

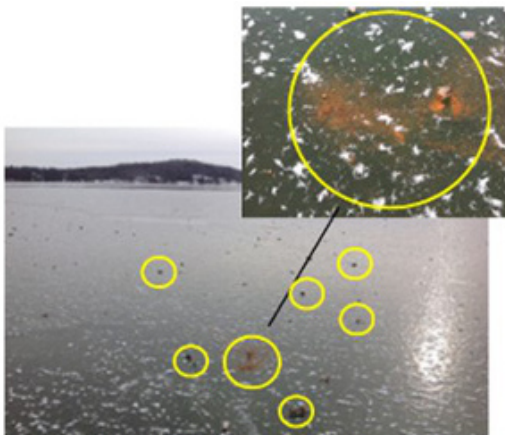
The Blue Sea Lake Watershed Association Bulletin
Issue No. 42 – May 2020

Lakeside Fireworks and the protection of our Watershed

Although currently preoccupied with the Covid-19 crisis, hopefully we can look forward to a time in the not too distant future when we will want to celebrate a 'victory' over the virus and return to our 'normal' lives. Often fireworks are associated with celebrations so it may be a good time to remind ourselves of the Association's policy on pyrotechnics.



In its [newsletter of December 2015](#), the Association recommended that our members refrain from the use of fireworks adjacent to water. In determining this policy we conducted an extensive review of the relevant literature concerning fireworks displays and their effects on the environment. Although we found little conclusive evidence to suggest that there is a significant immediate short-term negative impact on water quality, the potential long term impact of the accumulation of fireworks residue in water and in the lake bottom sediments is unknown. Because of incomplete combustion, debris



Résidus sur la surface gelée du lac Blue Sea

and residue are inevitable consequences of fireworks use, even when manufacturers and Federal guidelines are followed¹. This chemical residue usually goes unnoticed as it dissolves or sinks to the lake bottom. We prefer to keep it out of our lakes.

Shortly after determining our fireworks policy we engaged our Municipalities in an ongoing discussion on the issue, attempting to persuade them to ban lakeside pyrotechnical activities. From the beginning of the discussion both Municipalities have made it clear that they are not prepared to consider such a ban².

Since an outright ban is a non-starter, our latest suggestion has been that they consider restricting fireworks use to a limited number of long weekend and public holiday celebrations. Such an approach would contribute to reducing long term environmental impacts and stress on wildlife with the added bonus of limiting the disruption of cottage and residential peace and tranquility. At the same time, for those who consider it important, a fireworks tradition, would be maintained and the local economy would continue to benefit from sales and profits of fireworks. As well citizens and visitors would be forewarned and those who are not fans of pyrotechnics could plan or prepare for fireworks evenings.

The Municipalities rejected this middle-ground suggestion too, pointing to the tolerant policies of our provincial and federal environment ministries and also pointing out that they are reluctant to regulate the life-style and family traditions of their constituents. (Some of you may be surprised.) On the other hand, they do acknowledge that if there were a silent majority in opposition to fireworks they could be persuaded to reconsider their policies.

Consequently if you would like to see a ban on lake-side fireworks or a reasonable compromise to an outright ban, or on the other hand, if you are a fireworks fan, we encourage you to make your views known.

Regardless of our Municipalities' position on the issue, we continue to urge members and all lake-side residents and visitors to refrain from the use of pyrotechnics on the shorelines of our waterways.

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1. In reviewing Federal regulations regarding the use of pyrotechnics, it is encouraging to note that Federal regulations prohibit the use of toxic chemicals including lead, mercury and chrome. However, there is a long list of chemicals that the Federal regulations do not prohibit:

COMMONLY USED FIREWORKS INGREDIENTS: ammonium perchlorate, barium nitrate, potassium chlorate, potassium nitrate, potassium perchlorate, strontium nitrate, boron, carbon, phosphorus, silicon, sulphur, natural gums, plastics, polymers, starch, aluminum, magnalium, magnesium, titanium, nitrate oxidizers, sodium salicylate, sodium benzoate, strontium salts, barium salts, sodium salts, copper salts, antimony salts, aluminium powder, charcoal, iron particles.
(Source: Natural Resources Canada – Display Fireworks Manuel)

2. It should be pointed out that fireworks do fall under municipal bylaws governing noise and nuisance and as such are prohibited between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

Erratum

In the first article of our newsletter n ° 41 published on May 20th, the paragraph dealing with yellow buoys should have read as follows:



The Yellow Buoy Program to identify concentrations of Eurasian Milfoil beds to avoid will continue, with plans to install **55** additional yellow buoys for a total of **217**, as well as 5 larger signed panels, for a total of 17. **In addition, 20 other buoys will be installed to replace existing unusable buoys.**