

## Merton adopts slow, no-wake ordinance

**Recent problems caused by high water levels on local lakes have led to the adoption of an ordinance giving the town the ability to establish emergency slow, no-wake zones on five local lakes.**

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**Town of Merton** - Recent problems caused by high water levels on local lakes have led to the adoption of an ordinance giving the town the ability to establish emergency slow, no-wake zones on five local lakes.

The ordinance, which will apply to Okauchee, Upper Oconomowoc, Moose and North lakes and Lake Keesus, prohibits boat owners from operating their boats at speeds in excess of slow, no-wake speeds after a high-water condition has been declared.

Slow, no-wake means operating a boat at the slowest speed possible while still maintaining steering capabilities, said Town Attorney Bill Chapman.

On Okauchee and Upper Oconomowoc lakes, slow, no-wake will be declared when the waters rise above 875.1 feet mean sea level, or when either chairman from the town boards of Oconomowoc and Merton determines that conditions warrant such a declaration.

A height guideline will not be used for Lake Keesus, Moose and North lakes. On those lakes, slow, no-wake will be declared when the chairman of the Merton Town Board thinks a high water elevation has been reached and conditions warrant an emergency declaration.

High water on those lakes is defined as an elevation where wave action will potentially damage piers or other shoreline facilities and will cause erosion to the shoreline.

Beaver Lake is the only major lake in the town not included in the ordinance. The lake, which is bordered by both the Town of Merton and Village of Chenequa, has a public boat launch with no motorized boat launching capabilities, said Town Clerk Susan Oman.

While the use of motorized boats is allowed on the lake, the town rarely receives complaints about speeding boats causing problems during times of high water, Oman said.

When a slow, no-wake emergency on Okauchee or Upper Oconomowoc is declared, notice will be posted at the public launch site at Road T in the Town of Oconomowoc or at the commercial boat launch at the Golden Mast restaurant. Notices for Moose Lake and Lake Keesus will appear at the public launch sites of those lakes, and notices for North Lake will be posted at appropriate locations in the vicinity of the lake.

Notices will also appear in this paper and in radio and TV public service announcements.