

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT BAN REMAINS INTACT

by Babs Shapiro

The ban on jet skis, aka personal watercraft, remains intact on those lakes which had sought and fought for a law to protect them. The Maine Supreme Court upheld the law, passed in April of 2000, which had recently been challenged by an individual on Lake St. George in Liberty, to test its legality. The court sided with tradition, deeming that jet-skis are a safety risk.

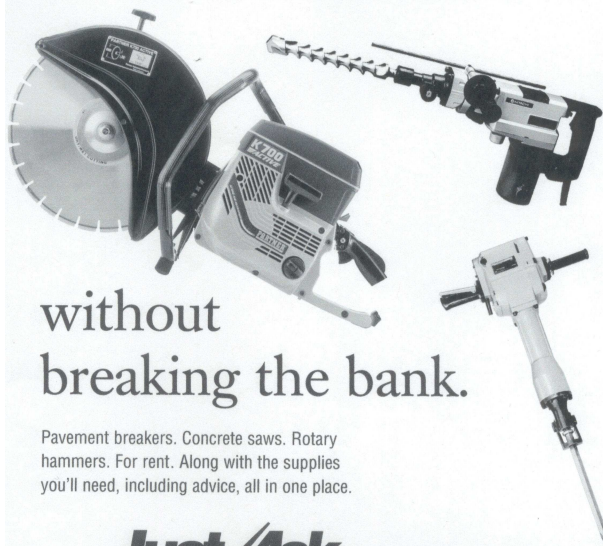
Over eight years ago, Tripp Lake and the Range Ponds worked together, polling members on their wishes regarding jet skis. Over 60% responded, saying they wanted to ban the watercraft from their lakes. Only 4% indicated otherwise. Names were put on a petition, which went to Poland residents for a vote, then to the Fish and Game Department for their recommendation. The final drama took place on a snowy day in March 2000, when seven members of TLIA went to Augusta to speak at a public hearing. Few spoke in opposition and it was passed into law as an emergency measure a month later.

The reasons for implementing the law were numerous, but water quality was the primary decision-maker. Failure to protect Maine's lakes would result in great economic losses; restoration of water quality is prohibitively expensive and technically difficult to achieve. Excessive noise, threats to nesting loons and fish, discharge of unburned fuel and reckless driving were other reasons for passing this bill. We are grateful to the Maine Supreme Court for their continuous support in protecting smaller lakes.



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