

ITASCA COALITION OF LAKE ASSOCIATIONS QUARTERLY MEETING

July 15, 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
Patty Gould St. Aubin, ICOLA Treasurer/Greater Pokegama Lake Association

Catherine McLynn, Crystal Lake
Rich Anderson, Deer Lake Association
Tom Boland, Deer Lake Watershed
David Anderson, Jessie Lake Watershed
Harold Goetzman, Jessie Lake Watershed
Marn and Marie Flicker, Jessie Lake Watershed
Helen and Bob Ahlbrecht, King Lake
Duane Oberstar, King Lake
???, Northstar Lake.
Tom and Barb Ryan, Suomi Area Lakes
Steve Johnston Three Island Lake
Michelle and Jim Brauner, Turtle Lake
Jim and Tina Appleby, Turtle Lake
Cec Riedman, Turtle Lake
Steve Long, Turtle Lake
Harold and Betty Dzuik, Turtle Lake
Bill Grantges, Itasca County AIS
Coordinator/Siseebakwet Lake

Don Simons, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation
District Board
Cal Saari, 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
Logan Jensen, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation
District staff
Andy Arens, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation
District staff
Dan Swenson, Itasca County Environmental Services
Moriya Rufer, RMB Labs

B. Woodiel, BTL? Big Turtle Lake??
??, BTL?

A variety of materials were available as handouts at the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: President Tom Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:58 pm at the Marcell Town Hall. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was distributed at the meeting. Motion to approve the agenda. *Marn Flicker, Harold Goetzman. M/S/U*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of June 17, 2015 were available at the meeting and on the ICOLA website and were briefly discussed. *Motion to approve the minutes. Patty Gould St. Aubin/Tom Ryan M/S/U*

TREASURER'S REPORT: Patty Gould St. Aubin reported that the audit was completed and she described transactions and balances. Since the June report, there were two checks for memberships totaling \$350.00 and deposits of \$203.50 for a new balance of \$2,685.25. Stephanie reported on the audit (not done since 2007)—copies were available. The most costly recurring expense was for the Shoreland Stewardship award—generally in the \$300-\$500 range. *Motion to accept treasurer report. Marn Flicker, Helen Ryan M/S/U Motion to approve the audit report. Harold Goetzman, Steve Johnston. M/S/U*

Patty asked for approval to pay expenses in connection with the annual meeting. *Motion to approve annual meeting expenses. Michelle Brauner, Barb Ryan. M/S/U*

Itasca County Environmental Services: Dan Swenson Daniel.swenson@co.itasca.mn.us

Dan has a new title: Land Use Planning and Administration Director. The Environmental Services office has had a lot of turnover the past few years. There are several new staff members. Currently there are seven staff members including two technicians. Staff is all licensed septic inspectors now which helps when they have to do precertification of soil for new systems--they can now provide same day service. They also address solid waste and household hazardous waste issues.

Originally he came to speak about the ordinance update but it is yet to begin. First, they need to update part of the Comprehensive Plan to allow for a new transportation grant. He is very hopeful that they can start this fall and do it over the winter. They hope to hold at least some evening meetings and also have information online and video streaming for meetings. Meetings are run by the planning commission with approval by the County Board. Anyone can provide suggestions, comments, and language, just send to him at Daniel.swenson@co.itasca.mn.us

Dan described their individual sewage treatment system (ISTS) work. See the website at <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/Home/Departments/Environmental%20Services/Pages/ISTS-Inspections.aspx>

1996 was a key year when MNPCA started enforcing certain rules. See the state website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/subsurface-sewage-treatment-system-ssts/ssts-practitioner-and-homeowner-information.html>

In 2013 the county estimated there to be 16,833 systems and in 2014 16,950 systems. In 2013, 235 compliance inspections (triggered by property transfers, additions, variances) were performed by private contractors. Of those inspections the county had 15 non-compliant systems. In 2014, 230 compliance inspections were performed of which 33 systems were found non-compliant. Over the last two years we have estimated that 10% of inspections have been non-compliant.

Itasca failure rates tend to be lower than those for other counties. Failures are mostly non-compliance due to lack of soil separation. This has become more complicated in recent years. Dan noted that mound systems should last many years if properly used and maintained--do not walk or drive on the mound and drain field. The U of MN Extension (septic.umn.edu) has considerable information that is also in the county office, see <http://www.septic.umn.edu/>

The office also issues zoning permits: 426 to date this year due to a busy construction season. They don't do building permits. Zoning addresses setbacks and similar. There is no plan to move to building permits due to cost.

Variances and conditional use requests are down over the past few years. The office is very proactive with alternative solutions to the variance and have been successful. There are exceptions and Dan noted a recent issue on Three Island Lake that had to go through the variance process although in that case other lakeshore owners supported the variance.

Shoreland restoration—orders can be required if the landowner exceeds bluff clearing or similar. Some would like it recorded on the deed so that the new owner is aware of expectations. Lots of staff time is required for these violations and the fee does not cover that work.

