

2005 Lake Ripley Opinion Survey Results

Distribution: Questionnaires were sent on 10/06/05 to the mailing addresses of all property owners located within the boundaries of the Lake Ripley Management District and/or Lake Ripley watershed

Number of households receiving a survey: 948

Number responding: 220

Response rate: 23%

1. What type of property do you own? Check all that apply.
 - 45%: Single-family home (Seasonal residence)
 - 49%: Single-family home (Permanent residence)
 - 6%: Vacant/Undeveloped
 - 1%: Agricultural
 - 3%: Rental property
 - 1%: Condominium
 - 1%: Business/Commercial

2. Approximately how far from the lake is your property located?
 - 40%: On the water
 - 47%: 1/4 mile
 - 7%: 1/2 mile
 - 2%: 3/4 mile
 - 4%: 1 or more miles

3. How long have you owned property near Lake Ripley?
 - 28%: 0-5 years
 - 18%: 6-10 years
 - 11%: 11-15 years
 - 9%: 16-20 years
 - 34%: 20+ years

4. If you are a seasonal or part-time resident, please answer the following questions.
 - A) On average, how many days per month do you use your home?
 - 11%: 0-3 days
 - 15%: 4-6 days
 - 24%: 7-9 days
 - 20%: 10-12 days
 - 30%: 12+ days

 - B) Do you have plans to make this home your permanent residence?

38%: Yes

62%: No

5. What about Lake Ripley contributed to your decision to buy property near Lake Ripley? List the letters of your top three choices.

(1st choices = 3 points, 2nd choices = 2 points, 3rd choices = 1 point)

91 pts: Lake not a consideration

54 pts: Size/depth

34 pts: Level of use

130 pts: Water clarity

11 pts: Weed/algae conditions

20 pts: Public accessibility

62 pts: Fishery

31 pts: Level of development

240 pts: Natural scenic beauty (1st)

26 pts: Lake-bottom condition

170 pts: Water-sport opportunities (2nd)

142 pts: Quiet recreation (3rd)

38 pts: Regional center of activity

6. If you boat on Lake Ripley, please answer the following questions.

A) What types of watercraft do you use? Check all that apply.

30%: Row/paddle boat

8%: Sailboat

11%: Jet Ski

11%: <30HP fishing boat

12%: >30HP fishing boat

27%: Speed boat

36%: Pontoon boat

B) How do you access the lake? Check all that apply.

31%: Public boat landing

15%: Marina

49%: Private lakefront access

C) Do you use your boat on other waters besides Lake Ripley?

22%: Yes

78%: No

D) If you answered "Yes" above, are you aware of how to inspect, identify and clean your boating equipment of invasive species (i.e., zebra mussels, Eurasian milfoil, etc.)?

91%: Yes

9%: No/not sure

7. If you are an angler, please answer the following questions.

A) Which types of fish do you prefer to try to catch on Lake Ripley? Rank 1-5, with 5 being least important. (Rank 1 = 5 points, rank 2 = 4 points,... rank 5 = 1 point)

403 pts: Largemouth Bass (1st)

314 pts: Walleye (3rd)

197 pts: Northern pike

331 pts: Bluegill/Sunfish (2nd)

144 pts: Yellow perch

35 pts: Other

B) Compared to other lakes, how is the fishing on Lake Ripley in terms of fish sizes and numbers?

7%: Excellent

35%: Good

47%: Fair

11%: Poor

C) How often do you practice “catch-and-release”?

56%: Always

39%: Sometimes

5%: Never

8. How do you feel about the current availability of public access on Lake Ripley?

24%: Too much

66%: Sufficient

10%: Not enough

9. Overall, how would you describe Lake Ripley’s water clarity?

67%: Clear

26%: Cloudy

7%: Murky

0%: Pea soup

10. Overall, how would you describe Lake Ripley’s aquatic plant growth? Please explain why you feel this way.

6%: Too sparse

69%: Acceptable

25%: Overly abundant

11. What activities do you or members of your household most enjoy while on Lake Ripley?

List letters of your top three choices. (1st choices = 3 points, 2nd choices = 2 points, 3rd choices = 1 point)

32 pts: Don’t use the lake

191 pts: Slow, motorboat cruising (2nd)

40 pts: Speed boating

178 pts: Fishing (3rd)

41 pts: Jet skiing

137 pts: Water skiing/tubing
270 pts: Swimming (1st)
5 pts: Diving/snorkeling
42 pts: Paddling
119 pts: Enjoying natural scenery
15 pts: Sailing/wind surfing
95 pts: Enjoying quiet solitude
27 pts: Spotting wildlife
8 pts: Snowmobiling
6 pts: Cross-country skiing
14 pts: Other

12. How crowded do you generally feel when on the lake?

WEEKENDS:

6%: Not crowded
16%: Slightly crowded
44%: Moderately crowded
34%: Extremely crowded

