

District Leadership

Sam Weber *Co-Chair*
2cherokeerivers@gmail.com
(715) 554-1054

Adam Elliott *Co-Chair*
adam.elliott@idinsight.com
(651) 343-5380

Tom Borden *Commissioner*
trborden@msn.com
(651) 335-3895

Jim Filkins *Treasurer*
mmafilkins@hotmail.com
(715) 307-0873

Peggy Lauritsen
*Communications Commissioner/
Secretary*
plauritsen@pldg.com
(612) 940-2006

SPRING MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 5-16-15 **FINAL**

Meeting at Georgetown Town Hall called to order by Co-Chair Sam Rivers Weber at 9:01 am.
Board Members present: Sam Rivers Weber/Co-Chair, Adam Elliott/ Co-Chair, Tom Borden/ Commissioner, Jim Filkins/Treasurer, and Peggy Lauritsen/Secretary.

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Rivers Weber proposed to approve the agenda with flexibility. Motion was made to approve agenda with flexibility by Jack Belisle, second by Mike Rogge. Unanimous. Motion carries.

Approval of Minutes

Co-Chair Rivers Weber explained the amended minutes from the 2014 Annual Meeting, published on page 6 in the Spring 2015 newsletter. Motion to approve minutes by Jim Seifert, second by Sheila Monson. Unanimous. Motion carries.

Treasurer's Report

Jim Filkins reported account balances as of 4-30-15 as follows: Checking \$6363.99; Savings \$5.00; and Money market \$65,704.88. Anticipated taxes are \$8000-\$9000.

Introduction of Guest Presentation

Presenter: Katelin Holm, Information and Education Coordinator/Water Quality Specialist, Polk County Land & Water Resources Dept.

Grants ending: We have 2 grants that are ending in 2015, EPP Grant (Education/prevention/planning) and the Sediment Core Grant. Blake Lake is the only lake in Wisconsin that has a state harvesting grant to control invasive weeds, and not use a chemical treatment. Because of this we have a flagship program in the state.

2014 District Member Survey Results. The survey was mailed to 217 district members in May, 2014. There were 126 responses, or 58% response, which is excellent given that a 30% response is considered good or acceptable. The survey results will inform our lake management plan going forward.

Top concerns by 75% of members: new invasives, more curly leaf, excessive plant growth, excess algae, water clarity, increased nutrient pollution and decrease on overall lake health.

Low or no concern: 60% believe there is no concern about excessive noise or decreased wildlife.

The average number of years owned property on the lake: 21 years. 50% living on the lake seasonally, which is common in Polk County; 56% are weekend residents and 33% are full-time residents. 148 days per year property is used. This data can help with modeling and septic systems.

Shoreline buffer zone of 35 feet is ideal that includes plants, shrubs and trees. 91% of properties have mowed lawns; 38% unmowed section, 50% have shrubs in this area; and 15% have woods on shoreline.

49% of properties have piers/docks

Amount of lawns: 50% of members said its just right; 25% said too much; and 25% were not sure.

Interest in shoreline improvement: 75% interested

Use phosphorous on property: 98% don't use or use phosphorous-free fertilizer.

What activities members enjoy most: 93% value views and peaceful enjoyment.

Watercraft used: 46% use canoes, kayaks and other non-motorized; 46% use watercraft with 21-50HP; 25% use boats on other lakes.

Water Quality: 54% rated it fair; 26% rated it good. More people thought water quality had degraded rather than improved. What month algae a problem: 66% said July and 88% August.

Plants: 2/3 thought there were too many plants; 1/3 thought there is a healthy amount of plants. Members thought plants are a problem 46% in June, 74% in July and 67% in August.

Impairments: 92% algae impairs swimming; 57% fishing; 52% boating/pets & animals. Boating not impaired by algae.

Impairments by plants /Curly leaf identification: 50% could recognize it.

Plant Harvesting/ how satisfied?: 44% somewhat; 19% very satisfied

Key Actions and Priorities to Manage Big Blake Lake: 91% of members want the dam up to code; 89% believe AIS (invasives) is a top priority; 78% enhance fisheries, 71% upgrade non-conforming septic systems; 61% install shoreline buffers and rain gardens; 54% install farmland conservation practices; 44% want lake fairs and workshops and 44% want enforcement in slow-no-wake-zones; 90% want harvesting of lake weeds; 89% want monitoring of new AIS; 86% want Clean Boats, Clean Waters; 72% want educational programs; 54% want to use herbicides to control curly leaf; 37% want landing cameras; and 35% want washing stations at landings (not in Polk Co. now).

Communications members want: 85% want the newsletter; 51% email; 24% website; 6% Facebook; and 40% annual meeting.

