

**From:** rladmin <[rladmin@rainbowlake.org](mailto:rladmin@rainbowlake.org)>

**Subject:** RLA Survey Results

**Date:** November 19, 2016 at 3:46:20 PM EST

**To:** rladmin <[rladmin@rainbowlake.org](mailto:rladmin@rainbowlake.org)>

Dear Neighbors,

Back in July, the Board formed a small committee to create a survey to help us better understand how the community feels about the lake and different improvement options, and how we might fund improvements going forward. Response to the survey was very good; thank you all for taking the time to share your opinions with us.

As promised, we wanted to make sure that everyone who participated in the survey receives the results from the survey. The attached document summarizes the findings from the survey, which were presented at the Open Board Meeting on November 17. A detailed document containing specific breakouts of all the survey questions will be placed on the RLA website in the near future.

Thank you, as always, for your support of the RLA.

The RLA Board

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# RLA Survey Assessment

Survey Performed July 2016, Final Report November 2016  
Prepared by Michael Smith, Michael Drobney and Douglas Carroll

Thanks to everyone who responded to our 2016 Rainbow Lake Survey! We had 87 responses, so we believe we are getting a representative sample of opinions on the big issues around the lake. Overall, we believe the survey supports changes that the board has already undertaken to pursue a more environmentally friendly and long term approach to lake management and to increase openness regarding information and decision-making.

The responses were evenly split between households that are Lake Front, Lake View, and Off the Lake.

Most questions were scored on a five point scale:

- 1 -- Strongly Disagree
- 2 -- Disagree
- 3 -- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4 -- Agree
- 5 -- Strongly Agree

The average scores are given in parenthesis below when appropriate.

Findings are summarized as follows:

- A. The 13 highest scoring responses show there was general agreement on the core issues and the core assumption that the lake is valuable:
- The scenic beauty of the lake is important to me (4.68)
  - The lake is a valuable asset to our community (4.63)
  - **We should make the long term health of the lake our top priority** (4.62)
  - Without Intervention the lake will eventually fill in (4.55)
  - **We should choose a long term approach that is practical, environmentally friendly and sustainable** (4.41)
  - The high phosphorous level is a problem in our lake (4.38)
  - **The water quality in our lake should be our major focus** (4.34)
  - We should look for ways to improve water circulation within the lake (4.34)
  - The lake's shallowness is a problem in our lake (4.33)
  - The lake was a determining factor in my decision to live here (4.32)
  - If the lake dried up, my property value would go down (4.31)
  - The lake adds value to my property (4.26)
  - Improved water quality in the lake would increase my property value (4.17)

While there was generally increased "value" placed on the lake by Lake Front and Lake View households, the three questions bolded above received high scores from all households, regardless of proximity to the lake.

- B. The five lowest-scoring responses show that responders understand the seriousness of the situation, but appreciate the complexity of our predicament:
- There's nothing wrong with our lake (1.31)
  - The lake is fine as it is. We should continue doing what we've been doing (1.56)
  - We should stop all chemical treatments immediately (2.03)
  - All of the weeds in our lake are bad (2.12)
  - The lake is filling in and there's no stopping it (2.35)

- C. There was a lot of uncertainty around causes of the problems in our lake:
- The high phosphorous level is a problem in our lake (33% Uncertain)
  - Failing septic tanks and fields are a major contributor to the nutrients in our lake (30% Uncertain)
  - Lawn care is a major contributor to the nutrients in our lake (24% Uncertain)
- D. There was also a lot of uncertainty around specific options, again showing that respondents grasp the complexity:
- Frequent deep draw-downs would help flush out nutrients from our lake (47% Uncertain)
  - We should drain the lake for a year to let the muck settle out and compact before refilling (39% Uncertain)
  - Chemical treatments are the most cost effective way to maintain the lake (36% Uncertain)
  - Dredging is the only way to fix our lake (30% Uncertain)
- E. Over 80% of respondents “Always” paid their dues (Q6) and half had attended at least one meeting (Q5). Two thirds also said they would pay more if there was a plan developed that they thought would work (Q7). Even half of respondents who do NOT regularly support the RLA said they would pay dues every year if there was a plan developed that they thought would work (Q9). Respondents seem to be involved and willing to support a plan that they think would work.
- F. Many respondents believed that the budget needed to be higher but others were not sure what the right budget level should be (Q13). There were no significant disconnects between the current budget and the “optimal” budget (Q14), however there was some support for a shift of spending from chemical treatments to work projects and beach improvements. Other ideas for additional spending included spot dredging, sterile carp, and education. But generally respondents supported the current budget, which should not be surprising since the budget passes unanimously at the annual meetings. Three comments that could be linked proposed hiring a lifeguard that could also enforce membership for beach users.
- G. The three specific treatment approaches surveyed -- floating islands (Q16), aeration (Q18), dredging (Q20) -- all received general support, and many respondents were OK with having the aerators (Q19) / floating islands (Q17) in their view (assume that the “Uncertain” responses were people who were not lakefront; the question did not really apply to them). The larger question here is what works and what can we afford?
- H. Education and plantings were mentioned by several commenters as options to be explored. Two commenters questioned whether dredging was an effective **long term** solution. Sterile carp was also mentioned as a potential solution by two commenters.
- I. There was general support for the Board:
- The Board communicates effectively with me (3.86)
  - The Board has always been trustworthy (3.67)
  - The Board has always been transparent in its decision-making, expenditures and governance (3.55)
  - I am satisfied with the work the Board does/has done to manage the lake itself (3.55)
  - I am satisfied with the work the Board does/has done to build the community around the lake (3.49)
  - The Board uses the website effectively to communicate with the community (3.48)

However, there were several comments indicating the board was negatively viewed. Our assumption is that the negativity reflects perceptions of the previous boards; the new Board is only nine members (compared to 19 previously) and has four new members. The new Board should be aware of the community’s perceptions of the previous boards, but should not conclude that survey feedback reflects perceptions of the new Board as well. Clearly, there are some opportunities for the Board to make improvements, some of which are already underway. For example, having open meetings at night during the week would address several stated concerns from the survey.