WEEKDAYS:

71%: Not crowded
19%: Slightly crowded
8%: Moderately crowded
2%: Extremely crowded

13. How do you feel about rule enforcement on Lake Ripley?

16%: Not sufficient
64%: Adequate
20%: Overly aggressive

14. What lake qualities are of greatest importance to you? Rank as follows: 2 = very important, 1 = moderately important, 0 = little or no importance

268 pts: Minimal boat traffic (6th)
246 pts: Fish/wildlife refuges (7th)
272 pts: Few to no problem weeds (4th)
162 pts: Big fish (13th)
223 pts: Abundant fish (10th)
294 pts: Natural scenic areas (2nd)
244 pts: Rule compliance/enforcement (8th)
269 pts: Quiet solitude (5th)
362 pts: Clear water (1st)
205 pts: Unique and diverse aquatic life (11th)
190 pts: Ease of navigation (12th)
289 pts: Safe beaches (3rd)
243 pts: Minimal shore development (9th)
126 pts: Public access opportunities (14th)
14 pts: Other (15th)

15. Do any of the following routinely impair your ability to enjoy Lake Ripley? Check all that apply.

- 14%: Poor water clarity (7th – tie)
- 19%: High or low water levels (5th – tie)
- 31%: Aquatic “weed” growth (2nd)
- 10%: Small fish sizes (9th)
- 14%: Low fish numbers (7th – tie)
- 40%: Overcrowding (1st)
- 22%: Algae (4th – tie)
- 5%: Insufficient public access (12th)
- 19%: Boating conflicts (5th – tie)
- 7%: Lack of fish/wildlife habitat (11th)
- 15%: Rule violations (6th)
- 22%: Noise (4th – tie)
- 9%: Burdensome lake-use policies (10th)
- 12%: Litter (8th – tie)
- 14%: Shore development (7th – tie)
- 12%: Pollutant-level concerns (8th – tie)
- 25%: Canada geese (3rd)
- 14%: Other (7th – tie)

16. What do you feel are the biggest threats to Lake Ripley’s future? List the letters of your top three choices. (1st choices = 3 points, 2nd choices = 2 points, 3rd choices = 1 point)

- 183 pts: Misuse of lawn/garden/farm chemicals (3rd)
- 208 pts: Invasive species (1st)
- 18 pts: Groundwater pumping
- 105 pts: Soil erosion and polluted runoff
- 171 pts: Boating pressure
- 18 pts: Fishing pressure
- 200 pts: Development pressure (2nd)
- 49 pts: Fluctuating water levels
- 38 pts: Poor farming practices
- 28 pts: Uninformed public officials
- 47 pts: Uninformed citizenry
- 58 pts: Habitat destruction
- 61 pts: Misguided management priorities
- 13 pts: Other

17. Do you feel that you are kept reasonably informed of important matters regarding Lake Ripley?

- 90%: Yes
- 10%: No

18. How do you obtain, or would prefer to obtain, your Lake Ripley-related news and information? Check all that apply.

20%: Watch or attend meetings
90%: The Ripples newsletter
42%: Local news articles
18%: Website
1%: Library archives
29%: Friends/neighbors
5%: Other

19. Which of the following topics would you like to learn more about? Check all that apply.

13%: Rain gardens (**11th – tie**)
23%: Lake-friendly lawn care (**5th – tie**)
10%: Conservation easements (**12th – tie**)
19%: Aquatic plant management (**7th**)
16%: Fisheries management (**9th**)
26%: Invasive species I.D./control (**3rd**)
27%: General lake ecology (**2nd**)
18%: Shoreline vegetative buffers (**8th**)
25%: Shoreline erosion control (**4th – tie**)
10%: Construction site erosion control (**12th – tie**)
9%: Conservation farming practices (**13th – tie**)
8%: Drainage ditch repair (**14th**)
29%: Lake rules (**1st**)
20%: Wetland restoration (**6th**)
13%: Nutrient/pesticide management planning (**11th – tie**)
5%: Composting (**15th**)
14%: Polluted runoff (**10th**)
9%: Water conservation (**13th – tie**)
23%: Shoreland zoning rules (**5th – tie**)
25%: Lake Ripley trivia (**4th – tie**)
3%: Other (**16th**)

20. What do you think is the most positive aspect of Lake Ripley? Please explain.

Top responses (descending order): Water quality; natural beauty; peacefulness

21. What do you think is the most negative aspect of Lake Ripley? Please explain.

Top responses (descending order): Overcrowding; jet skis; overdevelopment

22. What actions would you like to see taken to better protect and manage Lake Ripley?

Top responses (descending order): Boating restrictions (numbers/sizes/horsepower/speed); better lake-access controls; continued management efforts

23. Do you have any concerns or questions that were not addressed as part of this survey?

Overwhelming majority indicated “no” or made no comment