

**Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association (VCLRA)
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 27, 2018
9:00 a.m. Trout Lake Station**

Present: Tom Ewing (President); Debbie Soberg (Vice President); Karen Dixon (Secretary); Anne Kretchmann (Treasurer); Steve Budnik (Immediate Past President); Jeff Currie; Carol Warden; Pat Barofsky; Norm Wetzel; Paul Lewandoski; Quita Sheehan (Vilas County Land and Water Conservation).

Guests: Dick Jenks (Boulder Junction Lakes Alliance) Phoebe Spier; Eric Olsen

Absent: Celeste Hockings; Bob Barofsky

Call to order: President Tom Ewing called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and invited Carol Warden to give a brief overview of Trout Lake Station and the work that is done at the facility.

Carol reported that current research is being done on the interactions between bass and walleye. They have a year-round staff with living facilities for 20-30 interns and 5 undergraduate students. The first Friday in August they have an open house that showcases research being done at the station. Trout Lake has its own unique strain of lake trout.

Agenda review: Dick Jenks asked to add item under New Business regarding realtor initiative and Paul Lewandoski requested an addition of an item under New Business regarding Winchester Town Lakes Committee purchase of new signs. Motion made by Norm Wetzel to accept minutes as amended, second by Pat Barofsky. Motion approved.

Blue Heron Award – Carol Warden introduced Blue Heron Award winners Phoebe Spier and Eric Olsen. She expressed appreciation for their efforts with shoreline restoration of Moon Beach Camp with the help of Mike Meyer (DNR) and which was nominated by Quita Sheehan. Carol gave a presentation on the Blue Heron Award and described the work that was done to restore the shoreline. It scored 72 out of 113, and although it scored low there has been much improvement. They continue to give shoreline restoration talks for their students. DNR did all the plans.

Alice Kramer, Master Gardener, was the second award winner who lives on Meta Lake. The property scored 93 out of 113.

Secretary's report: Tom Ewing reviewed the draft minutes of the April 16, 2018 board meeting that did not have a quorum. Robert's Rules of Order indicates that minutes should be recorded for all meetings, even if there is no quorum, hence we still need to approve them. Motion to approve April minutes made by Jeff Curry, second by Steve Budnik. Motion approved. Motion to approve minutes of the October 9, 2017 board meeting made by Jeff Currie, second by Steve Budnik. Motion approved. Annual meeting and annual board meeting reports will be approved next year.

Treasurer's report – Anne Kretschmann reported that she did the annual online renewal of incorporation. We are currently at 30 individual family memberships – some gave \$75 instead of \$25. Total of 61 memberships with 62 lakes represented. We will be up slightly over last year. List of lakes and districts represented was provided. Budget year balance is \$7,385,79;

checking balance is \$10,022.78. Motion made by Pat Barofsky, second by Debbie Soberg to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion approved.

President's report: Tom Ewing noted our mission is to educate and engage lake organizations and other stakeholders. Our primary means of engagement include our annual meeting, booth events, newsletters in January and May, our website, and programs like the Blue Heron Award and scholarship for high school students. He listed some metrics for various activities. Peak membership has been as high as 78 in 2016, but since then it has fallen to 64. Although it was too late to send out a membership reminder letter (many lake associations will not meet again this year), Tom thought it would be useful to compare 2016 membership to current to see what lakes dropped out, and contact the missing ones.

Historically we have alternated years of the multi-county and the lakes fair just for Vilas County. In 2012, there were 80 signups for the 2012 Multi-county meeting. Tom asked if we could get a copy of the sign-in sheet from the recent multi county meeting to see how well our recent event compares. Steve will put Tom in touch with Oneida person who has that info. If the sign-up sheet lists lake affiliations, this will also help answer the question how well we are engaging Vilas lake associations. Tom also noted that 3 years ago we ordered 1000 brochures, and these are primarily given out during 3 or 4 annual booth events. Since we have nearly exhausted our brochure supply, our public outreach is roughly 100 brochures per booth event.

Tom checked with Bobbie Kocim to see if we had tracking (Google Analytics) active on our website. This allows you to see how much traffic comes to the website, which content is of greatest interest, and thus establish metrics for website effectiveness. Unfortunately our website does not currently have tracking.

Tom is investigating updating to a next generation website. Our current website is a static system that passively serves content, whereas modern systems are dynamic, database-driven systems with stronger security, automatically adjust content for all devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets, which now generate 30-40% of web traffic), and have social media integration (users get notified of new content, can post content to social media, which has a cascading effect to drive new traffic to the website). Next year is our 25th anniversary, so we may want to do something special, such as roll out an updated website plus Facebook page.

Committee Reports/Old Business:

Blue Heron Award report (Carol): Notes on discussion: Nominations for 2019 in Newsletter. How do we get other people to nominate rather than just us? Reach out to past winners? Call members about the award. Ideas discussed: nominate, assess and give award all in one year; involve two counties? Oneida and Vilas. Go to one of their meetings and explain the program. Have the winner write a little blurb about their experience. We could recognize lake associations – submit why they should be Lake Association of the Year. Don't forget the land and water people. Write up why you nominated them. Pushing the lake associations to nominate someone on their lakes. They should be the ones to nominate for the award. Then the lakes assoc. can say this is what we are promoting and what it looks like. Give lake association presidents a checklist of what we are looking for. Even for those who just leave their properties alone. The county is going to work with people about healthy lakes. Work with shoreline restoration initiatives and healthy lakes. Work on publicity – webpage to call attention to it. Timing is wrong for reminders in the fall. Send a letter to the lake association board presidents – asking them to put the blue heron award on their agenda. Find out how long lake associations have been

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members of VCLRA or in existence. Encourage them to put articles in their newsletters – Carol could write one for them to use.

