

Sawyer County Lakes Forum

Meeting Minutes

10/30/2024 11:00am

Sawyer County Courthouse Assembly Room & Online

1. Phil Nies called the meeting to order at 11:00am.

2. Roll/Introductions

1. Natalie Erler- Sawyer County AIS Coordinator
2. Jean Accola- Little Sissabagama
3. Martin Hanson- Round Lake
4. Don Stover- Tiger Cat Flowage
5. Donna Carlson- Grindstone
6. Dan Tyrolt- LCO Conservation Dept.
7. Linda Zillmer-Big Chetac/Thomas
8. Mike Hallum-Nelson
9. Phil Nies-Current (now former) VP & Treasurer of the Forum
10. Steven Lindahl- Connors/Lake of the Pines
11. Jim Meyer- Spring
12. PJ Flynn- Whitefish
13. Lori Thompson- Clear
14. Kurt Schroeder- COLA

3. Summary of Board Changes (Phil Nies)

-Phil informed us that the SCLF is a part of the “Lakes at Stake Wisconsin” an organization run out of Madison that aims to protect Wisconsin waters from the impacts of wake boats.

-On 9/27/24, the current board members, Bill, Phil, Dennis, Martin, and Dan met to accept new board members: Jean Accola, Linda Zillmer, Don Stover, Donna Carlson, and Mike Gardner with Martin Hanson and Dan Tyrolt continuing to serve on the board. This passed unanimously. There was a motion by Phil to have Martin Hanson set up the next meeting. Bill and Dennis resigned, and Phil will resign at next meeting.

-Currently \$69.27 in Frandsen bank account. \$30 will be deducted soon to keep website running.

- Need 2 people that are approved to sign checks. Martin Hanson will stay on, so we would need one more person for this (probably the treasurer). As an fyi, if you're not a Frandsen Bank customer, you will have to provide more details to be added to the account.

-Phil's address is currently on the checks. Future board can decide what to do with that.

-Every year the Forum must register with the WI Dept. of Finance and this is all online. Phil offered to continue filing every year and will pay the \$25 fee as his "donation" to the Forum. Phil will email the certificate when he files.

4. Election of Board Officers

A. President: Don Stover nominated Martin Hanson. 2nd by Linda Zillmer. Martin commented that he does not live here full time. Motion passes.

B. Vice-President: Linda Zillmer nominated Jean Accola. 2nd by Dan Tyrolt. Motion passes.

C/D. Secretary & Treasurer: No nominations. Will be discussed at next meeting.

5. Approval of September 19, 2024 Minutes

-Minutes approved by Jean, 2nd by Linda.

6. Website and Records keeping

-Martin is the current webmaster, but is willing to give that up if someone else wants to do it- just let him know (hansonm@outlook.com). Website is pretty inactive. It costs \$30/year to maintain.

-What do we want to put on the website?

Martin thinks it's important to have emails (will respect privacy concerns) or some sort of directory of who's a part of the Forum

Dan supports having a directory with contact information as well as posting meeting minutes.

Linda suggest adding a list of all the lake associations in the County with contacts and website links, if applicable.

Maybe also having Sawyer County and DNR contact info as well.

Don suggests maybe having a blog or bulletin boards for general questions from the public that any of the board members can answer.

Maybe an FAQ page for general info/questions.

There are currently 24 identified lake associations in the County. Martin wants to delegate someone to find all of the lake associations and get their current contact info. Linda offered to do this.

-Sharing newsletters between associations to get inspiration and new ideas about events/projects

7. Lake Reports

Steven Lindahl-Connors/Lake of the Pines: Have 162 members for both lakes and are pretty active. They have a good donation base. Have some invasive species issues. Boat landings are in bad shape and the DNR lost their money for that. Will maybe have to ask for money back. Stocked 2,500 walleye in Lake of the Pines. Hayward area hunting/snowmobile/ATV Clubs etc... don't respond/support the lake association but the Price County clubs do.

PJ Flynn-Whitefish: Eurasian Water Milfoil is a significant problem. They are an active association and receive donations. Had a lot of issues with the DNR response time being very slow or not at all. The boat landing pad is not adequate and it's the townships responsibility to replace it. Water quality is good and fishing is not as good as it used to be.

Mike Hallum-Nelson: Proud to say they have no major invasive species. Drawdown started in September. They are replacing the boat landing on Hwy 27. Stocked 2,500 walleye. They have an annual picnic and a kayaking event around the big island in the summer. They also do a "WinterRama" which is a snowshoeing/skiing event on the big island.

Lori Thompson-Clear Lake: Small, 77-acre lake. They have Eurasian Water Milfoil and used ProcellaCor herbicide for the first time in June of 2023. They have seen

good results so far and hoping the treatment will last for 3 years. They've also had DNR response issues, but Lori offered to help/give some tips for getting in contact with them.

