

ITASCA COALITION OF LAKE ASSOCIATIONS QUARTERLY MEETING

June 17, 2015
Itasca County Courthouse

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

Harold Goetzman, Jessie Lake Watershed
Dick Sandberg, Greater Pokegama Lake Association
Catherine McLynn, Crystal Lake
Helen Ahlbrecht, King Lake
Michelle and Jim Brauner, Turtle Lake
Doug Griffin, Wabana Lake
Bill Grantges, Itasca County AIS Coordinator/Siseebakwet Lake
Don Simons, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District Board
Terry Schaedig, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District staff
Kim Yankowiak, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District staff

A variety of materials were available as handouts at the beginning of the meeting. Items included well water sampling kits from RMB Labs, an RMB CD with sample article on water for use in newsletters and similar, a variety of handouts from RMB Labs, a note with a link to the “Just Outdoors” program that ran on ICTV featuring AIS boat inspections, a memo requesting volunteers to work with AIS inspectors, registration forms for the Healthy Watersheds adult conference on July 31 at Sugar Lake Lodge.

CALL TO ORDER: President Tom Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm at the courthouse. A quorum was present with six of ten member lake associations being represented.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was distributed at the meeting and approved by consensus.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of April 15, 2015 were briefly discussed. *Motion to approve as presented with a technical correction to the spelling of Helen Ahlbrecht’s name. Stephanie Kessler/Harold Goetzman M/S/U*

TREASURER’S REPORT: Patty Gould St. Aubin reported that the audit was completed. At the end of December 2014, the balance was \$3,876.25. Since then she has written checks for the Envirothon (\$200), IWLP for the Healthy Watersheds conference (\$500), two checks for the county fair (\$195 for booth rental and \$100 deposit to be refunded if the booth is in operation until the end of the fair). The current balance is \$2,831.75. We received a thank you from IWLP. As our fiscal year ends on June 30, Patty has prepared a new invoice for lake association membership. Patty handed out invoices to representatives of seven association at tonight’s meeting, the rest will be mailed. Michelle suggested that invoices also be emailed. *Motion to accept treasurer report. Catherine McLynn, Jim Brauner. M/S/U*

Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District Introductions and Report on Activities: Terry Schaedig, Kim Yankowiak

Terry Schaedig described his extensive background professionally and personally, including experience with tick control (dry ice is very attractive to them).

Kim Yankowiak also described her professional background including an internship at SWCD several years ago.

Terry said that SWCD is now fully staffed. In response to a request from Tom about available funding, Terry reported that there are several different pots of money available. First, Andy Arens (andy.arenas@itascaswcd.org) relayed questions about the shore land awards for this year—we plan to participate, probably at the \$300-\$500 level. Terry described a program with funds for Jessie Lake including shoreline restoration, rain gardens and similar. There are also some countywide funds: some for work close to shore and others for work farther from the shore. There are RIM projects to protect wild rice beds. For the tulibee lakes, there is a DNR grant for stewardship plans for landowners in certain tulibee lake watersheds. For more information contact Andy Arens.

New employees include Logan and the AIS crew. Logan has been working with younger students who might have an opportunity to help with fish stocking.

Terry asked for feedback on another idea that came from the master gardeners to have a website (would need other options also) that facilitate barter connections among those with gardens and those who need help. There would have to be some way to check out folks, and deal with liability and insurance issues.

Kim reported that the WRAPS Headwaters group meets tomorrow and is still in the assessment phase. The Mississippi Grand Rapids project is in monitoring phase --- she circulated a map of the lakes being assessed. There is a ten-year cycle with multiple phases. There are a total of five watersheds in Itasca County being studied. There were several questions about the process, SWAG grants and the EQuIS database. SWCD uses specific labs—MPCA requires state-certified labs, including the RMB labs. They have started working with the RMB lab site at ICC. It should be open for full testing late July. Lake data is being compiled by RMB under another grant (Crow Wing County) that will include a handout for each lake and also an analytic directory. Data seems to be drawn from the EQuIS statewide database.

RMB Labs: Water testing kits and promotional materials

Patty brought kits for testing well water for individuals and associations. There are specific requirements for collecting samples and testing and samples need to get to the lab early in the afternoon. Tom pointed out the CDs with articles for newsletters. RMB will have a representative at the ICOLA July meeting.

Firewise

There is no formal presentation tonight but members may wish to check if they can sign up.

CAP Report: Bill Grantges

There are obligations for six matching CAP grants totaling \$16,097. Bill reviewed details of the grants. He has just received the first set of receipts for reimbursement from Dixon Lake. There are several more applications in process. For the period for the end of the month, they used \$16,000 of \$20,000 available. The next CAP period has \$28,000 for period ending in December.

AIS Coordinator report: Bill Grantges

There are seven DNR priority lakes in Itasca County: Pokegama, Trout in Coleraine, Bowstring (noted that a new grant from DNR will fund an additional 745 hours on these three priority lakes) as well as Splithand, Swan, Wabana, and Deer. They are working on various reports. He also mentioned the AIS training workshop on June 24 (see below) that would allow lake associations reps to train others in their association.

