

WLLID Response to Residents Concerns and Questions

This report provides answers to concerns and specific questions raised by residents attending the 17 June public meeting where Larratt Aquatic presented findings from an analysis of water and sediment taken at Wasa in summer 2025.

Almost 100 people participated in the public meeting. Many filled out a Feedback Survey that gathered responses from participants, both in person and online.

The sentences in italics were taken from the comments received on the feedback survey.

WLLID mandate:

WLLID mandate is water quality – boats a huge issue – how are we going to fulfill our mandate?

In the WLLID Letters Patent, issued by the BC Provincial Government, the organizations mandate is to “maintain a good quality of water in Wasa Lake by lake-level control and treatment of the water therein and land improvement purpose, the acquisition of land, and the acquisition, maintenance and operation of works for these purposes and all things incidental thereto.”

In terms of lake level, WLLID has a volunteer who tracks the rise and fall of water here at Wasa and the Kootenay River. This water elevations are used to estimate peak water level in the lake and provide residents with a warning of possible flooding.

In the mid-1980s, WLLID installed two flap gates to control over-land flooding from the Kootenay River. One flap gate is located on the west-side of Highway 93/95 where Hanson Channel runs under the roadway. The other is located at the south end of Cameron Pond.

While no formal investigation into their effectiveness has been done, anecdotal evidence suggests the flap-gates do stop most overland water from the Kootenay getting into Wasa.

Many residents have raised the issue of low water levels and what can be done about that. Past investigations concluded there is insufficient water flowing into Cameron Pond that would make little to no difference in Wasa water level. Additionally, there is a significant cost to moving water from somewhere into the lake. The WLLID is not willing to impose the vastly higher taxes this would entail.

Monitoring water quality is our biggest undertaking.

To that end, WLLID conducts weekly testing for dissolved oxygen and temperatures at a location in the deep water of the SE section of the lake.

Broad spectrum water chemistry has been tested twice, in 2020 and 2024. Reports from this testing are available on the WLLID website – <https://wasalake.ca/reports/>. Click on CARO Water Study reports under the Resources tab.

These tests show a good quality of water, with no significant variations in the numbers outside of Provincial parameters.

The Larratt Aquatic study concludes:

- Water quality at Wasa is “suitable for recreational use”
- Green algae, while growing more extensive, “poses no risk”
- Cyanobacteria is present, but “densities do not pose a health risk to recreators”

When volunteers are available, E. coli sampling is done once per week at six (6) locations. The water samples are analyzed by Interior Health (IH) and the results posted on their website.

When issues about the water, i.e, algae, turbidity, leeches, virile crayfish and aquatic foliage (native milfoil), are reported, a WLLID Trustee will investigate to the best of their ability. Limited volunteer resources reduces the scope of monitoring activities.

Boating at Wasa:

WLLID does not have any jurisdiction on boats, whether it be banning, restricting access or the numbers and types.

The Federal government, Department of Transportation, is the only entity that can restrict or ban boats on a navigable body of water.

The RCMP are charged with monitoring boaters for licenses, alcohol consumption and other boating violations.

How long is the process for limiting boat usage on the lake?

The Federal government process for making change covers multiple years. There is no guarantee any changes will be made without Transport Canada’s involvement.

How to manage wake boat usage -- Should boats be restricted to mid-high water?

This may or may not be something Transport Canada deals with.

While outside of WLLID jurisdiction, it could provide water level data used in any analysis.

How many boats are on the lake at any one time?

In short, no one really knows. The WLLID has never conducted a boat count at Wasa. The RDEK contracted Living Lakes Canada to conduct a boat count in 2024. A report on findings can be found here:

How many boat launches? All licensed or approved?

WLLID counts six (6) end of road access points that are being used as boat launches. The only official boat launch is located on BC Parks land at Beechwood Road.

The other five (5) access points around Wasa are not boat launches. They were never deemed to be such things. That status has evolved over time.

As far back as 1988, the then ID Board said, “Uncontrolled boat access to Wasa Lake represents the most significant problem relating to control of water quality.” They suggested there should be only one launch point.

WLLID has, in the past, discussed this issue with the MOTI and MOE. Nothing came of it, except some ‘no parking signs’ along Cedar Road.

How does the community make change?

Big political question.

The WLLID believes that community engagement and discussion from **all** residents, whether they are part of WLLID or not is a first step. The future of the community rests on residents considering the greater good and the role they play in making change.

The Wasa community would be better served by having one entity covering the scope of resources and activities that several separate groups now take care of.

WLLID deals with lake water. We don’t have any jurisdiction over the aquifer/ground water or septic systems.

The Wasa Fire Suppression group focuses on containing fire so that it does not spread.

The Recreation Society handles the Community Hall.

The Lions have the country kitchen, vendor stalls, ice rink, tennis court, ball field and bocce court.

These groups all have a Board of Directors requiring interested people to step forward to help run these organizations. All of these groups draw from a small and shrinking pool of local residents.

The BC government will not allow ID’s to expand their mandate which limits the role the WLLID can play, except providing data and information on water quality and threats to it.

How to create some harmony with the stewardship of the lake?

The WLLID believes one key way to “create harmony” is to host public meetings that are safe, open, respectful and professional, where residents listen with open ears and curiosity, and engage in conversation about Wasa, the issues it faces and options for the future.

This engagement requires **all** residents to engage with other residents in a calm, respectful and non-threatening discussion about the scope of problems and a range of solutions.

Was (sic) the initiatives of the study to determine how boats affect the health of the lake or a "sediment" study only?

WLLID outlined the scope of research to focus on water quality and sediment assessment. Larratt Aquatic linked the water and sediment to boats based on their findings here, and other research they have been a part of in the East Kootenay. (Lake Windermere Ambassadors study)

The analysis of water and sediment samples conducted by Larratt led them to look at the impact of boats on the water and sediment, particularly given Wasa’s small area and shallow depths.