# Wataba Lake Survey – Detail Results

Survey Performed July 2016, Final Report November 2016

**Survey Committee:**

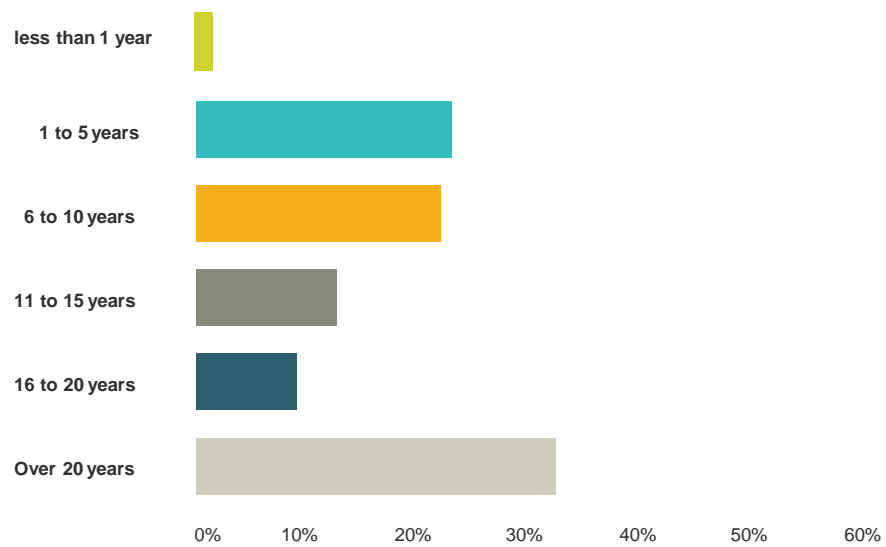
Michael Drobney

Doug Carroll

Michael Smith

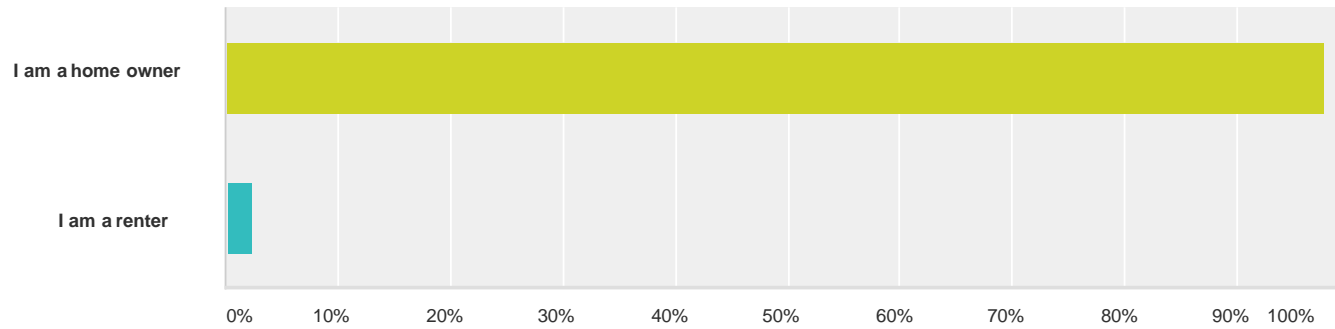
## Q1 How long have you lived in our neighborhood?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 0



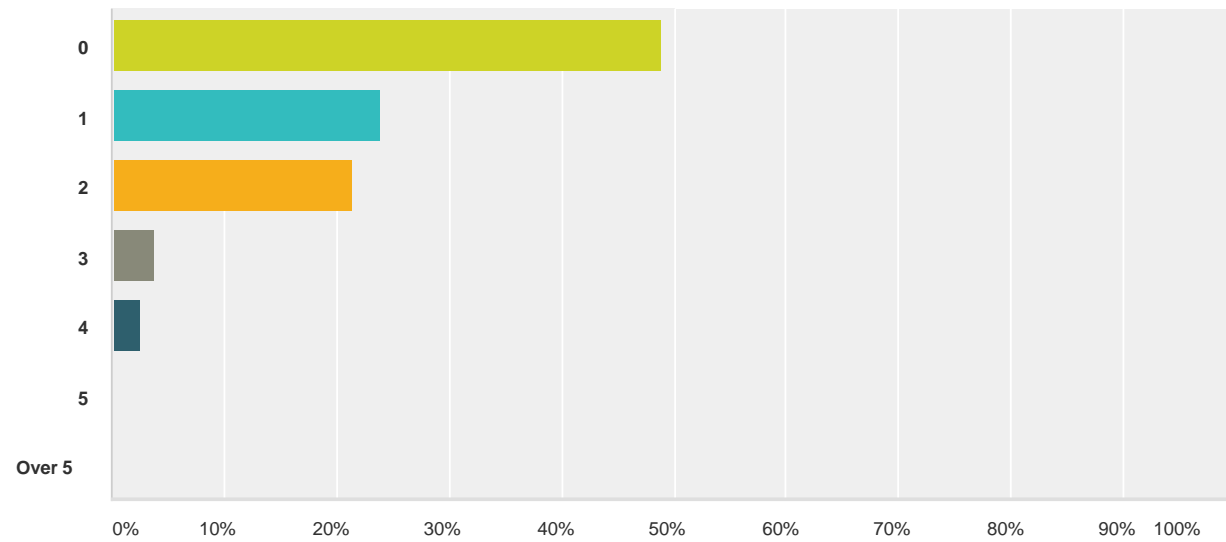
## Q2 Home ownership

Answered: 87 Skipped: 0



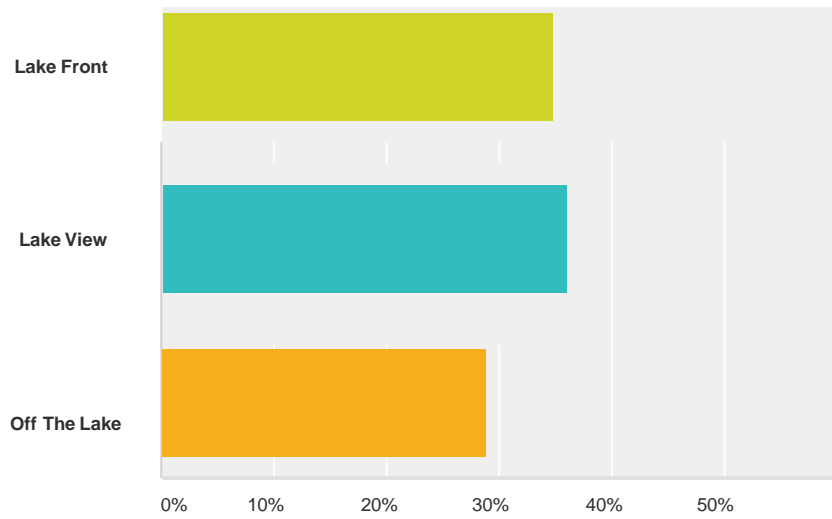
## Q3 How many children live in your house?