County Conservationist Report (Quita): Healthy Lakes grants can be submitted for tree drops, shoreline restoration plantings, and rain gardens. Our shop will put together the plans. Cathy Higley is the publicity person. Dec. 10 is the deadline for grants. DNR can't give money to individuals, so they go through an organization. Individuals will be signing a contract with the county. Will do again in 2019. Get lake associations to do this on their own lakes. They can apply for up to \$25,000. Contractors and landscapers involved in the process. Need shovel-ready plans. Share success stories.

Water Clarity report from Dr. Kemp – draft report coming out - change in water clarity can affect property values. He will be presenting to the Land and Water Committee this fall. Land and Water will develop press releases, etc. Newsletter and website. Meeting is 9:00 a.m. at the Courthouse in Eagle River Thursday Sept. 13. He's from UW Eau Claire and created a model of what people are willing to pay for a property. What part does water clarity play?

There might be changes in how we run our dept. in the future. Looking at analysis of watersheds in Vilas County. Looking at culverts. Looking at watersheds of greatest concern. What can we do. Put together a grant. Cathy Higley's position is funded through grants.

Lake associations have had problems with CBCW programs with UW Oshkosh and the interns. Some are planning to ask Oshkosh for money back.

Shoreline Initiative grant (Steve): Grant is closed out. We still have 6 or 7 metal medallions. Program is not dead – just the grant. Sandy Gillium sold her place and new owners immediately violated the covenant. Is there much value in encouraging people to write it in? We don't have the champions on the board any more. Keep this topic in mind.

VCLRA Booth (Steve): Booth is set up at four events - Lakes Fest in LdF, Forest Fest (Trees for Tomorrow) and Cran-a-rama (MW) and our annual meeting. What about farmer's market in Eagle River? Tom encouraged everyone to help with one event. County fair? Trout Lake Station open house. Think of places on the east side of the county. Quita suggested ER Wednesday farmer market.

Legislative update/WSI (Tom): Money for DNR is unchanged in proposed budget for 2019. Land and Water Dept. doesn't know yet about money for them– there are four parts to the equation. Staff funding through grants may go down a little bit. No further shoreline bills. No action to repeal act 55.

New Business:

VCLRA Scholarship Status: The scholarship is available to any student who is planning to study anything that has to do with natural resources. We will try again next year to find an appropriate recipient. Maybe two scholarships? Put article in the Newsletter about the winner. Include quotes from his essay and add his senior photo.

VCLRA/OCLRA Joint Plans: Discussion about doing a brochure together about best practices. Concerns - counties may interpret the laws differently. New editions of Water's Edge and Shoreline Restoration Practices are available. We should get copies.

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We need to explore what we can do jointly. Try to save money because budgets are small. What can hand out at booths together. Think of other organizations we can partner with. Steve will give Tom Steve Martini's contact information.

January Newsletter: We will talk about our Jan. Newsletter at our next meeting in early Nov. Articles and deadlines will be discussed.

Other new business/initiatives: Look at possible changes to the website for roll out for next year's 25th anniversary.

Dick Jenks – two jobs for the board – initiative to connect with new lake property owners through the realtors. Vilas and Oneida counties have lake properties that turn over every five years. Dick is challenging us to deliver to the information to realtors about best practices for the lakes. Give them presentations for them to share with property owners.

Maybe a business card that tells how they connect to lake associations. Several years ago, we did have a committee that worked with the realtors. Opportunities for partnerships. Connect to new audience – new property owners. Welcome package on our website. Karen will bring an example of the MWLA flyer that is sent out through the MW Chamber that goes to all the taxpayers in Manitowish Waters. Committee of Dick, Debbie, Carol, and Jeff to meet with a realtor and get back to us.

Tamarack Flowage: Baker Lake in Conover has water clarity of only 2 inches due to algae. Many factors can influence clarity and growth of algae – temps, rains, humidity.

Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor (I-LIDS): Is it possible to get a grant to study the effectiveness of the program? Could VCLRA apply for a grant? How do you assess the deliverables? Karen will send the digital information to board members.

Winchester Towns Lakes Committee (Paul): Purchased AIS signs for Papoose Lake and Harris Lake.

Noise and Shoreline lighting: Discussion of what to do about noise complaints such as loud music from boats and piers. Can you have an ordinance? Concerns discussed regarding shoreline lighting issues. Awareness and education seem to be the best solution.

Wake boats: Discuss at county and/or state level to ban them? No good scientific studies – only anecdotal information.

Next meeting:

Monday, November 5th at 9:00 a.m. at Trout Lake Station

Adjournment: Carol Warden made a motion to adjourn, second by Jeff Curry. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Karen Dixon, Secretary VCLRA