

## **Boating season is upon us**

Many boaters just hook up and go to the lake for that first boat ride, hoping that everything works when they get there. There are a few precautions you can take to avoid damage to both your boat and the lake environment.

Many plants, animals and people depend on the ecologically and economically imperative Lake Windermere. By taking time to consider your actions and their impact on our lake environment, you help make Lake Windermere a more enjoyable place for all.

Diesel, gas, and petroleum lubricants are harmful to aquatic environments. Boat engines, automatic bilge pumps, fuel handling facilities, and on-water accidents are common sources of the significant quantities of oil and gas found in our waterways. It is estimated that up to 1 billion litres of oil-derived fuel and lubricants enter North America's waters every year from recreational boating. This is more than 15 times the 257,000 barrels of oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez in 1989.

Even small fuel spills in the water are enough to kill aquatic species and contaminate drinking water sources. Using a funnel when fueling tanks and filling lubricants can prevent these spills. Having cloths available to wipe up any overflows and drips also helps reduce water contamination.

When cleaning your boat, be sure to use environmentally friendly products. Local retailers carry a number of different products that are non-toxic, biodegradable and phosphate free. Always remove your boat from the water while cleaning and avoid discharging the wash/rinse water directly into the lake.

The Lake Windermere Project's 2005 Lake-Use Survey found that 32% of respondents are dependent on Lake Windermere to meet the following needs beyond recreation: general household use (71.0%); drinking water (47.7%); or garden irrigation (6.2%). Please keep this in mind when working with gas, oil or cleaning products on or around the lake.

For tips on safe fuelling or alternatives to toxic cleaners visit the Transport Canada website at [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca), or contact the Lake Windermere Project at 341-6898. You can also visit the Project office located in the old District of Invermere office beside the Invermere Community Centre. The Lake Windermere Project is a long-term comprehensive stewardship program dedicated to safeguarding the health of our lake.