

ITASCA COALITION OF LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

Wednesday, July 16, 2014
5:30 p.m. – Marcell Town Hall

Attendance:

Tom Nelson, ICOLA President/Deer Lake
Stephanie Kessler, ICOLA Vice-President/Johnson Lake
Jan Sandberg, ICOLA Secretary/Greater Pokegama

Tom Boland, Big Fork River
Rich Anderson, Deer Lake/AIS inspector
Dick Sandberg, Greater Pokegama
Paul & Dolly Warner, Horseshoe Lake
Catherine McLynn, Ice Lake
Marn & Marie Flicker, Jessie Lake
Harold Goetzman, Jessie Lake
Sue Swanson, Johnson Lake
Helen & Bob Ahlbrecht, King Lake
Glen & Shirley Foust, Shallow Lake
Bill & Lynda Grantges, Siseebakwet Lake
Tom and Barb Ryan, Suomi Area Lakes
Dick Fursa, Three Island Lake
Gayle Heggem, Three Island Lake

Jim Brauner, Turtle Lake
John & Sue Burrit, Turtle Lake
Betty & Harold Dzuik, Turtle Lake
John & Joan McCallum, Turtle Lake
Cec Reidman, Turtle Lake
Jim Schramm, Turtle Lake
Jack Adamson, Upper Prairie River
Dave Lick, Wabana Lake/IWLP
Terry Snyder, Itasca County Commissioner
Don Simons, Itasca Soil and Water
Conservation District Board
Jim Gustafson, Itasca Soil and Water
Conservation District
Paul Radomski, MN DNR

CALL TO ORDER: Tom Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:40. Representatives from 14 Itasca County lake associations were in attendance.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Tom led a round of introductions of those in attendance. Because of the lengthy agenda, ICOLA updates were started as members ate dinner.

4. MEMBER ASSOCIATION REPORTS/ICOLA UPDATES

A. Lake Association updates

Deer Lake

The Bible Camp issue is still in the courts but will be resolved soon. The annual Frolic is coming up August 12, a benefit for the association and all are invited. The Miss Ississippi giant puppet will be present. Due to high water, curly leaf pondweed did not return this year.

Deer Lake Watershed Association

They had a July 4th flotilla, continued work on the creek, and held a 5K run with a post-run social event.

Greater Pokegama Lake Association

GPLA had two meetings since the February ICOLA meeting. In April, we decided to continue with the scholarship, discussed the need for an ICOLA treasurer, discussed Board membership, updating the GPLA website, working with ICC to do water testing for this summer and discussing school trust lands and sales. In June, the Board hosted a very well attended meeting to discuss high water on the lake with the Army Corps of Engineers and Sheriff Vic Williams. The Board is considering a request to file a complaint with the EPA concerning the pushing of polluted water from the Mississippi River into the lake and the subsequent negative effects on water quality.

Jesse Lake

They moved their spring meeting to June as an attempt to get better attendance. Their issue for the past seven years was low water. They had discussed putting a dam on the creek. But this is no longer a problem for now. They put up 18x24" signs similar to those used at Splithand for AIS on three lake accesses. Their annual meeting is tomorrow and coming up is Share the Lake day.

Johnson Lake

Two small private islands were purchased by DNR and are now part of an aquatic management area. This spring they erected five "no-fishing in spawning area" signs. Their annual meeting is on August 9. Generally things are going well.

King Lake

They celebrated 4th of July with a boat parade and had great attendance. The annual meeting was held Memorial Day weekend and it was also well attended. There was a presentation of the Firewise program.

Sand Lake

The water is very high and they lost lake gauges due to the replacement of bridges. At a Northern Pike dinner, several fishermen were on the lake giving tips to fishermen. The zebra mussels are spreading throughout the lake. In response to a question, it was reported that he had seen no DNR inspection teams.

