

SUGAR LAKE ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES

5.18.19

Call to Order

A board meeting of the Sugar Lake Association was held on May 18, 2019 at Corinna Town Hall. It began at 8:02 AM and was presided over by chair Dan Erdmann, with Andrea Welter as secretary.

Attendees

Voting members in attendance: Gary Borrell, Sheldon Brown, Ron Elsner, Dan Erdmann, Larry Jude, Andrea Welter, Dave Arnason, Scott Radtke, Mike Emerson (left at 9:45), Mark Ertl, Dan Salfer, Mark Snyder. Peter Ramme (arrived at 8:22).

Members not in attendance: Jim Shimelpfenig, Jan Tift, Diane Hall, Michael Rosenberger.

Open Mic

- D. Arnason expressed concern regarding potential legal liability for bog removal activity. Worried that any injury occurring during its execution puts us at risk and believes our insurance would not protect us. Also questions whether we want SLA to be responsible. Ron Elsner will check our current insurance policy for coverage. Bog removal is on the current agenda under old business, so the discussion will continue at that time.

Approval of Previous Minutes

motion to accept April minutes by D. Arnason and seconded by G. Borrell. Motion carries.

Officers' Reports

A. Treasurer's report (Ron Elsner)

- Currently 148 paid members
- Received 2 additional \$1000 donations
- Checkbook balance from last month is at @\$210K.
- *Motion to accept the April Treasurer's Report S. Brown and seconded by M. Emerson. Motion carries.*

Committee Reports

A. Chairman's Report (Dan Erdmann)

- Removal of large floating bogs has been the top item occupying a large amount of his time this month. The process requires obtaining required permits from the DNR, contacting/contracting with landscaping companies, getting approval to use the landing, all while working around the constraints of the weather and available volunteers.

B. Membership (Keith Theisen)

- Keith Theisen is taking over role of membership chair
- Last year there were 300 additional access only members last year.
- We obtained \$29,000 in additional donations
- Asked board if we wanted the committee to solicit those people again this year. Response was overwhelming yes. Recommended that an email be sent first, and then follow up with regular mail.
- Discussion regarding reminders to members who have not yet paid. Email? Suggestions included send a reminder along with the raffle tickets? Setting up a recurring payment was brought up again, but that proves too difficult to manage, as credit cards expire, etc. which requires more work to track down.

C. Government Relations

i. Corinna Township (S. Brown)

Nothing to report from Corinna meeting, but stated that Clearwater Township junk amnesty day is today (May 18th).

D. Fisheries

- No report-Paul Gustafson not present

E. Water Quality (Dan Erdmann)

5.16.19

- water clarity 9 feet
- water temp 60 degrees F
- air temp 72 degrees F
- culvert inlet 22 inches
- culvert outlet 27 inches
- overall score of 3 on a scale of 1(poor) to 5(excellent) due to algae and brown stain from plant decomposition

F. Water Quality/AIS (Dale Gustafson)

i. Zebra Mussels Watch/Inspections

- Every lake responds differently to the introduction of zebra mussels. However, for the first few years growth is typically slow, then accelerates rapidly until it either levels off, or goes back down in some cases. Sugar Lake is an ideal environment for its reproduction and spread.
- Currently there are testing programs are going on in MN that are trying to determine the smallest amount of chemicals needed and the treatment time when it is most vulnerable.
- The current SLA plan is to continue monitoring with the zebra “bricks” and ask property owners to inspect their boats and equipment when they remove it in the fall.
- Zebra mussels will impact fisheries. There will still be fish, but the increased clear water will impact the types of species and numbers.

ii. Vegetation/Water Quality

- Steve McComas (Blue Water Science) has been contracted to do a monthly inspection for Starry Stonewort.
- Last week he looked for Curly Leaf Pondweed in order to focus on the high and medium density locations. Last year we treated about 30 acres. Treatment is scheduled for Monday (20th) weather and water temperature permitting.
- With the additional testing being done by Steve McComas, by the end of this season, we will have one of the best knowledge bases of a lake.
- Ron Elsner interjected that the MN Lakes and Rivers Conference is June 17th and 18th. Money is available to send a few interested members.
- Dale put in a pitch for individuals to join the political action group Lakes and Rivers Advocates. Membership is \$25. The association is a member.

iii. Wright Regional Inspections Pilot Program (Ron Elsner)

- The program is still in legislative limbo. And as it is near the end of the legislative session, there is little hope that the topic will even be taken up by the house before the break.
- DNR sent out a “message” this spring about being “vigilant.”
- The county would need to re-enact the ordinance, and get it approved by the DNR deadline.

iv. Nominations for WCRIP board

- Dan Erdmann will continue to be the SLA board member on the Coalition board.

G. Communications (Don Peterson)

i. Newsletter

ii. Website

- add to calendar: fishing contest, golf contest, picnic
- (As an aside, it was brought up that the picnic committee will approach Don Rachel regarding possible use of his property for the picnic this year).
- Peter Ramme suggested adding a link to the Star Tribune article by Jeff Forester dated May 12, 2019 "Lakes illimitable are lakes lost-Aquatic Invasive species have changed the context of public access."

Old Business

A. Floating Bog Policy

- Discussion whether the association should establish a policy regarding the procedure for taking care of floating bogs. Does the association want to be the responsible party for their removal? If so, the following issues/parameters would need to be addressed in any plan:
 - What size would qualify for assistance?
 - Service available to members only?
 - Only send info to members and make property owners responsible?
 - Use newsflash to organize volunteers, or pay a business?
 - Have property owners pay and then petition for reimbursement?
- Questions of liability arose again, and Ron will find out what is covered through our policy.
- If an outside contractor is used, they can request and obtain the required permits.
- Our anticipated costs for treatments of invasive species already has us in deficit spending, so do we want to incur this additional expense? The existing money we have is targeted/budgeted for specific purposes. If this becomes a policy, a new budget item would need to be added. Would likely require an increase in dues to cover the additional costs of contracted removal. It is not realistic to assume/plan that we can count on enough volunteers to be available needed in a timely manner. In addition, increased insurance costs may have to be covered depending on what our insurance provides us.
- J&K Landscaping and Dive Guys are willing/able to help remove the current large bogs that have been temporarily staked down.
- Motion by Larry Jude and seconded by Scott Radtke to spend money for the permit and removal of the large bogs that have been identified and any remaining ones in the north bay for a cost between \$5000 and 10,000. This will be contracted out to minimize SLA's liability. Motion carries.
- After extensive discussion, decision was made that this is a very complex and controversial issue that requires more time and thought than we can devote today and we will table it for now. Potential ideas put forth are to form a committee to look into the issues, or poll the general membership.

B. 5 year Strategic Plan

- no discussion

Adjournment

motion to adjourn by D. Arnason, seconded by R. Elsner. This was agreed upon by all at 10:18 AM.

SECRETARY APPROVAL:

Andrea M. Welter
