

CCCoLA minutes: July 10 2020

Attending the Zoom meeting: Irene and Larry Mullen ,Caribou (chair persons); Al Flieder, Aspen Lake; Carrie Framsted, Pike; Biz Clark ,Poplar; Gary Maciejewski (treasurer) Tait; Amanda Weberg, AIS; Matt Weberg, DNR Cook County fisheries; Ilena Berg, Ck Co SWCD,:Karen Evens, MPCA; Jerry Caple, Joel Halvorsen and Jim Trippet, Gunflint; Kate Kelnberger, Bearskin; John and Barb Bottger, Hungry Jack; Dan Fitzgerald, Saganaga

Irene opened the meeting at 9:00 AM

The minutes from the last meeting: June 12, were approved

Gary presented the treasurer's report. Members had also been emailed the report

It was moved and seconded to accept the treasurer's report.

First order of business:

Matt Weberg

Attendees were sent a summary of fisheries report for lakes which have been surveyed this year. He gave a brief summary of protocols used state wide for fish surveys.

Survey species include all fish of importance to sport fishing in state

From surveys, management plans are developed for primary and secondary species

Surveys conducted every 5-10 years, longer if lake is not heavily fished

Revision and assessment include success of walleye and lake trout stocking.

(many lake trout lakes produce abundant levels without stocking. Poplar attempt at lake trout stocking was not successful. Reason is not known at this time)

Walleye stocking:

Eggs are hatched at state hatcheries, fry are sent to private growers. Fisheries achieves good to moderate results from walleye stocking. Local lakes stocked with walleyes include Hungry Jack, Flour, Poplar and Gunflint

Al: can walleye fingerlings be marked to ascertain success in stocking?

Matt: markers work best in the first 1-2 years after stocking

Al: what methods does DNR use to monitor lakes?

Matt: electric probes, angling(effective with small mouth), mesh trap nets with variegated size mesh

Al: does fisheries engage in water quality testing?

Matt: yes. O2 levels, chemistry, water temp are all important factors to fish success

Trout Lake and Greenwood Lake are both being monitored for water temperature

Tait lake is in a long-term study for o2 levels and water temperature

Gary: the population of walleye dropped off after there was a spearing event at Tait. Do you know when spearing will once again happen at Tait?

Matt: late ice-out in this county is one of the reasons that spearing does not often take place here. I will provide more information as it becomes available to cook county fisheries

Larry Mullen: will there be a walleye count on Caribou this year?

Matt: Caribou walleye will be assessed in 2023

Larry: will fisheries accept money from lake associations to cover the cost of stocking?

Matt: financial assistance not necessary. The cost of stocking is covered by the sale of the (non-mandatory) walleye stamp (\$5.00).

Biz: do you assess forage fish as well?

Matt: yes, gill nets have graduated mesh for the purpose of catching forage fish.

He added that it is not unusual to see ups and downs over the short term of but the more sustained trends are what drives the management plans

Gary: is the walleye fishery in Tait sustainable?

Matt: there was good reproduction in 2017 and that is showing up in good walleye catches this year.

Matt: Hungry Jack is over goal for walleye production.

Kate: my grandson caught a 29 ½ inch walleye this spring. We got a good picture before releasing it.

Matt: not unusual to catch fish from H.J. in the 20-26' size

Kate: The March trout tournament was controversial with some cabin owners on Bearskin. Letters were sent to the snowmobile club and the DNR requesting that the tournament be catch and release only

Matt: the tournament was monitored. 10-15 large fish were caught. As long as fisherman have licenses and follow the rules there is not much the DNR can do.

There may be amended regulations particular to Bearskin to improve the trout fishery. There may be a minimum size of 17' and a decrease of bag limit to one per license Also, there is a lot of trout mortality associated with tip-ups and two lines. A new regulation may indicate one line to each fisherman.

Stocking in Bearskin has not been successful. However, natural reproduction is successful and the natural fish persist. The mechanism for decreased stocking success when there is natural reproduction is not understood.

Kate: Are northerns "native" in Bearskin. There is a persistent rumor that northerns were planted.

Matt: Likely that northerns are native in bearskin. There are nutrient rich ponds surrounding bearskin from which northern have a pathway to the lake.

Kate: The bay near us on Hungry Jack is shallow and weedy. Easy path for young northern to migrate into bearskin from the nearby flowage between the two lakes.

John Bottger: Is the bass population in Hungry Jack at a good number?

Matt: Current status of bass is not known. Small Mouth do not count well in gill nets. The best way to determine bass is with an angling survey. Fisheries is not able to this year because of limited staffing.

Irene thanked Matt for his report. Matt replied that if further information is needed contact him via email.

Next on agenda: AIS, Amanda Weberg

Irene asked for questions from CCCoLA group

Amanda: no angry people, compliance is good,

Gary: any new lakes with AIS infestations?

Amanda: none at this time

Larry: has there been any coupon usage?

Amanda: a few have been used

John: I have noticed more boats on H. J. perhaps because Canada is closed.

Amanda: we have three inspectors. Each inspector does 2 lakes a day. Lakes are those that are heavily fished: Sag, Gunflint, Devil Track...

