honks. This has given my children a deeper appreciation and respect for nature, and it gives me peace to hope that future generations of my family will be able to appreciate future generations of the waterfowl with whom we have always shared our home. In standing up against wake boats, please know that I am speaking on behalf not only my human friends and neighbors, but also the avian residents of our community.

I am also standing up for our children. First, there are my own children, who swim, kayak, and paddleboard on the lake safely, wearing appropriate lifejackets and accompanied by adults. Nonetheless, I fear that the presence of fast wake boats and the higher-than-normal waves that they create does jeopardize their safety. While I recognize that there is an inherent risk in being on the water, as a mother, any threat to my children's safety, whether unintended or not, is something that I prefer be minimized. I hope that you feel the same way. Secondly, there are the children of Glover Pioneer Day Camp, a local summer education program that I have helped to direct for many years. This program is one of our community's most valuable assets because it has taught generations of Glover children the natural and cultural history of our region from pre-Abenaki times through white settlement, and into our current era. One of the favorite activities of our elementary-age campers is to swim in the lake at the end of the day, and we have had up to 30 children at times splashing around. Though our lifeguards are vigilant, imagine the increased difficulty of watching that that many children while also now keeping an eye on the traffic of wake boats and again, the huge waves that they create. We like to swim in Lake Parker with our campers because it is a calm lake and safe for our programming.

Finally, as the Vermont House Representative-Elect of the towns of Albany, Craftsbury, Greensboro and Glover, I would like you to know that many of my constituents have reached out to me to express their own concerns about the potential presence of wakeboats not just on Lake Parker, but also on Shadow Lake in Glover and Caspian Lake in Greensboro. I am standing up for their voices as well. Please do not allow wake sports on these lakes. We are a small agricultural area, and we try to keep our lakes as healthy as possible and free of invasive species. The churning up of our waters, and the ballast tanks that may bring invasive species into the lakes threaten to undo the years of hard work that our local lake associations have put into helping to clean and monitor our lakes for healthy sustainability. Please don't let that happen.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Leanne Harple, VT House Representative-Elect of Orleans-4