Kurt Schroeder-COLA: Active association and are struggling with invasive species. They can't use ProcellaCor because of the cranberry operations on the lake. They have a harvester machine and have done scuba for pulling the invasives. It feels like a losing battle at times, but the tribe (LCO) has been very helpful. They have stocked muskies this year and have a bounty on Northern Pike.

Jim Meyer-Spring: He is the Vice-President and lake monitor. Have 24 members and are financially stable. Had a bad algae bloom this year but the fishing was still good. HWY E will be under construction in 2027, so that will affect the boat landing/lake use for the public. They are a no wake/no power loading lake and this can only be enforced by the Sherriff not the Town of Bass Lake.

Don Stover-Tiger Cat: Have about 85 members that fluctuates every year. Eurasian Water Milfoil was discovered in July this year, so they are submitting DNR grants to help create management plans. They have not treated it yet, but hope to next year. They've had Purple Loosestrife for a long time and have a handful of volunteers that treat it. They have a Pike Improvement Project because the Northern Pike have negatively impacted the fishery. Muskies are few and walleyes are practically non-existent anymore. There are 3 boat landings, and hoping that one of them will be repaired soon.

Linda Zillmer-Birch/Chetac: Located at the headwaters of the Red Cedar Watershed. The association is not very active right now. They have issues to address, but turnover is high which requires a lot of re-education. Early on, fish cribs were installed and there is a large Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CLP) population. The DNR gave grant money to develop a lake management plan and conduct a lake study to help combat the CLP, but this created division among the association members. Since COVID, the association has struggled to get going again. The Birch Lake Dam controls the water levels on the lake and this is operated by the Washburn County Highway Dept.

Dan Tyrolt- LCO Conservation Dept.: The department does extensive water quality monitoring on 28 lakes in the County. Concerned about cold water fishery habitat, profiling, and invasive species management. Also monitor 46 miles of streams.

Have a brand new fish hatchery and do lots of stocking with a focus on extended growth walleye.

Marty asked if we could get the water quality data on the Forum website. Dan is happy to share the data. The easiest way right now is to contact Dan. This winter he hopes to make the data easier to understand for the public and when that's done he can put it on the website.

Donna Carlson-Grindstone: Large lake. Found a patch of Eurasian Water Milfoil in Little Grindstone and they used DNR funding to get it pulled out by scuba divers. Recently established 12 "neighborhoods" around the lake to help get more volunteers engaged. Lake levels are down, and they are working with the DNR to get the levels changed in regards to where the water level readings are taken for operating the Billy Boy Dam.

Jean Accola-Little Sissabagama: Small lake with 6.5mi of shoreline. Sissabagama in Ojibwa means "lake of many bays". It has a wilderness feel with not a lot of development. The lake does not have public access, only private boat landings, so their invasive species risk is lower. There's a big island in the middle of the lake that was gifted to the association. Taxes are \$3,000/year for it, so they created a fund to help pay as well as put it in conservancy so it will never be developed. Taxes weren't able to be reduced because it has no public access. Because nearby lakes have Eurasian Water Milfoil, the risk is still there, so they are joining the Citizen Lake Monitoring Network next summer to look for any invasive species that may enter. They submitted data to have the lake be designated as an Outstanding Resource Water and are waiting approval. They also are a part of the Loon Ranger/Watch program.

Martin Hanson-Round: Just over 400 members. They've had Eurasian Water Milfoil for a long time and costs about \$50,000 a year to control it. They did not get a DNR grant to treat it this year, so they raised the \$50,000 in just over 3 weeks. They also do DASH is spots and work with the DNR for herbicide treatment recommendations and concentrations. They tell their members that they are never going to get rid of it, but that they are controlling it. They place buoys for slow/no wake zones (~2-year process to establish these zones) and have a safety program. As the DNR grant funding becomes more competitive, they are looking

to start self-funding these control efforts. They are also looking into possibly becoming a lake district and have received mixed feedback from property owners.

8. Future Agenda Items

- Establish a budget
- Northwest Lakes Conference support
- Dues are currently \$25-still appropriate?
- Choose a Secretary and Treasurer (separate positions)
- Revisit the bylaws, considering having more board members?

Miscellaneous Discussion:

- Having an annual meeting with a speaker to help draw more people. Time and possible topic?
- Should we have a liaison for the County Board/Zoning Meetings? So that they know what we're up to and we know what's going on at the County level. Also, suggested that we have a representative for the Land, Water, and Forest Resources Committee (LWFRC). Linda will report on the County Board/Zoning meetings and Jean will attend the LWFRC meetings. Will create an agenda item to share what's going on. Natalie will report to the LWFRC of what the Forum is up to.
- Treasurer duties are pretty straight forward. Secretary duties will include things like, creating agendas, doodle polls, coordinating with Natalie Erler for reserving County meeting room and online meeting links, collect dues etc...

9. Set Next Meeting Date

How often?

-At least once a month. After discussion, **future meetings will be held the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 9am. With a max of 2 hours.**

-Natalie offered to keep reserving the Assembly Room and providing the online meeting link, if needed.

Meeting adjourned at 12:23pm