Katelin will email the full 10-page report summary to anyone who wants it. Contact her at katelin.holm@co.polk.wi.us.

Katelin reported on the APP Grant expiration in 2015: Blake Lake has a 3-year AIS (aquatic invasive species) grant that ends in 2015. Every other week samples are collected from the lake including pH, temperature. Once a month nutrient samples are sent to the lab. Algae and zooplankton are measured once a year. The Spring and Fall plant survey is measured at 276 GPS points on the lake and three people rake samples of plants. Once-a-year dredge samples taken. In the Spring, curly leaf pondweed turions are sampled. Nutrient levels are sampled at inlets and outlets.

Katelin reported there is a county and state emphasis on AIS prevention via the June Drain Campaign (focused on anglers) and the July Landing Blitz (focused on all boaters). A key component of prevention is educating members, and all boaters. She handed out a list of AIS training and classes in June. Again this year she will be leading several of the trainings at the east landing including a new class "Pontoon Classroom" on June 13 from noon to 2pm. Details were published in the Spring newsletter.

Katelin advised us to think about the development of a lake management plan with a sightline of the next 20 years. How do we want the lake to be in the future? Everyone is invited to contribute to this coming effort.

Katelin reported on the Sediment Core Grant. Samples are taken from the deepest part of the lake to see how the lake is changing and has changed over the past 150-200 years. Samples identify what the state of the original lake was. Jeremy Williamson will be reporting updates at the Annual Meeting in August.

Old Business

Dam update by Adam Elliott/Co-chair. We hired a good engineer Larry Gotham, early in the process to manage the project and keep things moving. The DNR advised that we had good timing for fast-tracking the project. We are approved for the loan of \$150,000 as of May 5. We have 4 months, until September 5, to draw down the funds. We are expecting a 3% interest rate upon drawn down with a 5-year term. The funding

source, BCPL (Board of Commissioners of Public Lands), funds schools and libraries in the state. We are in the process of getting the outlot transferred from the property owners/Sherrards. Once we get the ownership of the outlot the district takes over to start the reconstruction. There will be a permanent easement for maintenance and temporary easements for construction. Legal agreements are being processed, and with that we can get approval from the DNR. In all, the process is going well and going down the right path. Once all agreements are in place to the DNR, the reconstruction can start. Regarding the timeline, we do not know at this date if the project will be done in 2015. We are moving forward as much as we can and with respect to the Sherrard family dealing with estate issues. The new dam will be a rip-rap-rock-chute dam style. When the new construction goes in the old dam comes out. Members were encouraged to contact any district board member with questions. Board member contacts are listed on page 2 of the newsletter. A question and answer period followed the presentation.

Slow-no-wake zone update by Tom Borden/Commissioner. The 6 buoys are arriving within a week and will be installed by June. Signs will be posted at the landings. The buoys will identify the slow-no-wake zone through the narrows on Big Blake Lake.

Standing Committee Reports

Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) by Peggy Lauritsen/AIS Coordinator.

There are three seasonal goals: 1) volunteers perform 400 hours of CBCW monitoring (200 hours per each of two landings); 2) educate boaters and the public to avoid the accidental spreading of invasives; and 3) increase awareness with district members that our grant requires volunteer hours.

Peggy thanked all past CBCW volunteers who have helped to meet our goals year after year. Thanks to Vicky Dornier for representing our lake, attending the Annual CBCW training April 29 presented by Katelin Holm, Polk Co. Land and Water Resources Dept. Highlights are included in our display at the meeting.

CBCW training dates and activities: There will be training on two June Saturday mornings to refresh CBCW volunteers in June as part of the WDNR "Drain Campaign" June 12-14, a statewide initiative to make sure anglers know about Wisconsin's invasive species laws. Dates are June 6 and 13. Posters, ice packs and flyers will be available for volunteers to give anglers at the landings again this year. Training on June 13 will be lead by Katelin Holmes, Water Quality Specialist, Polk County Land and Water Resources Department. She and Jeremy Williamson will lead the new Pontoon Classroom on June 13 from noon to 2pm, an on the water experience to learn how water samples, algae samples, and sediment samples are collected and analyzed on Big Blake Lake. This is your opportunity to learn how to find wild rice, how water samples work, learn more about Big Blake Lake and ask any questions you have regarding the lake. There is no cost to attend. Blake Lake will also participate in the WDNR 7th annual statewide Landing Blitz, July 3 -6. We are one of 90 lakes in Wisconsin participating again this year.

Peggy described the goals for the CBCW public relations efforts and named 4 ways for volunteers to get involved.

New CBCW coordinator wanted. Peggy announced that she will complete her fourth year and retire as CBCW Coordinator. We are looking for a new coordinator for 2016. She suggested that a committee approach of several volunteers could be considered instead of having just one person coordinate all efforts.