Larry thanked Amanda for contacting the Ambassador program director at the DNR. That program has not been active this summer because of Covid. Part of the problem is the security clearance which Amanda said she does not understand how Covid has affected that. The real problem is that in addition to the on-line session each ambassador must complete each year there is an in-person class which, of course, this year was cancelled.

Amanda also spoke about a project which is being tried in other counties that gives resorts \$5 for each inspection it conducts. The "resort incentive program" is working in other counties (i.e., Lake Vermillion in St. Louis County).

Larry: testing for spiny water flea is more effective in August through September. The county has new nets which give a more accurate picture of spiny water flea presence.

Irene: thanks, Amanda for answering questions and concerns.

Ilena spoke about water quality testing

Calcium sampling will be conducted on many lakes in July. The testing is dependent on how many volunteers are available. The next water monitoring will take place on July 21 and 22. The calcium test remains viable when refrigerated so timing is not an issue. The test can be sent to the lab with the other scheduled tests.

John and Barb: we are taking care of water quality testing on Hungry Jack directly.

Ilena: I will help ,via Zoom, anyone who wants to work on lake management plans .

Irene asked for the MNCCoLA report from Biz

Biz: at the last zoom meeting, we had election of officers to complete board members President will remain and several current officers will also retain their positions. We are very enthusiastic to be working with Jeff Forester of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers.

Veterinarians and epidemiologist are conducting a study of AIS- primarily stonewort and zebra mussels. The goal is to figure out tools that will be helpful in mapping movement of species and water connectivity to predict where next outbreak will occur. There will be a data base of infected lakes and the hope to stabilize their funding and eventually develop a state-wide plan. The data is due to be presented to state legislature by end of this year.

Irene added that wastewater testing shows where out breaks of covid and covid hotspots may occur.

Biz also reported that the effects of "Boat Wakes" are being studied. St. Anthony Water is seeking Crowd Funding. Minnesota Lakes and Rivers gave \$1,000 to the study.

Biz stated that AIS issues were discussed for most of the meeting. Biz said she did not know the ambassador program was in jeopardy for this year.

Larry: Part of the problem is the security clearance . In addition to the on-line session each ambassador must complete each year is the in person class every three years.

Amanda: I do not know what the security clearance has to do with Covid.

Larry: I don't understand why the in-person class cannot be on line. Amanda did due diligence but has not received a response.

Gary: regarding wake research, could it lead to restrictions on motor size as relates to lake size and depth?

Biz: yes. There has also been discussion to require licensing of boat operators and restricting wakes to 200 feet from shore as erosion prevention.

Larry: over July 4th there was a 30 ft. cruiser on Caribou. Lakes have various governmental units in charge of regulations. Caribou is a county lake.

Gary: Tait should have a 25 hp limit as lake depth averages only 9 feet.

Biz: rocks are helpful in limiting speed. She will ask at next MN CCCoLA meeting how our organization could contribute to the "wake" funding.

Irene: Is there any discussion required about Jeff Forester's attendance at our meeting in August?

Biz: What topics will Mn Lakes and Rivers be pursuing with the next legislative session?

Barb: Hungry Jack Association will be having their meeting in August. I will convey any pertinent discussion points or information from that meeting to CCCoLA.

Irene: Al Flieder wanted to ask Jeff about micro-plastics. I sent a link to these members regarding micro-plastic research and a link to a citizen science opportunity. There is also research being conducted on regarding AIS on lakes that border the BWCA. The effort is headquartered in Ely but any information would be of interest to Cook County.

Biz: Jerry do you have information from the Joint Commission regarding AIS?

Jerry: The Joint commission is very interested in how AIS is transmitted in the lakes in the joint commission watershed. We have found a few spiny water fleas in Gunflint. I am also concerned about large HP motors stirring up the bottom of Gunflint.

Irene: any other ideas for Jeff, please forward

Irene: I propose to table discussion of monetary support for fire department until next meeting

Irene: next item is the lake reports

Biz: the bear causing havoc through parts of Poplar has been dispatched. But we remind cabin owners that bears abhor a vacuum. Cabin owners are encouraged to bring in bird feeders and be mindful of how garbage is stored. Voyager's point is now a Firewise community. Biz and Jim Morrison drove every driveway on voyager point to assess emergency vehicle access. We are encouraging Fireplace Road to join Firewise

Gary: There are two loon chicks on Tait. I have been feeding a disabled fox and now it brings along two kits. They have dug up plants. One of the kits pushed the elder, disabled fox away from the food.

Barb: We rented a pontoon and saw a jet ski ready to launch. Forrest told the owners that Jet Skis are not welcome on Hungry Jack lake.

John: As a way to boost membership, the lake association is keeping members informed by sending many emails on issues pertaining to the association members.

Gary: Tait lake has a two-sided sign posted in a prominent place that states the current fire danger.

Gary, Biz and John stated that fireworks over the fourth were a problem.

Jerry: any information regarding microplastics should be forwarded to Jim Trippet.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02

Submitted by Kate Kelnberger