Answered: 80 Skipped: 7



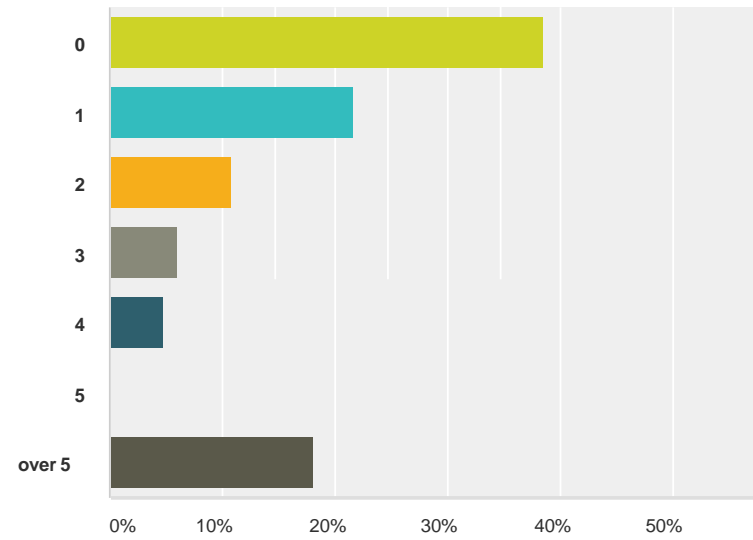
### Q4 My home is:

Answered: 86 Skipped: 1



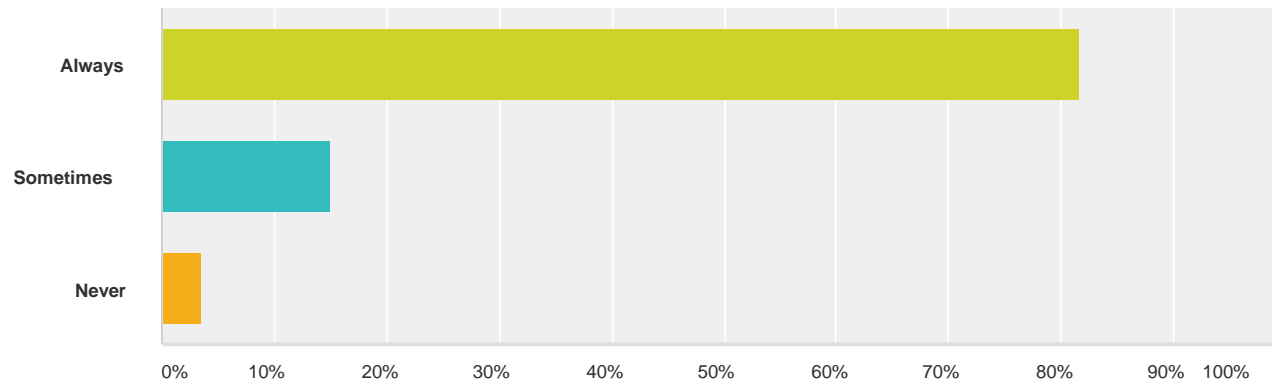
### Q5 How many RLA meetings have you attended in the past year?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 4



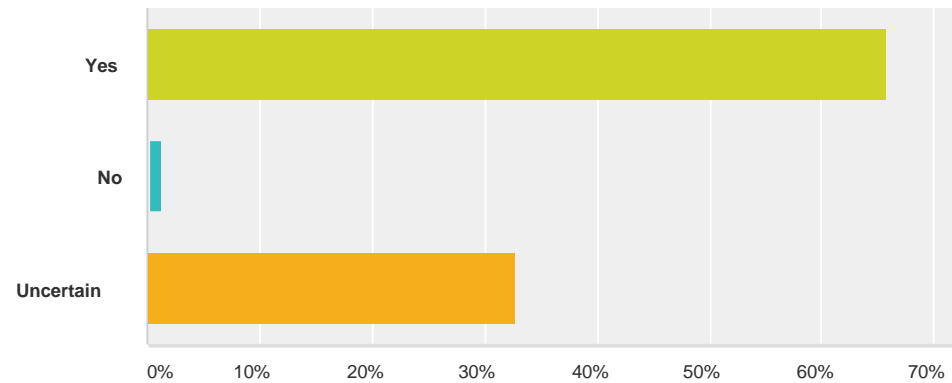
## Q6 How often do you support the RLA by paying your membership dues?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 0



## Q7 (ALWAYS) First of all, thank you for your continued support. Second, if a plan was developed that you believed would improve the lake, would you be willing to give money beyond your membership dues?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 17





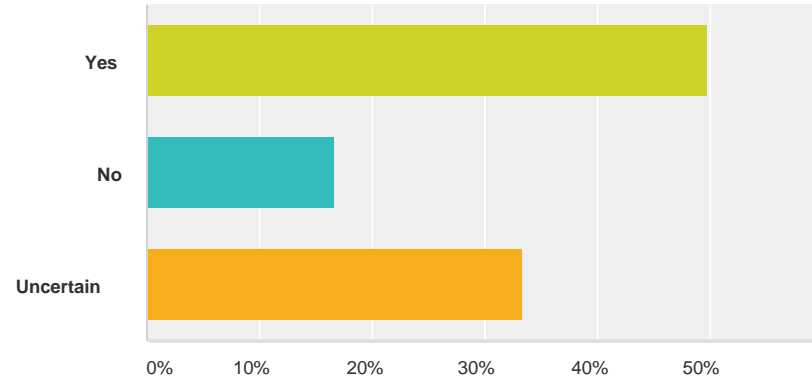
**Q8 (SOMETIMES) Please let us know why you choose to support the RLA some years but not others.**