WLLID did not direct Larratt to provide predetermined conclusions.

What are the visions for the lake's use and what are the maximum levels of contaminants that would be acceptable?

The WLLID vision is for a clean healthy lake that provides recreational options for all residents and visitors.

Water quality should meet BC government recreational water standards. A healthy lake is also optimal for aquatic life-vegetation, fish, water born microbes and water fowl.

The “*maximum levels of contaminants*” has been determined by the Provincial government and are outlined in their Recreational Water Quality Guidelines, (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/water-quality/water-quality-guidelines/approved-water-quality-guidelines>).

The BC government also follows Health Canada’s Guidelines for Canadian Recreational Water Quality, (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/guidelines-canadian-recreational-water-quality-summary-document.html>).

Results from chemical and biological analysis are reported on pages 12 to 19 of the Larratt report, which is available on the WLLID website – wasalake.ca/. Their conclusions are noted above.

These results form a 2026 baseline for the water quality. Additional sampling and testing would determine how chemical concentrations rise and/or fall over time.

If a number of water indicators exceed the Provincial standards, then WLLID would seek expert advice, solutions and costs, then present them to the taxpayers seeking their feedback, concerns and thoughts on solutions.

The lake and all the animals that rely on it deserve protection. Is that not the mandate of the WLLID and the provincial park?

As noted above, WLLID’s mandate is to monitor and maintain the quality of water through lake level control. This does not include any public beaches. They fall within the jurisdiction of BC Parks.

Have there been any studies on fertilizer & weed management of the manicured lawns around the lake? Has any research been done to assess the effects of fertilizer use on lake quality by lakeside yards?

In 2020 and 2024, WLLID sampled water at Wasa and sent it to CARO Analytical Services for analysis.

The 2024 analysis looked at a number of parameters regarding herbicide in the water.

The report, shows the acid herbicides in the water to be very low. All acid herbicides were <0.10 ug/L, which were substantially below the guideline numbers.

https://wasalake.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/wasa_water_quality_analysis_august_2024.pdf,

The cost of the study:

The WLLID spent \$11,000 on the Larratt study.

The WLLID should also prioritize maintaining the cleanliness and condition of public beach areas.

As noted, public beaches are a BC Parks jurisdiction.

A basic explanation of the hydrogeology of Wasa Lake is required to put the data results in context.

WLLID can look to retaining a hydro-geologist to provide this explanation.

Wasa Lake accumulates sediments and metals with no way of flushing or diluting these accumulations. If a deleterious substance is deposited, it stays. This is why the low concentrations of such materials in the mud column are significant and heartening.

No attempt made to measure the thickness of the mud column. Is it 2 feet or 20 feet and how variable is the thickness around the lake?

This type of core sample could be part of a future study that would take its direction from the Larratt report and community feedback.

WLLID is not sure that determining the sediment thickness is worth knowing. As the Larratt report points out, the shallow water levels and high calcium levels are a concern.

E. coli:

Is the RV park the Cedar road park? Can it be monitored for E.coli?

Cedar Road is a location where water is sampled and analyzed for E. coli. All E. coli findings are published by Interior Health (IH) at:

<https://services.interiorhealth.ca/publichealthprotection/watersamples.aspx>

Numbers are also published on the WLLID website – wasalake.ca – under the Water Quality Tab. In the event of an extremely high number, it and additional information would be presented in the top banner on the home page.

When E. coli readings exceed IH's cut-off of 220 E. coli per 100ml of water, the IH calls WLLID to ask what may be happening to trigger a high number. At that time, the WLLID would investigate possible sources and report back to IH.

If a high E. coli reading occurs at a BC Parks beach, they will post warning signs.

Based on sampled water at Cedar Road, WLLID statistics show that E. coli readings are usually at <5 E. coli / 100ml of water.

The table below shows E. coli readings from July this year.

Wasa E. coli Water Testing (2026)	14 July		21 July		29 July	
	E. coli per 100 ml	IH rating	E. coli per 100 ml	IH rating	E. coli per 100 ml	IH rating
Campers Beach	<5	Acceptable	75	Acceptable	<5	Acceptable
Cedar Road	<5	Acceptable	<5	Acceptable	<1	Acceptable

E. Coli at Cedar Road is no different than water in other parts of the lake.

Below are the E. coli readings at Cedar Road from 2025.

Cedar Road	
2025	E. coli per 100 ml
16 June	9
24 June	5
2 July	5
8 July	<5
29 July	<5
5 Aug	<5
11 Aug	<5
19 Aug	5
26 Aug	<5
5 Sept	<5

I want to know more about E.coli: Where does it come from? How do I know the level when I go to the lake to swim?

Fecal matter from humans, animals and water fowl are the primary cause of E. coli. Rainwater flushes droppings from pets and wildlife found on lake front yards, beaches and trails.

WLLID believes that leaking septic systems are not the source of E. coli at Wasa.

You can learn about E. coli levels at Wasa by going to the WLLID website where they are reported.

WLLID monitoring green algae bloom on north end of lake?

With limited volunteers, WLLID has not monitored this algae bloom.

Algae is a natural occurrence in BC lakes. Warm water and nutrients cause algae growth.

The algae at Wasa, as reported in the Larratt study, “do[es] not pose a risk to recreator health.” (Larratt pg. 16)

There were two questions raised about “the health effects of the sediment being stirred up.”

The ID would need to consult with local health officials to seek answers or links to reports that contain such information. This would be something for a new Board, elected at the October AGM, to look into.

This brings to a close the WLLID's response to questions and concerns raised at the June 17th public meeting.

If you have any additional questions, please send them to admin@wasalake.ca.