APM Harvey Report by Jim Maxwell, APM Coordinator. There are lots of weeds already this year. This is the ninth year of studies done on our lake by the research team. This team needs to complete samples of the weed population before cutting can start. As soon as that happens cutting will be aggressive.

EPP Grant Update by Sam Rivers Weber. The EPP Grant (Education, Prevention, and Planning) is a 3 year grant that is ending in 2015. It is a \$66,000 project designed to educate District members about the lake and about aquatic invasive species (AIS). Katelin Holm's report today is the detailed update on where we are at currently with the grant. District members are forming a committee to study the results of all the studies and surveys to inform our APM committee at the annual meeting in August.

WLP Convention by Peggy Lauritsen. The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention (WLP) is an annual, statewide convention that she attended on April 23-25 in Stevens Point. Wisconsin Lakes Partnership consists of 3 core groups: 1) Wisconsin DNR (technical, financial, regulatory); 2) University of WI extension Lakes (educational materials) and 3) Wisconsin Lakes (advocates statewide for local lake people and lakes). The Wisconsin Lakes Partnership brings science, education, and citizens together to empower people to work together to care for our lakes. Six educational tracks included "Watersheds, Groundwater and Water Levels", AIS, Ecology, "People Policy and Politics", "Nutrients in our Lakes" and Public Health.

Approximately 600 people attend from all over the state. Sessions and workshops were excellent. Speakers were very knowledgeable and attendees very willing to share best practices, resources and advice.

Conference highlights and value we can bring to our district include:

Networking with attendees: AIS leaders in our area attending from Balsam Lake, Deer Lake, Bone Lake, Amery Lakes, Round Lake and White Ash Lake.

Takeaways: literature in the display today is the latest and some "just published", many statewide contacts to experts in many areas.

Leadership training: all day workshop for "Beginner and Advanced Lake District Commissioner Training".

The latest information on key topics:

a) "Long term EW Milfoil research and long term effects of herbicide on native plants". Learnings: there are 100 plant species in Wisconsin lakes. After herbicide treatment some plant species NEVER COME BACK after treat. As was the case in Sandbar Lake and Tomahawk Lake.

b) "Learning from our Neighbors: What's new in Minnesota AIS prevention and management". Tina Wolbers-AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) Prevention Planner, Minnesota DNR. Learnings: AIS laws

- MN has a 21- day dry time for docks/lifts
- Citation: transport or possess prohibited species; and launch into non-infested waters with AIS attached MN=\$500; WI=\$295
- Since 2013 MN using dogs to detect zebra mussels
- MN increased the use of roadway checkpoints by 300% in last 3 years. Violation rate is 17%, down from 31% three years ago.
- Top invasives include curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian milfoil and flowering rush.
- New rules for Lake Service Providers (marina, boat club, yacht club; rent or leases water related equipment that will be placed into or removed from waters) owners or managers must:
 - register online for a service provider training
 - pay \$50 application and testing fee
 - attend AIS training, pass AIS 20 minute online test and recertify every 3 years
 - the business owner must have all staff trained and certified

c) Greater awareness of impacts to the watershed that effects our district and lake.

d) Fighting invasive species is a very big threat: Increased education and strategies to fight Eurasian milfoil, zebra mussels, and purple loosestrife are top priorities.

e) County alliances forming for lakes and rivers: Eau Claire area watershed creating a coalition to qualify for federal grants. Polk County has 14 lake districts, with increased talk about collaborations to improve shorelines and buffer zones. Special sessions at the conference in 2016 to support new alliances.

f) 50% of Polk County revenue comes from waterfront property taxes. Important economically to protect our lakes and rivers.

Recommendations: Attending future WLP annual convention is highly recommended. It serves to make us stronger as a district. Attendance will engage and inspire members with the latest information to be able to protect the lake we all value.

- representation at the state convention annually (2-4 people) so we can better cover more educational tracks related to our top priorities
- Regular participation at county level such as PCALR

Communications

Peggy Lauritsen reported that the results of the 2014 Member Survey will help to shape communications to members going forward. We are currently sending the newsletter to 226 members 2x per year; our email list is sent almost monthly to 92 members with an open rate of 65-70%; social media using Facebook has grown from 10 fans in 2013 to 77 fans in 2014 to 165 fans as of May 2015.

Announcements

2015 Annual Meeting will be held August 15th (3rd Saturday in August)

2015 Boat Parade July 4 at 4pm. (July 4th falls on a Saturday)

A motion was made by Jim Sieffert to adjourn the meeting and second by Marge Kabis. Meeting adjourned 12:01 pm. A total of 68 district members attended the Spring Meeting.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Peggy Lauritsen, Communications Commissioner/Secretary,
plauritsen@pldg.com*