

ITASCA COALITION OF LAKE ASSOCIATIONS ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, July 17, 2013
6:00 p.m. – Marcell Town Hall

Attendance:

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

Tom Nelson, Deer Lake Association
Dick Sandberg, Greater Pokegama Lake Association
Paul and Dotty Warner, Horseshoe Lake Association
Catherine McLynn, Ice Lake
Marn Flicker, Jessie Lake Watershed Association
Mike Sommer, Jessie Lake Watershed Association
Bob and Sue Swanson, Johnson Lake Association
John and Martha Hubbel, Pine Lake
Pat Doherty, Siseebakwet Lake Association
Barb & Tom Ryan, Suomi Area Lakes Association
Jackie and Bob Nase, Three Island Lake Association
Grant and Peggy McDougall, Three Island Lake Association
Brian Johnston, Three Island Lake Association
Jim Brauner, Turtle Lake Association
Harold Dzuik, Turtle Lake Association
Helen and Jack Adamson, Upper Prairie River Lake Association
Don Simons, Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District Board
Jim Gustafson, Itasca SWCD and Little Sand Lake
Noel Griese, Itasca SWCD
Marlyn Halvorson, Itasca County Sheriff's Office/Emergency Management
Eric Ahlstrom, Itasca Community College Water Lab

CALL TO ORDER: Vice-president Stephanie Kessler called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm at the Marcell Town Hall. Representatives from 10 Itasca County lakes and associations were in attendance.

1. INTRODUCTIONS: Stephanie led a round of introductions.

2. ADDITIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A draft agenda was distributed about a week in advance. Jan asked to add the IWLP event announcement to the end of New Business.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended. Marn Flicker, Paul Warner. M/S/U

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes were distributed about a week prior to the meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes of June 19, 2013, as submitted. Jack. Adamson, Sue Swanson. M/S/U

4. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Jim Brauner reported for Michelle that the beginning balance on June 19, 2013 was \$3,898.96. There was one expenditure during the month: \$112.86 for payment to Sugar Lake Lodge for the MN COLA meeting. There was a donation from Tom Nelson of \$112.86 for the MN COLA meeting. The ending balance as of July 17, 2013 was \$3,898.96. There was a question about requirements for spending including how large the balance could become. Stephanie mentioned a possible scholarship, discussed at a previous meeting

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Sue Swanson, Marn Flicker. M/S/U

5. Speakers

Jim Gustafson, Itasca SWCD: Watershed Restoration and Protection Program (WRAP)

Jim walked members through a slide show describing the watershed and larger project. This is a systematic approach to looking at major watersheds in Minnesota on a ten-year cycle. Jim displayed a color-coded map

indicating the year each watershed study would begin. By setting up a plan for the entire state, they can avoid overwhelming a certain region. This year is the start in Itasca County with the Upper Mississippi Watershed. The watershed extends from Lake Itasca to the Pokegama dam and includes about 60 miles of river. Major partners are all of the counties (Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Hubbard and Itasca), the Leech Lake reservation and municipalities. They held two kick-off meetings last June.

The WRAP project's goal is to protect the beneficial use of water for recreation, industry, agriculture and other uses. Some information has been collected on the watershed, but the project will be closing up the data gaps from various entities. If the information suggests problems, they can begin to address those issues.

The current phase is intensive watershed monitoring (data gap material). The following stages will be stressor identification (weak links indicating a problem), watershed modeling, critical areas and implementation.

They have identified several impairments in Itasca County including two stretches of the Mississippi that are impaired for dissolved oxygen.

They are doing chemistry monitoring through a Surface Water Assessment Grant with sampling by ICC and the Leech Lake Band-- biologic and flow monitoring is done by PCA. Part of the plan includes public involvement and information. They are now developing a work plan for phase two. While their work generally is within Itasca County., for this project several of the other counties do not have the capacity to do this work within their county and Itasca will assist them.

Many of the impaired lakes in Itasca County are for impaired for mercury. Noel noted that the status of Itasca County lakes benefit from monitoring by ICC and IWLP. They have assessed over 300 of county lakes. Jessie shows as completing the assessment process. Noel listed several lakes that just showed impairment: Decker, Dixon, Island, Jesse, Prairie, Round, and Splithand (Prairie and Splithand are new). Mostly are impaired for nutrients.

The stretches with low oxygen may be impacted by wetland drainage but this has to be determined by a full study. Jim noted that the percentage of impaired lakes is low in the County compared to statewide percentages. He also noted that they completed work in Bigfork for the period 2010-12 that is moving into the next phase.