Sissibakwet

They held their membership meeting on Memorial Day with program by a local diver about structures in their lake. They are still working on the dam/wier. The boat parade on July 5th was cancelled part way through due to thunderstorms. They also added signs at accesses modeled on Splithand's signs.

Upper Prairie River

They are still fighting high water and wind that has produced considerable shoreline erosion. They are also monitoring for invasive species.

Turtle Lake

They held a boat parade on the 4th and a food shelf drive where members left donations from the end of each dock for pick-up with great results (nearly \$500 in donations and over 500 pounds of food). The Firewise Chipper program will be conducted next week. They are running the catch and release program this year through September 30. They are also updating the website to hopefully increase participation.

Wabana Lake

They made some changes in operations (fewer meetings, no Saturday meetings) to encourage more participation—it has been difficult to find persons to take office. They are trying to do more social stuff, a departure from previous emphasis on science although that emphasis will continue through the newsletter. A picnic last year was open to all and brought in 20 new members.

There was a question if anyone know about the condition of the wild rice crop. Responses were that it may be difficult this year due to the high water and that the crop is weak.

2. ADDITIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A draft agenda was distributed at the meeting and electronically before the meeting.

Motion to approve the agenda. Bill Grantges, Rich Anderson. M/S/U

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were distributed at the meeting and electronically before the meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes of June 18, 2014, as submitted. Terry Snyder, Jim Brauner . M/S/U

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sensitive Lakeshore—Paul Radomski

Tom introduced Paul Radomski, project manager with the DNR for the Sensitive Lakeshore project, published in 2012. See <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/sli/index.html> for a summary, the project manual, and reports for each lake studied (warning—some large files). The study was completed over a number of years and included lakes in Cass, Crow Wing and Itasca counties.

The work is driven by issues with development over time. Some areas are not suitable for development or may require additional protection. Also, there have been runoff issues with phosphorus and loss of habitat.

Tom commented on Paul's latest book, "Lakeshore Living," described as a philosophy of living on the lake. While it is an academic book, it is very readable including an interesting comparison and contrast of poetry and science. For information about the book see

http://msupress.org/books/book/?id=50-1D0-343E#_U8fj8fldXhI or

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/lakeshore-living-paul-j-radomski/1117163086?ean=9781611861181> or

<http://www.amazon.com/Paul-J.-Radomski/e/B00JEP73JI>

Paul continued noting that some shorelines are more sensitive than others. They wanted to rank the shoreline to give counties information to help them prioritize county work when reviewing or permitting development.

The team first looked at plants by conducting aquatic plant surveys on many lakes (a complete list of the lakes studied is on the DNR website at the link cited for the DNR above). They found a diverse range of plants in varied habitats, many of which are important for fish. They also mapped the emergent vegetation and unique plants, some of which are indicators of good water quality. Frogs are important indicators of health and on Turtle Lake the population was healthy and widely dispersed. Fish surveys included three specific species of greatest conservation need. Finally, they mapped all loon nests as loons have a very good eye for quality habitat.

They combined this biologic information with other information about the land to develop a map of sensitivity of various areas of the shoreline. Some of this information can be used to inform those interested in setting priorities for conservation easements.

Paul answered a lengthy series of questions:

What about rip-rap? It is one of many solutions but it does change the shoreline and it can fail.

With work on Sand Lake and the zebra mussel problem, is there a plan to return to the lake and evaluate its impact? Yes, they think that could be a good comparison. Sand Lake is one of several that they will return to.

What about a similar follow-up for aquatic invasive plants? The problem is that they did not get enough pre-infestation data. There has been a mixed situation—lakes with lots of disturbance have higher levels of the invasive plants getting established than others where infestation can settle at relatively low levels.

What about purple loosestrife? They did find it but it is not as dense as it was.

Question about wild rice—there are several surveyors out this year. It is worse for the wild rice if water rises too fast too late at a certain growth stage.

