

Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch

Aquatic Safety Report

Manteo Mile – Kelowna 2016



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

The Lifeguarding Experts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The review of Kelowna Manteo Mile proposal is in response to a request by Ian Wilson, Park Service Manager, City of Kelowna. The request specified 4 questions to guide the review of the Manteo Mile swim course on Okanagan Lake for safety, possible alternatives and regulatory challenges. There was no site visit; instead the review was done with information provided by the City of Kelowna and through maps and images.

Recommendation Summary

The following recommendations are being made with support in the review:

1. Swimming not be encouraged or endorsed by the municipality where it does not provide separation of activities.
2. An alternative location be found for a long distance swim course that does provide for separation of activities (to prevent conflict between swimmers and boaters).

INTRODUCTION

The Lifesaving Society is a not-for-profit organization whose vision is to prevent death and injury in, on or near the water. This vision is achieved through public education, training programs, safety management services and lifesaving sport.

The objective of the Aquatic Safety Audit Program is to maximize the safety of aquatic facilities (swimming pool and waterfronts) thereby reducing the likelihood of aquatic-related injury and drowning.

A number of resources were referenced in the creation of this report including:

- Alert Lifeguard in Action
- BC & Yukon Waterfront Safety Guidelines
- Criteria for Beaches, Blue Flag Canada
- Transport Canada Safe Boating Guide
- Transport Canada, The Owners Guide to Private Buoys

It is the responsibility of the City of Kelowna management and staff to utilize this report in the best way they see fit. The Lifesaving Society and audit team members anticipate that management will act on the recommendations as stated and are not responsible for management's actions as a result of the report.

SECTION 1

Do you think it is feasible to continue to offer the “Manteo Mile” as an option to the public?

- 1.1 Most sources recommend that various water activities be separated into their own zone in order to limit conflict between the activities and to ensure the safety of those participating in each. For example, swimming should be separated from boating and kite boarding.
- 1.2 A swimming course designated with mapping and in-water distance markers (private buoys) constitutes an endorsement by the municipality of swimming as an activity in that location.
- 1.3 The location of the current course (Appendix 1) does not allow for separation of activities due to:
 - private property along the course that permits boat access
 - kite boarders using the south side of Rotary Beach Park
 - private marinas and piers south of Rotary Park
- 1.4 The Lifesaving Society would recommend that the activities be separated and consequently that a new location be found to create a formal swim course that is separated from boating, kite boarding or other water activities.

References:

- Alert Lifeguarding in Action
- Criteria for Beaches, Blue Flag Canada
- BC & Yukon Waterfront Safety Guidelines

SECTION 2

If we continue in this area, how do we do it safely and help minimize conflicts?

- 2.1 The Lifesaving Society would not endorse the current Manteo Mile for improvements and promotion that would cause an increase in its current usage.
- 2.2 Distance markers and signage would enable the current users to promote this route to potential swimmers increasing the number of users and potential conflicts with boaters and kite boarders.
- 2.3 If the decision is to pursue this course, proper signage should be installed at both ends of the course (potential access points) outlining the path, distance, potential water conditions and risks (including conflicts with boaters).
- 2.4 Distance markers should be placed on information buoys not on swim buoys to ensure that boaters and swimmers understand that they are sharing the water. Swim buoys are only to separate the activities which is not the case in this scenario.
- 2.5 Safety information should be provided to the owners of the property that front the shoreline along the route. The information should outline the activity being promoted, what to expect and the role they play in ensuring the safety of the swimmers on the course and boaters accessing their properties.
- 2.5 Safety information should be provided to the kite boarders as a user group. The information should outline the activity being promoted, what to expect and the role they play in ensuring the safety of the swimmers on the course and kite boarders.
- 2.6 Speed restrictions must be enforced through speed restriction buoys and information provided to local users of the area.

References:

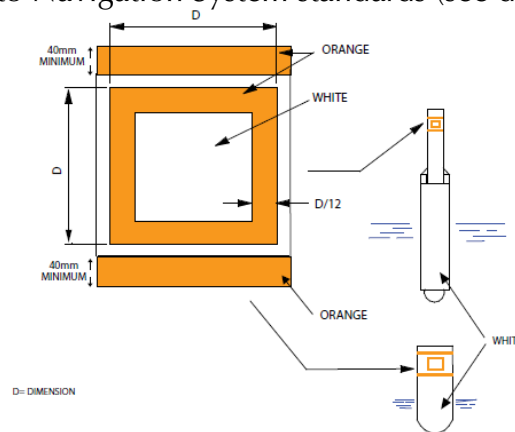
- Alert Lifeguarding in Action
- Criteria for Beaches, Blue Flag Canada
- BC & Yukon Waterfront Safety Guidelines
- Transport Canada - Safe Boating Guide
- Transport Canada - The Owners Guide to Private Buoys

SECTION 3

Do you think it is likely that Transport Canada will approve the placement of more buoys here?

Transport Canada has final approval authority but some factors to consider are:

- 3.1 The proposed Information Buoys (see diagram) are not meant to be mooring buoys so do not fall under the Navigable Waters Protection Act.
- 3.2 The proposed Information Buoys are not meant to restrict vessel operations so do not fall under CSA2001 (VORR) – these buoys require Transport Canada approval.
- 3.3 The proposed Information Buoys are covered under the Private Buoy Regulations (PBR) which is included in the Canada Shipping Act, 2001.
- 3.4 PBR requires that private buoys comply with 7 principles. The first principle requires that private buoy owners: *Do not place a private buoy that will/may interfere with the navigation of any vessel, or that will/may mislead any boater.*
- 3.5 PBR requires the buoys to be of regulatory size, shape and colour meeting the Canadians Aids to Navigation System standards (see diagram).



- 3.5 It is not clear how close together the Information Buoys can be to ensure free access of vessels into the area. The current locations of the buoys are far enough apart that access would not be an issue.
- 3.6 It is not clear if the property owners have a say in the placement of private buoys in front of their properties.
- 3.7 The information should be provided to local users regarding the buoys, their purpose and location.

References:

- BC & Yukon Waterfront Safety Guidelines
- Transport Canada - Safe Boating Guide
- Transport Canada - The Owners Guide to Private Buoys

SECTION 4

If you recommend that we look elsewhere, which location is preferred?

- 4.1 Preferred relocation would be to a section of beach that is already designated as a swimming area and limits access to boats and other activities that interfere with swimmers.
- 4.2 It is critical that the course be well marked with waterfront signage and defined in the water similar to the double layer of swim buoys at Gyro Park effectively creating a swim lane for the distance swimmers. This course can have distance markers if desired.
- 4.3 A new location should be away from general beach users to minimize potential conflicts (e.g. inflatables entering into the swim course). This can be as simple as pulling it away from the beach with starting and finishing points at either end of the stretch of beach.
- 4.4 Milfoil can be a hazard for swimmers so a new location should be selected that would be weed-free or deep enough that it would not impede swimming.

References:

- Alert Lifeguarding in Action
- Criteria for Beaches, Blue Flag Canada
- BC & Yukon Waterfront Safety Guidelines
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APPENDIX 1

Satellite image of the current Manteo Mile area. The course generally runs between the two public beaches.