Bill reported on the recent interception of a zebra mussel infested boat at the Sherry Arm access that was covered in the paper. Although the zebbs were dead before reaching the lake, it was important that this is caught because if they had washed off and been found on the shore, the DNR would have done research to determine if Pokegama was infested.

Comment that much of the fishing happens when inspectors are not there—early morning and night. Also the fishing tournaments, especially pre-fishing. Bill said that there have been (not will be) inspectors on Swan and multiple Pokegama landings each day for the past week to reach people ‘pre-fishing’. While the inspectors only work during daylight, they have been at landings around dawn when there is heavier fishing traffic at that time. They shift man hours of inspection to match changing usage patterns that result from where the fishing is ‘hot’.

Bill said that there will be a heavy presence this week on Pokegama and Swan because of a tournament. In response to a question, Bill said that there is no evidence that birds are significant vectors for AIS. Over 2,200 inspections so far this year. Bill needs volunteer help with data entry and volunteers to help inspectors at landings. He may need help with a future survey of public landings—the state funding is based on number of accesses and parking spaces. Lake associations could help verify the state’s data. Bill will let us know more about this project at an upcoming meeting.

Question if a CAP grant could be used to provide lighting at accesses? Yes, if it could be done right.

AIS Training Workshops for Plant Identification.

ICOLA Lake Challenge leaders will be trained by Extension Staff: Wednesday June 24 at 6:00 pm at the Trailhead building, Itasca County Fairgrounds

Annual Meeting Planning (there is a detailed work plan for this project)

- Officer nominations: Tom and Steph are interested in continuing.
- Program: Dan Swenson, RMB Labs
- Logistics: Marcell town hall is booked. Need volunteers to set up. Attendees needs to bring food for the pot luck style meal. ICOLA provides brats (and grill for cooking), buns, condiments, paper goods and soft drinks. Meal begins at 5:30 pm.

County Fair August 19-23 (there is a detailed work plan for this project)

- We have a committee with Helen Ahlbrecht, Jan Sandberg, Tom Nelson and Bill Grantges. Sign-up sheet for volunteers will be circulated at the July meeting.

Bill asked if ICOLA is interested in participating in the Tall Timber parade on Sunday, August 2. Contact Bill if interested.

Advocacy Discussion

Stephanie initiated discussion about use of our email system and ICOLA itself taking an advocacy position (as opposed to information/education position). What does the membership want? Various members commented: Opinions are OK if there is a balanced view; education and information is good; quantity may be a problem; larger organizations have more clout than ICOLA. We may need an official policy; ICOLA should not send out ICOLA advocacy but pass on other information. If this organization makes a decision to take a position that is one thing but it should be a board decision. We need to check about implications if we just pass on advocacy emails to others.

Note: Harold gets emails with the quick link geared to his geographic location that will not work appropriately if forwarded to others. Is there a way to fix this?

Membership Renewal: MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates and MN COLA

Discussion about the value of the two memberships in terms of information provided. Motion to *approve MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates membership for this year for \$100 plus \$100 for website hosting and \$150 for MN COLA membership for this year. Jan Sandberg/Harold Goetzman M/S/U*

Healthy Watersheds Conference, July 31 at Sugar Lake Lodge.

Registration forms were available at the meeting or see Maven Perspectives website at <http://mavenperspectives.com/2015-healthy-watersheds-conference-water-forests/> . The fee is \$20 for the day (includes lunch) at Sugar Lodge.

County News

Tom reported that the county is still waiting to move from the comprehensive plan revised over a year ago to new ordinances. It is possible that this will start up this fall. Stay tuned.

MEMBER REPORTS

Deer Lake Association

Just had a meeting and things were discussed. They heard from DNR Fisheries and are planning the Frolic on Saturday August 1.

Greater Pokegama Lake Association

Recent membership meeting with large turnout, discussed the recent AIS threat issues. The annual meeting is coming up in July.

Crystal Lake

City is more attentive to the shoreline. A new neighbor has been mowing to the lake. Now, the city will maintain the shoreline. They are promoting alternate treatments such as rain gardens.

Jessie Lake Watershed Association

Spring meeting recently with speaker from MLR. Share the Lake Day coming on July 15, and they are back in the beaver business.

Johnson Lake

AIS Education Day included as part of annual meeting with AIS inspector working at the landing for the day.

King Lake

Boat parade July 4th, first Firewise pick in August

Siseebakwet

Lake testing, flotilla on July 3rd, voted \$1,200 for a matching grant for inspections and materials. Volunteers will provide assistance at the Health Watershed Conference.

Turtle Lake

Getting ready for annual meeting with Grantges speaker. Will have annual 4th parade with food shelf donation off dock. Firewise community—annual pickup for chipper program in late July.

Wabana Chain of Lakes Association includes Bluewater

Many new folks on board, at the recent meeting they are trying to understand water testing and past practices. There have been several recent variances on the lake.

Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District

All is good at the office according to Don.

Next meeting is July 15, 2015 at the Marcel Town Hall. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Sandberg, Secretary