Jim Gustafson noted that SWCD has been working with lake associations to try to deal with the sensitive situations. This work may also require ordinance revisions by the county this year. SWCD is working to get RIM easements for eligible properties for wild rice.

Are the models from these three lakes going to be extended to other lakes? There is data on lakes from other DNR work including loon nesting.

Who will follow up on this? This was an LCCMR funded project but some work will continue through work with SWCD. There is some money to do conservation easements, as a voluntary way to protect the most sensitive shorelines.

How could this research translate to changes in zoning and what are the possible impediments? The concept of sensitive shoreline was included in the Itasca County comprehensive plan but it still needs to be included in ordinance. Jim Gustafson noted that the SWCD does shoreline alteration permit reviews and he can use this information to help convince owners to use good practices.

Is there any work being done on the effect of boathouses on sensitive shoreline? Paul is not aware of any current research although DNR looked at it several years ago. It is basically a matter of distance. A few years ago they did an analysis of all structures—docks, lifts, boats, other—published through Fisheries.

Has the current development on Turtle Lake impacted the sensitivity of the lakeshore? He doesn't think so as most of the development he saw was good. The problem is that lakeshore is slowly lost—a shifting baseline that is difficult to monitor.

Since the study started in Cass in 2007, how many man hours were spent? Paul listed five team members plus a number of interns. For Turtle, there 1,000 hours or so of work required.

Is there some way to put a warning system into the database? No, not without having someone do more data collection.

Was the application of the model reviewed? Yes, after application they went and looked at the rest of the data to determine validity.

Did they look at the bogs and swamps? Yes.

Is the numeric system on sensitivity MN specific? The numbers are specific to the lakes studied but the model is based on feedback from other DNRs.

Tom asked about concepts from Paul's book including the tragedy of the commons. Paul gave an example of who pays for the cost of waste products that possibly enter the water system. Perhaps we should pay those who own land for the services it provides to others, and charge those that pollute it.

B. Itasca County AIS Funding and Inspection Program—Bill Grantges

Bill described past work on AIS, including the table tents and similar materials. The new project focuses on boat launch inspections using funds from the Environmental Trust Fund and additional funds from Wabana Township, Wabana Lake Association and Deer Lake Association. They looked at a small number of high volume non-infested lakes. DNR is handling Pokegama and Bowstring. As of last weekend they completed 800 inspections, without having to call a CO—their role is education first. They will wind up work with two tournaments and Labor Day weekend. They are looking for volunteers to help inspectors at the launches.

In response to a question about what percentage of boats hit of those that were launched in Itasca County, Bill said that there is no information about the number launched. Bill mentioned the possible future use of magnetic sensors that might help track how many and when boats are launched.

Rich Anderson, inspector, described a situation with a boat that fished Mille Lacs and Winni and came to Deer with fish in the live well and zebra mussels. The owner expressed ignorance of the

rules but ended up drying off and going to Bowstring for decontamination. The problem is that fisherman are lake hopping. They also don't like the bait water issue and Rich carries fresh water for them. Bill said that biggest issue is ignorance about the drain plug.

Bill described the use of new dollars from the state for AIS inspections. In about a week Itasca will get over \$200,000 for 2014 and at end of year over \$500,000 for 2015. A group has been working on plans for use of funds. One thought is to hire a county coordinator for AIS to oversee various elements of the program. They need to involve fishermen and resorts. One plan is for SWCD to be umbrella organization and another plan is to run through CISMA and then to IWLP.

Bill has put together AIS education kits for lake associations and he may be able to coordinate the help of a Level I inspector. He also showed the key chain floats—clean, drain, dry—and stickers that he hopes to use at the county fair. Also, the DNR will hold another training if there is enough interest but additional funding, perhaps from lake associations, might be needed.

Dave Lick mentioned that the veterans could be involved and paid for their work. Tom Boland expressed interest in helping get the word out.

It was suggested that campground hosts, often found at state parks and national forest campgrounds, could provide some of this information.