Members had a number of questions. Jim said that AIS testing would come through the biologic assessment phase. This is monitoring—doing something about it would be in the next phase.

If there is a low dissolved oxygen (DO) how do you fix it? If it is natural cause, it is not treated. If it is not natural, they would first need to identify the cause such as runoff and turbidity.

For more information about watersheds, see <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/watersheds/watershed-overview-map.html>). The project will involve biological and chemical testing in 2014. There is a flyer about the project on the ICOLA website at <http://www.itascaswcd.org/news/news.htm>.

Marlyn Halvorson, Itasca Co Sheriff Dept: CodeRED

One of his goals when he came to the office was to upgrade Itasca County's emergency notification system (CityWatch) and eliminating dedicated phone lines. The database online is private. See <http://www.co.itasca.mn.us/Home/Departments/Sheriff%27s/Pages/CodeRED-Emergency-Notification-System.aspx> for information online. There are two primary systems--Emergency Notification System (e.g. lost child) and severe weather warning (not watches). The severe weather system is an opt-in system. Registration and changes may be done online or by submitting a form (available at the sheriff's office).

How the system works. When there is a non-weather emergency—e.g. a lost child—the system can be set to notify those within a certain distance of the reporting location or they can notify the entire county. For severe weather, the alerts come from the National Weather Service and go to the addresses in the affected area. This does not replace the weather radio (these are available from the sheriff's office). Remember, cordless phones do not work in a power outage, so it's best to have an old corded phone. The system is set up to auto redial if the line is busy. By signing up for weather alerts you are also updating the database with current information. Weather notifications could change as the storm moves.

To sign up, you need to enter your address to be monitored, cell phone (listing the provider if you wish to be notified via text or email). These are only for warnings, not watches. Including your cell phone number will get you the winter warnings also. They have had 2-3,000 registering with system since it went online. You can create an account to check your information or if you try to re-enter a cell phone number, it will advise you that you are signed up.

Find the Community Enrollment page at <http://cne.coderedweb.com/Default.aspx?groupid=Ozcy12B7vuEay5bheQzRHw%3d%3d>

6. Member Association Reports/ICOLA Updates

I. Individual Lake Assoc. updates

I. Lake Association updates

Deer Lake Association

The Deer Lake Frolic is coming up—it is a fun fundraiser for the lake association. They also had a Firewise event and a second is coming up. They are looking forward to the diagnostic report.

Greater Pokegama Lake Association

Nothing has happened since the last ICOLA meeting. The membership meeting is scheduled for this coming Saturday at Zorbaz at 9 am.

Horseshoe Lake

Not much to report.

Jessie Lake Watershed Association

They just completed Share the Lake Day with residents of the Bigfork nursing home boating on the lake using the Let's Go Fishing pontoon. The association annual picnic is tomorrow night. Roadside cleanup was completed in June. The lake cleanup is upcoming. This spring they did a live staking on the Tilly's Creek bank that was shored up last year with the help of Jim Gustafson at SWCD. The bank held up well this year even with the beaver dam blowout.

Johnson Lake

The annual meeting is coming in August. They had a variance issue last year --after the fact wish to get closer with two cabins—that has been resolved. Three islands on the lake are privately owned, and the rumor is that DNR is planning to buy the two islands near the landing. They participated in Firewise and recommend it as a good program. They had a 4th of July lake parade.

Pine Lake

They are having good fishing.

Sisebakwet Lake Association

The Triathlon last weekend worked well. Their annual meeting will be Labor Day weekend. They plan to work on their constitution this year to update to current technology (e.g. use of email voting). Major issue this year is the weir that outflows from the lake into Sugar Brook.

Suomi Area Lakes Association

They had 46 attendees at the 4th of July picnic. The annual meeting is coming up Labor Day weekend. They are working on a sign for AIS at the public access.

Three Island Lake Association

They had a well attended annual meeting -- almost all property owners are members. They were successful in getting the county to stop applying magnesium chloride to roads (intent is to stabilize the soil to suppress dust) due to concerns about its effect on vehicles. It costs the county \$2,180 per mile to apply it to the road.

Turtle Lake Association

They held their annual meeting on June 20. They also had a 4th of July lake parade. And they will also sponsor a Firewise event next week.

II. COUNTY ISSUES

Don Simons for the SWCD said that the county is good.

It was noted that at the April we talked about going before the Board to do a presentation and this has not happened as yet. It would be a good idea to team up with Water Implementation Planning Board and the county invasive species management area (CISMA) to ask the county board to spend some money. Funds might come

from the Environmental Trust Fund or Legacy money used as incentive to improve zoning ordinances for things like septic systems. Some people are working to put together presentation.