Answered: 10 Skipped: 77

Responses
Aggressive abusive behaviors by board members in clique. Closed meetings with no clear method of community input or involvement. Water quality practices that wasted money and degraded water quality leading to unhealthy unsafe situation. Gang mentality towards any voices raised against aggressive individuals agendas. Weak ineffectual leadership despite complaints or concerns raised by community. Ignoring evidence of septic system pollution submitted to board. Poor service.
It's a matter of money not intent or apathy
Lack of any responsible direction of RLA Board.
Never used the lake
There have been years that the quality of the lake made swimming at Martin Park a far better alternative.
I am not comfortable with the operation of the RLA. I find it difficult to figure out how to participate. I find decisions are made with my dues that I have no awareness of or input to. Most recent meetings that I was aware of were held on sat mornings .... For people that hold full time jobs M-F 9-5 Sat are generally reserved for family time, doc appts and errands. Why are meetings not held mid-week evenings .... Similar to town meetings and school meetings .... With an annual calendar I believe more folks would be able to plan their attendance.

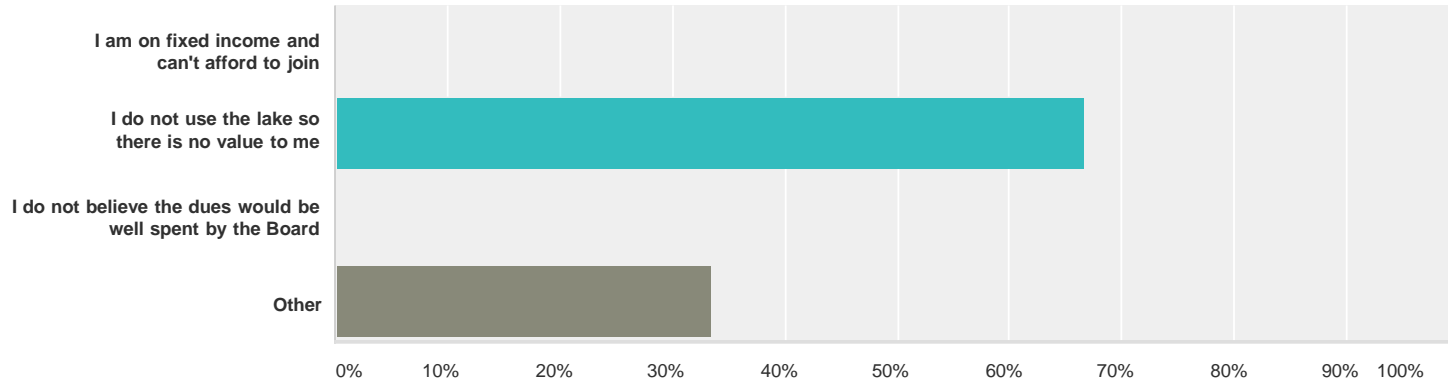
**Q9 (SOMETIMES) If a plan was developed that you believed would improve the lake, would you support the RLA every year by paying your membership dues?**

Answered: 12 Skipped: 75



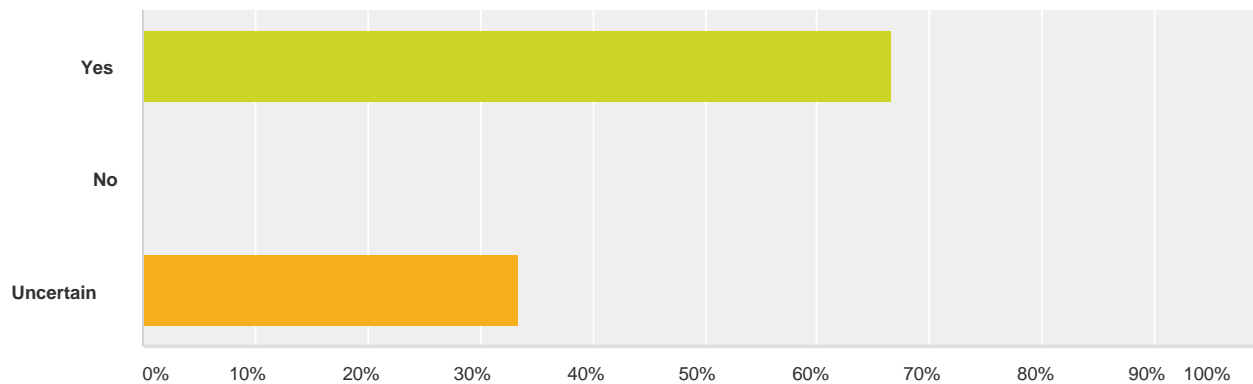
### Q10 (NEVER) Please let us know why you choose not to pay your RLA membership dues

Answered: 3 Skipped: 84



### Q11 (NEVER) If a plan was developed that you believed would improve the lake, would you support the RLA by paying your membership dues?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 84