C. Little and Big Fork Civic Engagement—Jim Gustafson

Jim said that there is a program to assess all watersheds on a ten-year cycle. They have finished the Little and Big Fork watershed. Jim distributed a summary of the 126 page report. The full report is on the PCA website. The SWCD is trying to get out to meet with lake associations in those watersheds and he invited anyone interested to contact him for a presentation.

Statewide about 30 percent of lakes are registering as impaired. In the Little/Big Fork, only about five percent are impaired. If a lake is naturally impaired, there may be nothing to be done to improve the lake and it should not be in the same category as lakes that can be helped.

D. Shoreland Stewardship—Tom Nelson

Tom said that the committee has been meeting and needs a third person to view several shoreland projects and select the award recipient. The award is usually a nice wildlife print.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Jim Brauner delivered the report shown in Attachment #1.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Catherine McLynn, Harold Goetzman. M/S/U

Motion to spend u to \$200 for the Shoreland Stewardship award. Dave Lick, Marn Flicker. M/S/U

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. County Fair Booth

ICOLA and IWLP will share hosting a booth at the county fair this year. Signup sheets are available at this meeting. Several Level I inspectors will be there. The Miss-Issippi puppet will also perform.

A related suggestion was that ICOLA could participate in parades with the puppet and hand out literature.

Motion to spend up to \$200 for a new ICOLA banner for the Fair and other uses. Dave Lick, Bill Grantges M/S/U

B. Thanks for Envirothon

Kathy Loucks at the SWCD sent a letter thanking ICOLA for its support of this year's Envirothon. The Grand Rapids team spent several weeks preparing for the educational event and placed second and third in the regional competition, moving on to compete in the state event in May.

8. ELECTIONS

Motion to nominate Jan Sandberg for a two-year term as secretary. There were no other nominations and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion to nominate Patty Gould St. Aubin for a two-year term as treasurer. There were no other nominations and the motion passed unanimously.

9. MEMBER REPORTS (continued)

a. County issues: Zoning Ordinance revision

Tom reminded members that based on the county comp plan from a year ago, ordinance changes are next. This has been delayed to changes at county’s Environmental Services office. ICOLA needs to form a committee to prepare the ICOLA position. This will be discussed in more detail at the October meeting.

b. IWLP report

In May, IWLP organized a successful Youth Summit program for 5th graders in Itasca County. IWLP finished the study of the economic value of water to Itasca County with a well-attended public meeting in May. Currently IWLP is working on purple loosestrife eradication under a grant from National Fish and Wildlife and the US Forest Service. There are also grants from DNR for public information about AIS and an AIS inspection program. Bill Grantges added that there are three programs about the economic grant and AIS running on ICTV through the public awareness grant.

c. CISMA report

CISMA is up and running with many partners throughout the county and it will have a role in the new AIS funding. Bill Grantges read the list of the cooperators. Other organizations could be informally involved.

d. MN COLA and MLR Advocates Report

These organizations work in tandem statewide to advocate at the Legislature. Both are trying to develop guidelines for counties to spend the new AIS dollars but it is difficult as every county is different and it is likely to be best developed at the local level. Individuals and lake associations can join MLR.

It was suggested that ICOLA request a representative from one or more of the tribal associations to attend a meeting and discuss their water situation.

10. ADJOURN

8:10 pm

Future meetings:

October 15, 2014, County Courthouse ITV Conference Room

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Sandberg, Secretary

JULY 2014 ICOLA MEETING
Treasurer's Report
Marcell Town Hall - Marcell, MN
Wednesday, July 16, 2014
5:30 PM Potluck 6:00 PM Meeting

Beginning Balance as of 6/18/2014	\$ 3,920.71
<i>Check #1396 Scenic Range News Forum (Ad for the Annual Meeting)</i>	\$ (50.00)
Ending Balance as of 07/13/2014	\$ 3,870.71

Final Treasurer's Report prepared by Michelle Brauner, as her term has ended.