

Fairness for Clear Lake

What We've Found So Far

December 2025

This summary presents information found in Parks Canada's certified record (CTR) and Access-to-Information (ATIP) releases about the 2025 boating decision. It outlines dates, documents, and statements as they appear in those sources.

Relevant documents include:

- **Certified record (CTR) filed by Parks Canada (July 3, 2025):** lists all materials Parks Canada states were considered by the Superintendent of Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP) when making the May 14, 2025 decision on watercraft management for Clear Lake.
 - **ATIP releases (access-to-information):** includes internal Question Period (QP) cards prepared after the reversal and notes on RMNP engagements with stakeholders.
 - **Other public letters and news articles** (see complete list of references on page 4).
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Timeline of Events

Apr 9, 2024 — Premier Wab Kinew urges Parks Canada not to ban boats on Clear Lake ([read here](#)). The Premier voiced concerns over an apparent “unilateral decision” by the federal government and supported keeping Clear Lake open.

Apr 9, 2024 — KOFN letter to Premier Wab Kinew (CTR Appendix H). States opposition to permitting motorized watercraft (prefers non-motorized only or full ban if warranted). The Premier's public statements about motorized access are outside the CTR/ATIP.

Nov 28, 2024 — KOFN letter to Parks Canada (Borden Smid) (CTR Appendix G). Reiterates opposition to motorized watercraft.

Jan 28, 2025 — Parks Canada Bulletin announces One Boat One Lake (OBOL) and opens consultation (CTR Appendix E). “In 2025, Parks plans to permit watercraft on Clear Lake under a ‘one boat, one lake’ aquatic invasive species prevention program ... similar to the one implemented in 2023.” Launches in-person and online public input through February 2025. The announcement also states eradication is not feasible and commits to managing impacts and to the vitality of the local tourism economy. By this date, Parks had received the 2024 KOFN letters noted above.

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Jan 28–Feb 28, 2025 — Public engagement survey open (*CTR Appendix F*). Summarized in the *What We Heard* report, Parks Canada’s public engagement survey collected 2,934 responses and shows very strong support for OBOL and for returning the 2023 inspection/tag & seal program. Multiple closed-ended items show public opposition to banning motorized watercraft.

Apr–early May 2025 — Internal note of KOFN position/litigation threat (*See CTR Briefing Note, p. 4, p. 10 for the document noting this*). Parks Canada’s internal “Current Situation” records that KOFN opposed motorized watercraft and that, if motors were permitted, KOFN would file for a judicial review and injunction. There are no KOFN-authored 2025 documents in the CTR making that threat; it appears only in Parks Canada’s internal text.

May 14, 2025 — Briefing Note, signed for decision (*See CTR Briefing Note*). Recommends only non-motorized watercraft for 2025, with a same-day decision to allow time to “inform the public.” Rationale cites prioritization of ecological integrity, alignment with KOFN’s “desired state of lake management,” and states the 2024 closure did not significantly impact visitation/revenue. Also references an internal note that permitting motors may trigger judicial review or injunction.

May 20, 2025 — Letter from Hon. Jamie Moses to Hon. Julie Dabrusin (*read [here](#)*). As Manitoba’s Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation, Minister Moses expressed concern over Parks Canada’s lack of meaningful consultation with the community and highlighted the economic impacts of the boat ban, requesting financial relief measures to support local businesses.

May 29, 2025 — Question Period cards prepared. (*See ATIP QP Cards*) Communications frame 2025 motorized watercraft ban as a “precautionary” approach enabling monitoring and scientific study. The cards acknowledge Parks Canada had announced OBOL and that “plans have changed,” anticipate mixed reactions, and note the *What We Heard* report release was delayed in April.

July 29, 2025 — FFCL Town Hall (*see full recording [here](#)*). At the event, Andrew Campbell, Senior Vice-President Operations at Parks Canada, stated the reversal was due to a potential, singular threat of legal action. He did not name KOFN in the meeting.

Oct 24, 2025 — Brandon Sun interview with Chief Blackbird (*read [here](#)*). Chief Blackbird publicly acknowledged making the legal threat that precipitated the 2025 boat ban.

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Jan-Feb 2025 Public Engagement Survey Responses

Sample: 2,934 responses; 42% own motorized boats, 39% do not use motorized boats.