# Q12 Using the 5 point scale, please rate your level of agreement with the following opinions.

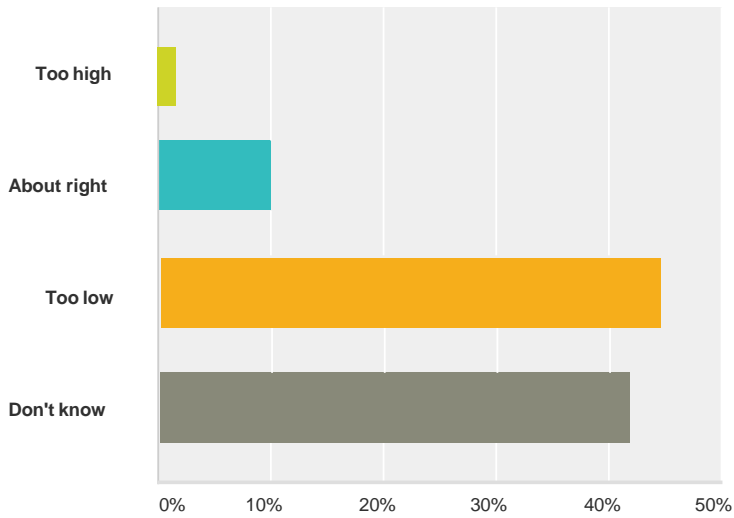
Answered: 79 Skipped: 8

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No answer/uncertain	Total	Weighted Average
There's nothing wrong with our lake	74.03% 57	19.48% 15	1.30% 1	2.60% 2	0.00% 0	2.60% 2	77	1.31
The lake is fine as it is. We should continue doing what we've been doing	53.16% 42	31.65% 25	8.86% 7	1.27% 1	0.00% 0	5.06% 4	79	1.56
We should stop all chemical treatments immediately	30.77% 24	28.21% 22	21.79% 17	0.00% 0	3.85% 3	15.38% 12	78	2.03
All of the weeds in our lake are bad	24.05% 19	37.97% 30	16.46% 13	1.27% 1	5.06% 4	15.19% 12	79	2.12
The lake is filling in and there's no stopping it	15.79% 12	39.47% 30	9.21% 7	9.21% 7	5.26% 4	21.05% 16	76	2.35
We should drain the lake for a year to let the muck settle out and compact before refilling	24.05% 19	7.59% 6	12.66% 10	11.39% 9	5.06% 4	39.24% 31	79	2.44
Fishing in the lake is important to me	21.52% 17	18.99% 15	24.05% 19	20.25% 16	15.19% 12	0.00% 0	79	2.89
Chemical treatments are the most cost effective way to maintain the lake	8.97% 7	7.69% 6	28.21% 22	15.38% 12	3.85% 3	35.90% 28	78	2.96
Frequent deep draw-downs would help flush out nutrients from our lake	3.90% 3	9.09% 7	15.58% 12	19.48% 15	5.19% 4	46.75% 36	77	3.24
Skating on the lake is important to me	8.86% 7	10.13% 8	22.78% 18	43.04% 34	13.92% 11	1.27% 1	79	3.44
Dredging is the only way to fix our lake	6.49% 5	9.09% 7	15.58% 12	22.08% 17	16.88% 13	29.87% 23	77	3.48
The Board uses the website effectively to communicate with the community	5.06% 4	13.92% 11	20.25% 16	30.38% 24	17.72% 14	12.66% 10	79	3.48
I am satisfied with the work the Board does/has done to build the community around the lake	5.06% 4	16.46% 13	18.99% 15	35.44% 28	18.99% 15	5.06% 4	79	3.49
I can tolerate more weeds in the lake if it leads to better water quality	7.69% 6	12.82% 10	12.82% 10	43.59% 34	15.38% 12	7.69% 6	78	3.50
We should minimize chemical treatments as much as possible	3.80% 3	11.39% 9	18.99% 15	40.51% 32	11.39% 9	13.92% 11	79	3.51
I am satisfied with the work the Board does/has done to manage the lake itself	5.06% 4	12.66% 10	20.25% 16	31.65% 25	20.25% 16	10.13% 8	79	3.55
The Board has always been transparent in its decision-making, expenditures and governance	8.86% 7	10.13% 8	20.25% 16	24.05% 19	26.58% 21	10.13% 8	79	3.55
Swimming in the lake is important to me	10.26% 8	15.38% 12	11.54% 9	29.49% 23	33.33% 26	0.00% 0	78	3.60
Purchasing water testing equipment would be a good use of our membership dues	2.56% 2	7.69% 6	20.51% 16	33.33% 26	14.10% 11	21.79% 17	78	3.62
The Board has always been trustworthy	2.56% 2	15.38% 12	21.79% 17	24.36% 19	29.49% 23	6.41% 5	78	3.67

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No answer/uncertain	Total	Weighted Average
Hiring an inland water scientist (limnologist) to study our lake would be a good use of our membership dues	6.41% 5	10.26% 8	8.97% 7	41.03% 32	25.64% 20	7.69% 6	78	3.75
Investigating natural approaches of maintaining the lake should be our top priority	3.80% 3	7.59% 6	16.46% 13	41.77% 33	21.52% 17	8.86% 7	79	3.76
Lawn care is a major contributor to the nutrients in our lake	1.27% 1	3.80% 3	16.46% 13	40.51% 32	13.92% 11	24.05% 19	79	3.82
Socializing with others in the community is important to me	2.56% 2	2.56% 2	24.36% 19	47.44% 37	23.08% 18	0.00% 0	78	3.86
The Board communicates effectively with me	2.53% 2	8.86% 7	15.19% 12	43.04% 34	26.58% 21	3.80% 3	79	3.86
Failing septic tanks and fields are a major contributor to the nutrients in our lake	0.00% 0	2.53% 2	21.52% 17	27.85% 22	17.72% 14	30.38% 24	79	3.87
Some of the weeds in our lake are beneficial	0.00% 0	5.06% 4	15.19% 12	44.30% 35	18.99% 15	16.46% 13	79	3.92
We should put usability at the top of our priority list	2.53% 2	5.06% 4	18.99% 15	34.18% 27	34.18% 27	5.06% 4	79	3.97
Improved water quality in the lake would increase my property value	1.27% 1	7.59% 6	10.13% 8	34.18% 27	45.57% 36	1.27% 1	79	4.17
The lake adds value to my property	3.80% 3	6.33% 5	8.86% 7	20.25% 16	58.23% 46	2.53% 2	79	4.26
If the lake dried up, my property value would go down	2.53% 2	10.13% 8	6.33% 5	13.92% 11	64.56% 51	2.53% 2	79	4.31
The lake was a determining factor in my decision to live here	2.53% 2	8.86% 7	5.06% 4	20.25% 16	62.03% 49	1.27% 1	79	4.32
The lake's shallowness is a problem in our lake	0.00% 0	3.80% 3	10.13% 8	24.05% 19	45.57% 36	16.46% 13	79	4.33
We should look for ways to improve water circulation within the lake	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6.41% 5	41.03% 32	34.62% 27	17.95% 14	78	4.34
The water quality in our lake should be our major focus	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.86% 7	48.10% 38	43.04% 34	0.00% 0	79	4.34
The high phosphorous level is a problem in our lake	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 6	25.64% 20	33.33% 26	33.33% 26	78	4.38
We should choose a long term approach that is practical, environmentally friendly and sustainable	0.00% 0	1.27% 1	7.59% 6	39.24% 31	50.63% 40	1.27% 1	79	4.41
Without Intervention the lake will eventually fill in	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6.41% 5	24.36% 19	52.56% 41	16.67% 13	78	4.55
We should make the long term health of the lake our top priority	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.85% 3	29.49% 23	65.38% 51	1.28% 1	78	4.62
The lake is a valuable asset to our community	1.27% 1	0.00% 0	6.33% 5	18.99% 15	72.15% 57	1.27% 1	79	4.63
The scenic beauty of the lake is important to me	1.27% 1	0.00% 0	3.80% 3	18.99% 15	75.95% 60	0.00% 0	79	4.68