Household hazardous waste: on alternate Thursdays, hazardous can be taken in by appointment (need to know what they get) at no cost to Itasca County residents. There is a new program called PaintCare at Ace and Sherwin Williams stores (see <http://www.paintcare.org/paintcare-states/minnesota/>), which will take limited amounts of paint at no cost. There may be a similar program at Home Depot but they may charge. Some discussion of who will take fluorescent bulbs.

Risk of lakeshore flooding. Dan is hearing that some financial institutions are asking for a more formal determination that a property is not in a flood zone. If it is close, the owner may have to go through a process to be determined out of the flood zone via a letter of map amendment for certificate of elevation. Current maps are from 1978. The county has had good success with the letters they have prepared although they avoid the borderline situations.

Other questions: jurisdiction in bridge rebuilding. Shoreland alteration permits all require inspection and are not done over the counter. They follow up on the permits. Probably 90 percent of phone calls are about lake shore issues.

RMB Labs: Moriya Rufer, moriyar@rmbel.info, 218-846-1465

Moriya described their work at the ICC Lab, not open yet for sample delivery until all certifications are completed through the MN Department of Health. RMB started in Detroit Lakes in 1995. The goal is to open in September for various types of samples including wells and lakes. She suggested that she could come to a spring meeting to discuss lake monitoring. They also have a small consulting and field department analyzing data for reports. See <http://rmbel.info/>

Lakes Monitoring Program: their program is statewide, see <http://rmbel.info/lakes/> It is recommended that associations take five samples in the summer (May-September). The goal is to monitor yearly for 8-10 years so they can answer how the lake is doing. At a minimum, associations should do the Secchi disk monitoring with a goal of once a week. The lab measures phosphorus and chlorophyll-a, ideally measured on the same day as one of the secchi disk readings. Location for sampling is important--select one main testing site, usually deepest in middle of the lake. Cost for program--\$210 includes five samples for phosphorus and chorophyll-a analysis, posted to their website, and group training. They also sell the sampling equipment.

Moriya is now evaluating data from 37 lakes in the county and will present a report at the Watershed Conference (see below for information about the conference). RMB is now talking with IWLP to locate lakes data. Some is in the PCA database but not all. She encouraged associations to search their files to locate data. She will email a report to Tom for distribution to members via the website. Moriya distributed a variety of materials and a CD of articles that are on their website for newsletters and similar.

AIS Coordinator report: Bill Grantges

Bill complimented the work of the SWCD on AIS countywide. He also mentioned the early detection training offered earlier by Julie Miedtke. He reviewed the CAP grant process (six awarded to date and several more in the hopper, detailed in the June ICOLA minutes) and communications including the recent MPR interview program.

Inspections is a big focus and Bill described the mobile decontamination unit that he brought to the meeting. They do courtesy decontaminations. Inspectors have covered three fishing tournaments this year for both pre-fishing and tournament day. Bill also described the Pokegama zebra mussel scare. Last year there was a 29% failure rate; this year there are many more inspections with a larger crew and a lower failure rate. An additional training is coming up to increase number of Level II inspectors to eight.

DNR has identified seven priority lakes but they are trying to cover more lakes. He is happy to come to other lakes for presentations or possibly inspections—contact him at 218-259-8797.

Bill described the need for a survey of public landings (including parking spaces) that is used in the AIS county funding formula. Jan suggested posting the current list on the ICOLA website with the survey form and contact information.

Email Policy

Stephanie drafted the following policy:

*Itasca Coalition of Lake Associations
Policy on Advocacy and Use of Email*

Since ICOLA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that is limited in the amount of lobbying the organization can do, and

Since the mission of the organization, as stated in the by-laws, identifies two objectives related to education and information and states:

“Mission: To protect and improve the quality of Itasca County lakes and waterways. Objectives by which to accomplish the mission:

- A) Serve as an umbrella organization where member lake or river associations can exchange information, share ideas and give advice for solving problems.
- B) Provide information to members about water quality initiatives, environmental issues, and laws and regulations affecting lakes; and provide educational opportunities that promote the protection and stewardship of county lakes and shoreland.”

Therefore, the following statement is a guide for ICOLA in dealing with emails regarding information, legislation and other relevant topics that ICOLA members would likely be interested in:

- ICOLA will provide information via emails. If this information contains a direct link to take action, the act of sending the email does not imply that ICOLA endorses or supports that action. It is meant simply as education.
- The purpose of ICOLA’s email messages will be focused on information or informative materials only.

- When ICOLA forwards emails received by separate organizations (such as MN COLA or MLR), ICOLA will state that the forwarded email is for information only and is not implying ICOLA endorses or supports any specific action referenced in the email.
 - In order to do this, emails from ICOLA will usually include the following introduction: “This information is being provided for INFORMATION only. ICOLA has taken no official position regarding this topic”.
 - If an official position by ICOLA is needed, ICOLA will vote on such a position at its meeting when members are present and discussion can take place.

