

Request for Prohibition of De-Icers in Dryden Lakes

Bubblers and de-icers are devices used to prevent the formation of ice on the surface of water bodies, particularly in cold climates. These devices are used to maintain open water areas around docks, piers, marinas, and other waterfront structures during the winter months. Unfortunately, these devices come with several risks, including impacts on public safety, water quality, fish spawning, and recreational activities. These risks are outlined in more detail below. I ask that these are taken into consideration and that a bylaw prohibiting their use can be considered for the City of Dryden.

Some other municipalities have instituted bylaws prohibiting the use of de-icers or creating bylaws to regulate their use. Please refer to Appendix A.

Public Safety

- Thin Ice: De-icers create thin ice and open water, posing risks of injury or drowning for snowmobilers and other recreational users.
 - Navigation Hazards: Snowmobilers often travel close to the shoreline in poor weather, where open water from de-icers increases safety risks. During winter storms or heavy snowfall, it may be difficult to see areas where de-icers or bubblers are in use, increasing the risk of accidents.
- Signage and Awareness: Lack of proper signage and public awareness about the presence of these devices can lead to dangerous situations.

- Wildlife: Thin ice and open water endanger animals crossing the lake.

Water Quality

- Algae Growth: The Ministry of the Environment has told us that there is concern for increased risk of algae growth by altering lake temperatures and light conditions.
- Stirring up of sediment in the lake can release phosphorus
- Water filters: Increased sediment stirred by de-icers has led to more frequent water filter changes, indicating poorer water quality.

Fish Spawning Habitat

- Disruption of Natural Habitat: Fish, especially those that spawn in shallow areas, may be disturbed by the continuous movement of water caused by de-icers or bubblers. This can affect their natural spawning behaviours and success rates.
- Temperature Alterations: De-icers and bubblers can cause localized warming of water, which might disrupt the spawning cycles of temperature-sensitive species. Fish rely on specific temperature cues to initiate spawning, and changes can delay or inhibit this process.
- Sediment Resuspension: The movement caused by these devices can stir up sediments from the bottom, which can smother fish eggs and reduce the survival rate of embryos.
- Stress: Continuous operation of de-icers and bubblers can create a stressful environment for some fish species. Stress can lead to reduced spawning activity and lower reproductive success.

Recreational Use

-Risk of Injury, as outlined in public safety: The presence of open water or thin ice created by bubblers and de-icers increases the risk of skaters falling through the ice, which can lead to serious injuries or fatalities.

-Decreased Usable Space: Large areas of open water reduce the available space for ice skating and other winter sports.

-Inaccessibility with snowmobiles and ATVs

To ensure public safety, protect water quality, preserve fish habitats, and maintain the lake's recreational value, we request the prohibition of de-icers in Dryden Lakes.

Appendix A

Examples of bylaws existing for other locales:

“In 2018, Manitoba Parks developed a policy which addressed the use of winter dock bubblers, de-icers and submersible water pumps installed by owners and occupiers of vacation home lots within Provincial Parks.

Dock bubblers and/or submersible pumps are typically installed at the edge of docks and/or boathouse structures, used as a preventative measure to mitigate against ice damage to such public reserve development. However, this practice of installing pumps results in areas of open water and unsafe ice conditions that pose a risk to neighbouring cottagers and ice users alike.

Due to the high risk to public safety and liability concerns associated with this activity, Manitoba Parks strictly prohibits the independent use of any equipment installed within the water to create thin ice or open water conditions within Provincial Parks.”



Scan this QR code to view a website with an interesting article about bubbler pumps/de-icers
Or click on this (electronic copy) -

<https://cottagelife.com/general/why-this-ontario-municipality-decided-to-regulate-lake-de-icers/>