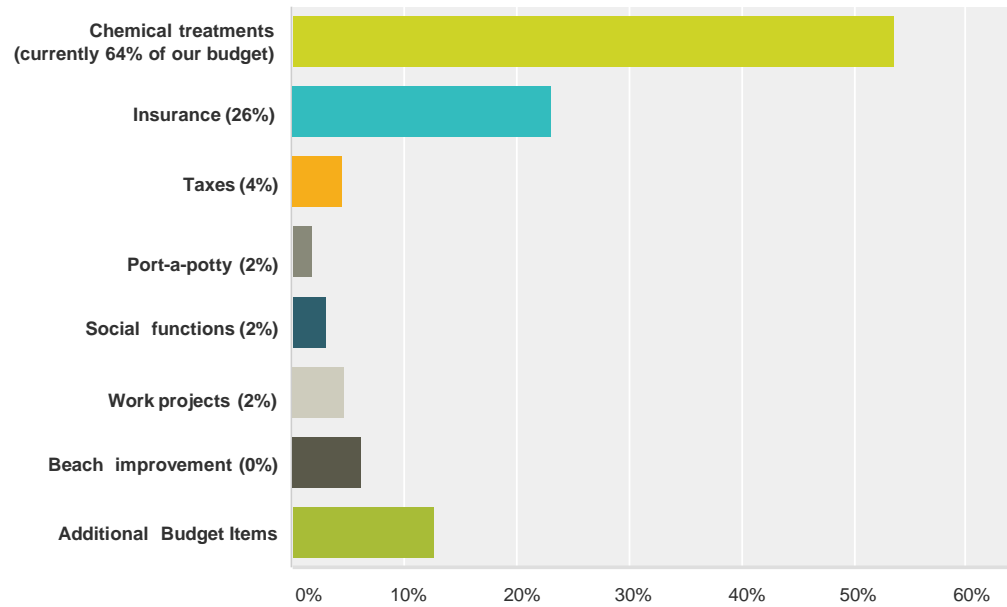
**Q13 Expenditures: Our 2016 budget is roughly \$31,000. Do you think this amount is**

Answered: 74 Skipped: 13



**Q14 Expenditures: What percentage of our membership dues should go to each of the following categories? The percentages shown are from our 2016 budget. Note: your percentages should add to 100.**

Answered: 42 Skipped: 45



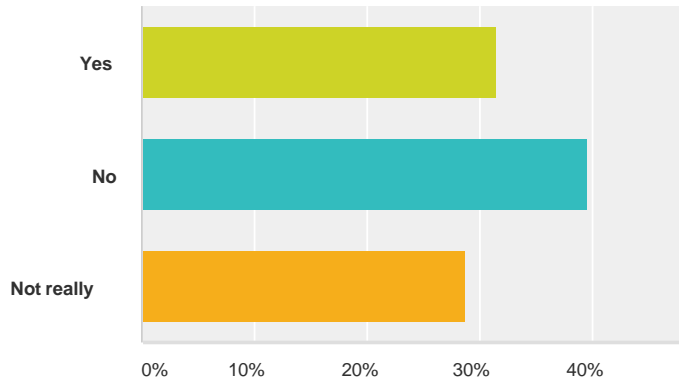
## Q15 Additional budget items

Answered: 27 Skipped: 60

Responses
Investigate selective dredging
Floating islands, soil stabilization on slopes, buffer plantings with ericaceous species, daphnia, fundraising social events, zero valent iron nutrient barriers, dam soil stabilization, education, septic tank pumping group rate, savings to be used towards limited soil removal projects targeting areas by beaches and along roads that are easily reached with excavators and that can be done after drawdown
Research and consultations w limnologists. Look into adding sterile carp!!
Patrol to verify lake membership/private lake - We often have non-members fishing off our dock - membership needs to be enforced somehow. Creating a large fundraising event instead of social functions could go towards a large scale initiative to save the lake. Let the community rally around the lake vs. the same old BBQ and tag sale - and those who don't want to help the lake, don't have to show up. Once lake is in good condition, sharing weekly lake conditions (with measurements etc.), life guards, nice bathrooms and larger nicer beaches would be great. Perhaps those that want to use the lake who are not members can pay each time they use the beach or fish (i.e. \$10 per family to use the beach for non-members etc.) Use this extra \$ for bettering the health of the lake.
Educational programs about proper lake management/community therapy!
Please give some attention to the small beach.
While we would like to see a more organic way to care for and sustain the lake and would rather not see long term chemical treatment I have no idea at what point we would start reducing that portion of the budget and so can't speak specifically to the budget and trust the board to ultimately make the best decision.
Lake expert (limnologist?); dredging coves or most shallow areas; aeration for some areas; plantings around exposed lake perimeters; algae eating carp (possibly)...not sure which of these is most realistic/cost effective?
Test spot dredging of nutrient rich muck in coves.
Add add't native plants and buffer zones: continue ed. on lake pollutants
Dues should build the capital fund (as well as voluntary additional contributions).
Life guard might bring insurance cost down. Also port a John on both beaches would be nice.
Annual non-chemical treatments
Community awareness program
Selective dredging of coves
Environmentally friendly treatments
Dredge fund
No way to change the percentages without an increase in income.
There are no 'additional' items unless the lake is cared for and usable. No need for beach improvement, work projects etc if it is going to be a swamp and not used for swimming, boating, fishing etc. So the budget question is difficult to answer clearly. I would prefer a higher % for 'treating' the lake if we could find grant money etc for dredging or other more sustainable options.
Would be nice if we could move away from chemical treatments and invest in a longterm solution. But, until we know what that longterm solution is, I don't see a point in changing the budget allocation.
Dredging
Education, septic lawn-care, clubhouse, parking.
Long term management of lake. Need a more sustainable approach instead of just chemical treatments!!!