Motion to approve the proposed email policy. Jan Sandberg, Bill Grantges M/S/U

County Tax Inserts

Tom said we would be working on this over winter

Shoreland Stewardship Awards

Steph mentioned that this was our highest recurring expense. It is a good program but is it too expensive? A framed print costs at least \$100 apiece for the three winners. Question about impact on budget—our expenses are fairly constant and the carryover is consistent. Patty mentioned a real estate listing where the homeowner insisted on including the award photo on the website listing. We could downsize to two recognitions. Another option is a certificate for the SWCD native plant sale.

Motion to continue awarding a print as the award for the Shoreland Stewardship Award, up to \$300 per year for all awards given. Patty Gould St. Aubin, Marn Flicker M/S/U

An application for the award is on the SWCD website (note it is for 2013 but is still appropriate) at http://www.itascaswcd.org/Programs/SSA_application.pdf

Agency Organization Reports

SWCD

Kim Yankowiak reported on the state of the watershed. They are in the project phase with Little Fork, looking for projects to reduce sediment or velocity of flow that contribute to Little Fork (impaired for turbidity). It was suggested that SWCD contact Tom Boland from Deer Lake Watershed (the County should have his contact information as he was a member of the Itasca County Water Plan Implementation Committee for the latest report. Big Fork is a few years behind, and projects will be sought soon and public meetings will be scheduled. The Upper Miss Headwaters just finished the data assessment phase and they are waiting for a report. The Upper Mississippi Grand Rapids is starting monitoring. There will be a civic engagement workshop on September 11.

Andy Ahrens (andy.ahrens@itascaswcd.org) distributed info on funding opportunities for shoreland conservation, including native shoreline stabilization planting and native riparian buffers. Also, stormwater management practices near lakes, rivers and streams include vegetated channels with rock check dams, roadway water diversions, and catches such as raingardens. See <http://www.itascaswcd.org/Programs/Shoreland.html>

Terry Schaedig noted that Logan Jensen is helping monitor lakes and rivers. SWCD has a new program tool from DNR to develop stewardship plans for cold, deep ‘refuge’ lakes. They are also working on some stormwater abatement situations including a bridge across the Mississippi near KAXE.

MNCOLA—Tom suggested reviewing their website for current issues, see <http://mnlakesandrivers.org/tags/mn-cola>

Rainy Lake Watershed: there is a conference August 13th in International Falls, and the watershed includes a good part of Itasca County. It should be worth attending. See http://ijc.org/en /RLWWB/International_Rainy-Lake_of_the_Woods_Watershed_Board

ICOLA Brochure Revision

The “current” brochure isn’t and will be worked on over the winter.

County Fair August 19-23

- We have a committee with Helen Ahlbrecht, Jan Sandberg, Tom Nelson and Bill Grantges. Sign-up sheet for volunteers was circulated at the July meeting and three time slots were filled.

It was suggested that in addition to a poster of infested lakes in Itasca County, that we prepare blowup of AIS violations based on Bill's data.

Officer Elections

President: Tom Nelson is willing to serve.

Vice-President: Steph Kessler is willing to serve.

Motion to adopt the slate by unanimous ballot. Marn Flicker, Helen Ahlbrecht 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 \$30 for the day (includes lunch) at Sugar Lodge.

MEMBER REPORTS

Only a few associations had time to provide information at the meeting.

Deer Lake Association

LWBC is approved to go forward and building is anticipated, with conditions. AIS inspections are in process, they are preparing a CAP application, and the Deer Lake Frolic is set for August 1 (\$10 for steak dinner) at Camp Hiawatha at 5 pm.

Deer Lake Watershed

The dam repair is finished, and water levels are good. Just had a 5K fundraiser. They now have 65 members. There has been discussion of improving the CCC camp just off the lake to develop it into a historic point of interest. IN response to a question, he has no knowledge of AIS prevention activity.

Greater Pokegama Lake Association

The annual meeting will be held Saturday. They have submitted a CAP grant.

Sisebakwet

The association is doing well. There is a walk-on public access now being used as full access by boats. They are pursuing having it revert to walk-on only. Submitted CAP application to do own AIS education grant. Elections coming up in late August.

Suomi

4th July celebrated with over 50 people. They need a new president. The Centennial next year. Firewise next fall. Caribou Lake is nearby, and they have been in discussion about adding them to Suomi – there is more interest this year.

Turtle Lake

Had the boat parade, it was very successful. This dovetailed with drive for food shelf and that was also successful—donations were collected from the end of the dock. The lake is unusually low this year, typically it is steady. They are not yet infected, have posted signs at the one public landing. Inspectors have been on duty

Next meeting is October 21, 2015 at the Itasca County Courthouse. The meeting adjourned at just after 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Sandberg, Secretary