Next winter, since the update of the comprehensive land use plan is complete, the county will be making zoning ordinance land use revisions. Past practice is for ICOLA to be involved.

7. Old Business

A. AIS Table Tents / Posters

Stephanie reported on the wide distribution of the AIS table tents including 400 to the Mille Lacs Casino. Members were invited to take some for their neighbors or businesses as some people still are unaware of the boat plug requirement. Good targets include bait shops, convenience stores, and resorts. Tom Nelson gave some background information about the extent of the problem and need to slow it down. Harold Dzuik emphasized the danger posed by AIS in Itasca County and need to slow the spread in anticipation of research to find a cure. Note the effectiveness of beetles and herbicides with purple loosestrife. He emphasized the need to get the cooperation of the lake owners for grant support. Harold described the newly submitted community innovation grant to the Bush Foundation for education to battle invasive species. He also noted the help from the Environmental Trust Fund with various projects. Tom stressed the need for lake associations and individuals to join IWLP and partner with MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates.

B. County Fair Booth – Volunteers Needed

Stephanie described background for new booth with a focus on AIS. Members were asked to volunteer for a two hour time. Catherine suggested members might want to donate \$20 to the Fair Board to get an anytime pass. Catherine will give the ICOLA check to management on set up day.

C. LWBC EAW update

In its twelfth year, the county determined that there was no need for additional studies so that the application can now move to the planning commission. A presentation is scheduled for the end of August/early September. In the meantime, the Deer Lake group has sued them again due to lack of proper consideration of science issues. But this does not stop the upcoming hearings. The Planning Commission process is open to the public and all comments are welcome.

D. Goals and Accomplishments for FY2013

Stephanie reviewed the goals and commented on the preparation of the document. Please bring and questions or comments to the October meeting.

8. New Business

A. Envirothon Donation

Stephanie described the education Envirothon event that ICOLA traditionally supports.

Approve \$100 donation for this year's event. Catherine McLynn, Sue Swanson. M/S/U

B. Lake Field Day – U MN Extension

Jim Gustafson said that on Thursday, August 8 he will be conducting a tour (about four hours) of management and activities in the Jesse Lake watershed. They will start with an area mined for sand for county road use since revegetated. They will look at a wildlife pond and the Tillys Creek project. Jim provided details about the bank stabilization efforts—the bank was initially stabilized using dormant brush bundles that would hopefully sprout although the survival rate was low. So they followed with live staking this spring. They will then look at several other locations on the lake including a local resort that ten years ago used local plantings to define use areas. Julie Miedtke will discuss ash forest management near the boat access. Contact Julie Miedtke (Julie.Miedtke@CO.ITASCA.mn.us) to register for the event.

C. Shoreland Stewardship Award

Tom described the history of the stewardship awards. ICOLA members have traditionally participated in project review.

Motion to appropriate \$500 for the Shoreland Stewardship awards. Tom Nelson, Pat Doherty. M/S/U

III. Officer Elections

Terms are for two years. There are five meetings (the bylaws require four meetings) a year: October, February, April, June, and July. This year the offices of President and Vice-President are open. Stephanie noted that the current president is moving from Itasca County and officially resigned a few months ago.

Motion to approve Tom Nelson as president. Catherine McLynn, Sue Swanson. M/S/U

Motion to approve Stephanie Kessler as vice president. Jim Brauner, Tom Nelson. M/S/U

IV. IWLP Event Releasing Results from Deer-Pokegama Lakes Study

Those interested in water quality in Itasca County should plan to attend the 6:30 p.m. meeting on Friday, July 26, to discuss findings and implications from the Deer-Pokegama lakes study that has collected data over the past three years. The event will be held at the Rotary Tent in the KAXE amphitheater in Grand Rapids (260 NE 2nd Street, Grand Rapids MN 55744). Bring a chair or blanket and relax in the amphitheater while learning more about how these valuable lakes work, how lakes in the region are functioning, and how the community can ensure the sustainable use of its outstanding natural resources.

V. ICC Lab Students

Eric Ahlstrom reported that they are looking for ways to use students to speak to lake associations, summer schools, and similar. Students normally work from the end of May to mid-August. Ideas for next year are welcome.

VI. Sensitive Shoreline Grant

Jim Gustafson reported that the SWCD is looking for sensitive sites to do shoreline stabilization or other projects, with a possibility of cost sharing the project expense.

8. ADJOURN

About 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Sandberg, Secretary

NEXT MEETING:

Oct 16 (7pm Courthouse)