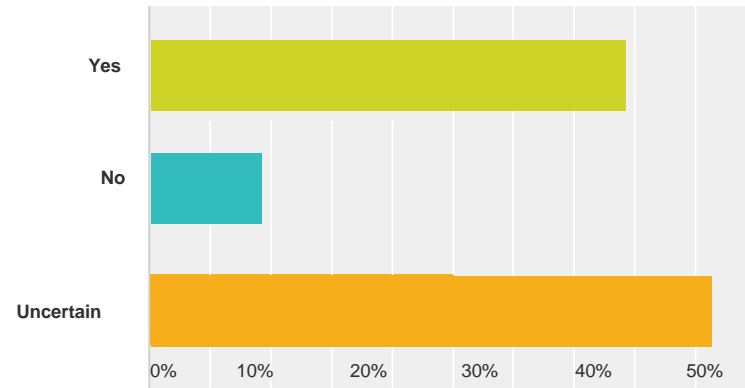
### Q16 Do you understand what a floating wetlands does?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 14



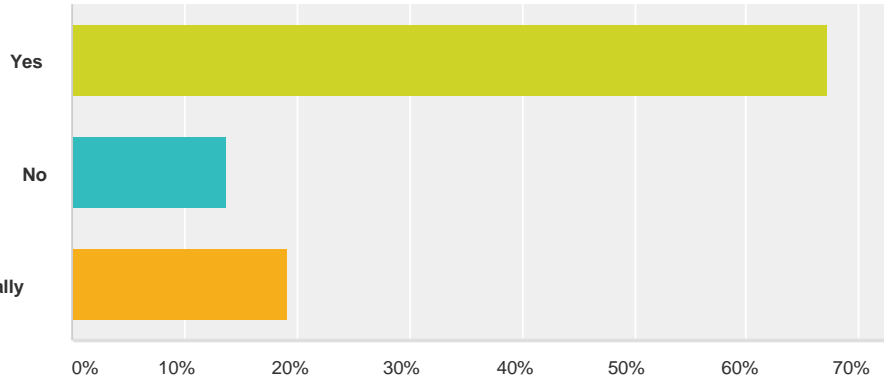
### Q17 If a floating wetlands would help improve the water quality of the lake would you be willing to have it in your view of the lake?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 14



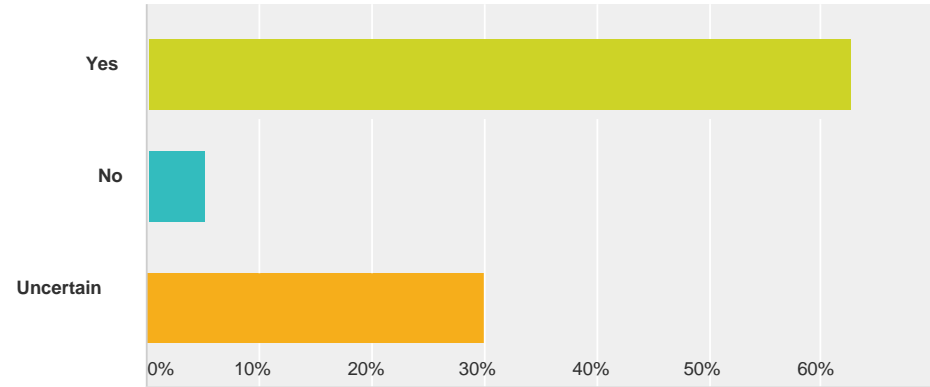
### Q18 Do you understand what a pond/lake aerator does ?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 14



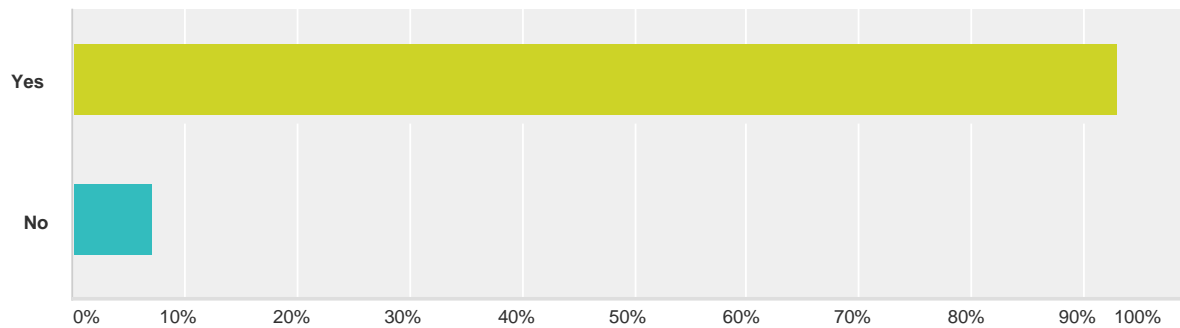
### Q19 If a pond/lake aerator would help improve the water quality in the lake, would you be willing to have it in your view of the lake?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 14