Highlights from closed-ended items:

- Allow ONLY non-motorized watercraft: Support 34% vs Oppose 60%.
- Allow non-motorize AND motorized watercraft: Support 71% vs Oppose 23%
- Designated hours for motorboats: Support 27% vs Oppose 58%.
- Designated areas for motorboats: Support 27% vs Oppose 59%.
- Effect of motors on experience: 57% say motors contribute vs 21.6% say detract.

Highlights from open comments (1,092 total): Parks Canada's summary characterizes "very strong support" for OBOL and a return to the 2023 tagging and inspection program.

Indigenous perspectives noted in the documents

Coalition of First Nations (CFN) / Riding Mountain Forum (RMF): Formally recognized consultation body, has engaged with Parks Canada for years. Earlier ATIP materials indicate CFN/RMF did not support boating restrictions on Clear Lake.

KOFN: Holds specific rights and interests at Clear Lake. Letters in 2024 oppose motorized access. In 2025, the threat of judicial review or injunction appears only in internal Parks Canada notes; the CTR contains no KOFN-authored 2025 letter threatening legal action.

Internal Record vs. Public Messaging

The internal record shows Parks Canada was aware of the considerable public support for the OBOL policy for 2025 and confirms a shift in focus from zebra mussel eradication to management. Internal notes also show concern over the risk of KOFN legal action.

Parks Canada's public messaging defended the policy reversal without referencing a legal threat. Instead, their messaging reframed the restrictions as precautionary and as enabling further monitoring and study. The *What We Heard* report, which shows widespread support for allowing motorized watercraft, was not released publicly until after the May decision.

Why it matters: The timeline of events and the inconsistency between the internal record and public messaging underscore that the policy reversal was not fairly and transparently reasoned or communicated to the public.

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Why this matters to the community

- When done safely under OBOL, boating supports local jobs and year-round vitality, while also preventing the spread of AIS to other bodies of water.
- Parks Canada’s own survey shows no majority support for a total motorized ban, and their comment summary says support for OBOL was “very strong.”
- We’re asking for fair, clear policies, and a return to the practical, balanced OBOL plan that Parks Canada had announced on Jan 28, 2025.

Appendices & References

Item	Location	Date
Clear Lake AIS Briefing Note to the RMNP Superintendent	CTR p. 2	May 14, 2025
CTR Appendix A – Zebra Mussel Eradication Response and Initial Containment Plan	CTR p. 15	April, 2025
CTR Appendix B – Detailed Impact Assessment: Management of Zebra Mussels in Clear Lake	CTR p. 67	July 2024
CTR Appendix C – Options for Zebra Mussel Response Following Removal of Containment Curtain	CTR p. 239	Mid 2024
CTR Appendix D – Integrated Pest Management Plan & Authorization for Use of Pesticides	CTR p. 247	Late 2024
CTR Appendix E – Information Bulletin: Watercraft Management Measures for Clear Lake in 2025	CTR p. 267	Jan 28, 2025
CTR Appendix F – What We Heard Report: Watercraft Management Measures	CTR p. 269	Spring 2025
CTR Appendix G – Letter: Chief Dwane Blackbird to Parks Canada	CTR p. 291	Nov 28, 2024
CTR Appendix H – Re: Statement by Premier Kinew and Minister Moses; Chief Blackbird Letter	CTR p. 293	April 9, 2024
CTR Appendix I – SWOT Analysis – AIS Operations	CTR p. 295	2025-2026

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CTR Appendix J – Public Engagement / Consultations	CTR p. 301	Jan–Feb 2025
ATIP – QP cards prepared May 29, 2025	ATIP QP	May 29, 2025
ATIP – RMNP Engagements on Zebra Mussels in Clear Lake	ATIP RMNP	Feb 2, 2024
Letter from Hon. Jamie Moses to Hon. Julie Dabrusin	Read here	May 20, 2025
FFCL Town Hall July 29, 2025 (in-person, recorded)	Watch here	July 29, 2025
CBC: Premier Kinew urges Parks Canada to not ban boats	Read here	Apr 9, 2024
Brandon Sun interview with Chief Blackbird	Read here	Oct 24, 2025

Prepared by Fairness for Clear Lake, based on Parks Canada’s certified record and ATIP releases available to date.