

# Half Moon Lake Property Owner Survey

## Analysis and Recommendations

### Survey Responses

As of mid May, owners returned 115 surveys – an excellent return rate of 51%. Detailed results are tabulated in the attachment. Results especially important to Half Moon Lake Conservancy efforts are shown in bold below.

### Survey Results

Most popular activities are quiet recreation: appreciating peace and tranquility, enjoying the view, and observing wildlife.

The highest priority issue identified regarding owning Half Moon Lake property is protecting the lake environment – ranking about the same as maintaining property investment values.

Results show water clarity as a slightly lower priority concern than observed for other lake groups. Perhaps this is because existing water clarity/quality is very good. While more an issue for the Half Moon Lake District than the Half Moon Lake Conservancy, it is interesting to note that owners are concerned about negative impacts caused by invasive and native aquatic plants. (Invasive aquatic plants have not been identified in Half Moon Lake.) Jet skis also rank quite high in negative lake impacts.

**Almost half of Half Moon Lake residents acknowledge the impact of current residential development and the threat of new residential development on Half Moon Lake water quality.**

**Over half of property owners support a variety of methods to protect varying types of watershed property. These are worth repeating:**

**Please choose which (if any) types of undeveloped properties should be protected from development in the Half Moon Lake watershed. (Check all that apply)**

86% Land with existing wetlands

79% Land next to streams (Harder Creek and Tamarack Creek)

66% Land adjacent to Tamarack Bay

60% Land next to wetlands

54% Land next to the lake

48% Land with drained wetlands

**From the list below, which methods do you think should be tried in an effort to protect Half Moon Lake water quality? (Check all that apply)**

87% Educate landowners regarding practices to maintain features that protect water quality

79% Educate landowners regarding land protection options

77% Accept donations of land

72% Accept donations of conservation easements (these agreements restrict development without changing land ownership).

56% Buy land from willing sellers with the help of grants and donations

56% Purchase conservation easements from willing sellers with the help of grants and donations

**Education for water quality protection is supported by almost 90 percent of respondents. And other results support education as well . . .**

- Less than half of residents are familiar with landscaping practices to protect water quality.
- A similar percentage would consider installation of these practices on their property.
- If they would install a practice, improving lake water quality would be the top motivator.
- If they are not interested, lack of knowledge is the greatest impediment.
- The newsletter is the preferred method for obtaining lake information.

### **Analysis and Recommendations for HML Conservancy**

Survey results support the goals and objectives of the Half Moon Lake Conservancy Strategic Plan.

Of particular note is that many residents are ready to support watershed land protection efforts (48% - 86% depending upon the property type) and few oppose them (only 2%). A variety of methods for land protection are supported as well – including significant support for purchasing land or conservation easements and using fund raising and grant writing to fund these efforts.

Property owners support education as the top priority – consistent with strategic plan recommended actions.

There is a lack of knowledge about water quality landscaping practices that help to decrease impacts from residential waterfront property.

### **Recommended Actions**

Re-examine the work plan and consider new priorities for implementation.

### **Outreach to watershed property owners**

With the support of lake residents, and slow property sales, it may be an ideal time to reach out to watershed property owners. Although current emphasis is on Tamarack Bay, greater water quality benefits would accrue with emphasis on parcels adjacent to streams and those where wetland restoration potential exists.

- Develop mailing list for watershed residents in high priority areas
- Distribute HLM Conservancy brochure with a cover letter
- Consider offering additional options to land preservation such as incentives for CRP re-enrollment and incentives for wetland restoration.

### **Enhance education efforts**

Continue educational series in newsletter with emphasis on the following topics:

- Summary of survey results
- Water quality landscaping practices (rain gardens, diversions, infiltration pits and trenches)
- Land protection options (and specific projects once they exist)

Consider other options to enhance resident knowledge

- Deer Lake/Balsam Lake runoff reduction projects as models
- Publications available (new runoff checklist and landowner guide)
- Small groups of lake residents - discussions of what would help encourage water quality landscaping
- More explanation can be provided at the next board meeting if there is interest

## **Analysis and Recommendations for HML P&R District**

It is interesting to note that owners are concerned about negative impacts caused by invasive and native aquatic plants. (Invasive aquatic plants have not been identified in Half Moon Lake.) Jet skis also rank quite high in negative lake impacts.

Native plants are critical for a healthy lake ecosystem, and it is important for lake owners to understand this fact. Otherwise, owners are more likely to be motivated to remove plants. Owners do seem to acknowledge the threat of invasive plants such as Eurasian water milfoil becoming established in the lake.

### **Recommended Actions**

Complete an aquatic macrophyte (plant) study to inventory plants present in the lake (native and potentially invasive). Follow up with an aquatic plant management plan.

Continue Clean Boats, Clean Waters monitoring and education at the boat landing. Maintain an inspection program to monitor for invasive aquatic species.

Consider regulating hours of use for jet skis.

Complete a lake nutrient budget to identify current and potential future sources of phosphorus to the lake.

Submitted by Cheryl Clemens, Harmony Environmental  
05/14/08