### Q20 If dredging would improve the water quality of they lake would you be willing to have that done?

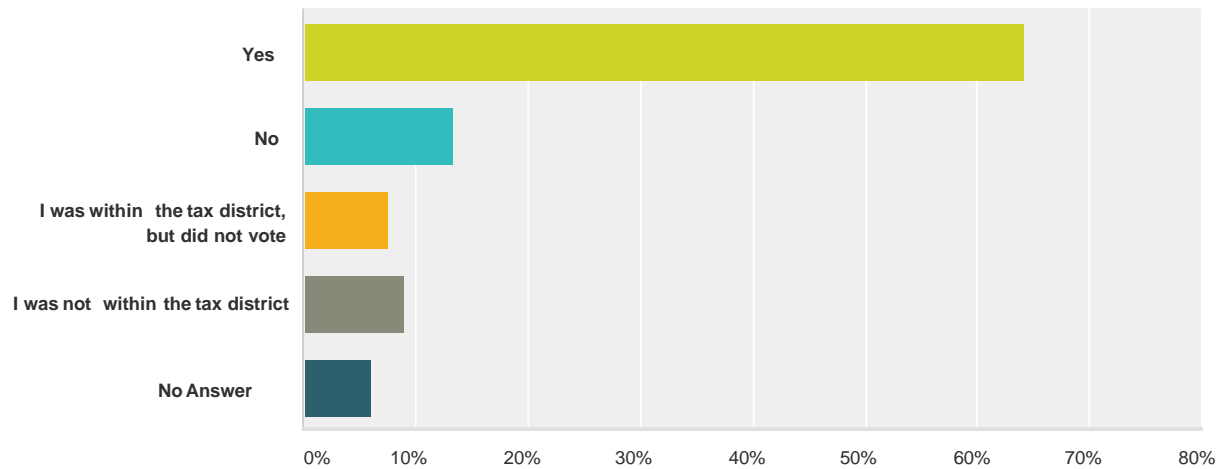
Answered: 70 Skipped: 17



**Q21 Tax district vote: We'd like to remind you, at this point, that your responses are anonymous. Still, we understand that your vote on the tax district is very personal. If you are not comfortable answering this question, please don't answer. We think it's important to be able to compare and contrast the opinion scores of the Yes voters vs. the No voters. Please answer only if you're comfortable doing so.**

### How did you vote on the tax district?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 20





## Q22 Please add any questions/comments.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 61

Responses
I feel that dredging is the only long term (?) solution, perhaps I'm wrong. Its man made and needs maintenance- as a pool does.
We need a tax district to raise the proper funding required to improve and maintain our lake.
Add carp to the lake.
Many lakes have better managment at less cost. Example of excessive cost. Mamanasco is 30% larger and spend less. Is that a better lake are there problems diffrent?
Without a tax district, I'd like to know the board's plans to afford maintaining the lake. It has made us strongly consider selling our house before the property value falls more as the cove we live on continues to shallow.
The rhetoric on the RLA website prior to the Tax District Vote was absolutely appalling. I nearly voted "No" as a result of comments made by pro-Tax District people on the site. Should this process be pursued in the future, the conversation needs to be managed better. Social Media might not be the correct forum to do that.
I believe Harry Sewell had water testing equipment. Limnologists have previously been hired over the years, I'm not sure any new information would be learned, new board members should be encouraged to review the previously submitted limnologist reports.
Not sure how helpful it is to ask such questions as "If a floating what's-a-hoosis would improve the lake, would you support it?" Sort of like, if aliens landed on the lake & cleaned it all up, would you support it? Maybe an explanation of what a floating wetlands & aerator are (how big? how loud? how expensive? etc), would help people make a more informed choice.
Dredging is very expensive, would it actually help long term and who would pay for it?? I would like to see more or all Board meetings open in the interest of transparency to promote trust and cooperation.
Floating wetlands are a waste of money.
I was of the understanding that we were not in the tax district. If we were, I would have voted "no". The tax district lines seemed to be ambiguous, at best. It was misleading to the point of almost seeming underhanded as to whom was in the tax district.
We don,t have money to dredge in my opinion and am uncertain that until other problems are addressed if it would be a lasting solution. The lake is a complex organism , no simple answers. Do think if we work together we can make good progress in improvements. It didn,t get in this state overnight and we won,t be able to fix it overnight. Appealing to homeowners to first of all take care of any pollution their property contributes and education is a good place to start. When we are all more involved , more people will contribute to dues. Thanks for the survey and good luck to all of us.
In terms of the previous page (percentages related to how budget is spent), I defer to the board. I left it blank because the board knows more about funding needs than I do. I do not own a house on the lake, but I walk or bike ride around the lake most every day and have watched the blue/green algae blooms grow each year. But this is a problem not unique to us. I see the algae blooms in many lakes and ponds throughout the Northeast. And now we see the algae problem in Florida. So, this is a huge environmental issue, and I admire the board for their efforts to combat it. The lake community is a special one, and it makes me sad to see how much acrimony has developed between home owners over the debate about how to solve the algae infestation. I wish I could do more to help all of you. Thank you for your efforts. I know you have a very difficult job.
A number of my answers are unsure as I don't have the information for an opinion. I have always trusted our board. I feel they volunteer their time and of course are interested in the quality of our lake, as much if not more than I. As such I leave it to those members with the information to make the decisions they feel are best. I was very disappointed the tax didn't pass. While we don't want to have to police our lake, I do feel it's used by those who don't pay without consequence. I don't know the answer necessarily but it would seem tightening up that issue may result in more \$ for the lake.
2% spent on social annoys me. It is my opinion, that the residents in the 'club' attend .... In my opinion it is the same families .... Why should my dues go to this entertainment???.... Holding social things in someone's home that I have never met .... I would never walk into a strangers home and not feel uncomfortable...neighbor or not. This is one of serval reasons my dues are not paid consistently
I appreciate all of the effort, time and energy the board and others have put in. I was sorry the tax district didn't pass. Perhaps people should find out their home appraisal if there is no lake and they would have voted differently
The board works hard and its efforts are greatly appreciated. We need to fix the lake. Everyone should contribute financially, though I know that is not likely.
Let's decide to dredge it or drain it and turn it into a field/park. It would be more attractive than what we have today, especially in terms of property value.
Can any board meetings be held in the evenings?