

Whitefish Lake nears record-high water level

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By **Whitefish Pilot**

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Whitefish Lake is at record-high water levels due to spring precipitation. High water levels create safety hazards such as submerged obstacles, rocks, and floating debris and can lead to increase rates of shoreline erosion, according to the Whitefish Lake Institute.

The Whitefish Lake Institute has compiled 61 years of lake elevation data for Whitefish Lake, and the only date higher than the level measured on June 20, 2022 (3002.15 feet) was on June 6, 1961 (3002.48 feet). Between 1957-2014, the mean high-water elevation was 3,000.5 feet above sea level. WLI installed a temperature and lake level logger in Whitefish Lake in 2021, and real-time data is now available at www.whitefishlake.org.

The City of Whitefish and WLI are receiving calls from lakefront homeowners concerned about wake-induced shoreline erosion, and several homeowners have indicated water is now overtopping their retaining walls. WLI says that shoreline erosion has many consequences on the aquatic environment including habitat destruction, an increase in sedimentation in the water leading to a loss of water clarity, and the release of nutrients (phosphorous and nitrogen) that promote algal blooms. Shoreline erosion can also result in the loss of land and affect shoreline property values.

Boaters, especially wakeboard boats, should stay farther from shore to reduce erosion and impacts to the shoreline.