

CCCoLA minutes July 19, 2019, Cook County Commissioners' Room 9:00-11:00 am

Attending: Irene and Larry Mullen (Caribou), Kris McPherson (Portage), Gary Maiejewski ,(Tait), Jerry Caple, Jim Triplett (Gunflint), Karen Evens,( [MN Pollution Control Agency Watershed Division](#)), Biz Clark (Poplar), Julie Carlson, Dean Berglund(Devil Track), Carol Berg (mid trail), Ilena Berg (Cook County Soil and Water), Barb and John Bottger (Hungry Jack), Kate Kelnberger ( W. Bearskin).

The meeting was called to order by Irene Mullen.

Gary's treasurer's report included the lakes that are arrears in their dues to CCCoLA. He submitted a report to the attendees.

Ilena: Lake Survey questionnaire are still available on line. Pike Lake sent their survey in. AIS continues as a top priority of concern- perhaps because of awareness of the issue. More lakes in the Rainy Lake watershed are monitoring for water quality: Loon, Tucker. There are nets available for spiny water fleas. Starting in July, the best time to capture SWF is mornings and evenings (think of productive fishing times). There are kits available to test your drinking water. There are resources available to identify and remove terrestrial invasive species. Garlic mustard has been found in two places in the county- one behind the IGA and one in Grand Portage both are being treated to prevent spread. Equipment to remove Terrestrial Invasive Species is available at Sugar Loaf nature center. (the best way to remove tansy is to hand pull it) The Shoreland Stewardship book is available for handout to lake associations. It is an excellent resource for lakeshore owners to decrease their environmental footprint by following very specific suggestions.

Gary's treasurer's report included the lakes that are arrears in their dues to CCCoLA. He submitted a report to the attendees.

Matt Weberg: DNR fisheries: The management protocol is to survey first then use the survey to drive the management. The management plans are an important part of the surveys and are often many pages. For high priority lakes, for instance: Bearskin and Hungry Jack, surveys are done every 3-6 years. There is a standardized protocol for the surveys- same places for the gill netting, electric sampling etc. There is a concern that smallmouth were found in Tait and Devil Track. Small Mouth tends to take over a lake once established and compete with walleye. Walleye depend on yellow perch. Devil track has natural reproduction of walleyes. Biz asked if there is any natural reproduction in poplar? Matt replied, very minimal. Walleyes need clean wave washed lakeshore. In poplar the stocked walleyes survive long enough to have an impact on the fisheries. John Bottler said that in Hungry Jack there are a lot of really big bass- maybe the slot limit should change. Part of the slot limit was fishermen's' request for higher quality bass. More pan fish are showing up in surveys.

Larry: is it legal for lake associations to provide funds for private stocking?

Matt: legal but hold off for a while

Carol: what criteria do fisheries use to prioritize lakes?

Matt: if the lake is stocked or if the lake is developed and there is high fishing pressure Leo will continue to be stocked with rainbows. Ilena requested that fisheries plans should be part of the citizen-based lake management plans

Gary: Tait is a sentinel lake. DNR monitors lake temperature, water quality. The PCA also monitors Tait Lake as part of the protocol on climate change. Northerns are also a focus as well as wild rice and spear fishing due to a native treaty.

Biz: an important part of fisheries is shoreland management. Matt: land usage for the whole property. Gary: bunch berries are a good ground cover. Matt: At Pike Lake, fisheries are looking at creating more tall woody trees to overcome the rusty crayfish depleting the near shore vegetation which impedes spawning.

Biz: in mid trail there is development and lack of inspection. There is money available for homesteaded properties with low income owners. That does not much impact the trail, however.

Karen: Devil Track lake is headed in the wrong direction but there is ongoing water quality testing Septic inspection on Lake Superior has high priority and there is not funding available for inspection on inland lakes.

John Bottger: data is available in the assessor's office as to the age of or lack of systems. Caribou went through this and the data seems to point to updating old systems as the reason.

Matt: Fisheries has lost funding for 2 full time staff. There are usually 5 full time and an intern from ice-out to freeze up to survey lakes. Current staffing is four; three are in the field, one in the office. This moves the high priority lakes to every 5 years and the remote lakes to every 15-20. Creel surveys are not funded by the general fund but with DNR money. They are useful. The Gunflint creel surveys found lots of lake trout- not a good sign. Overfishing results in stricter regulations or stocking. In complex lakes like Gunflint, the stocked fish die before maturity. W. Bearskin is being surveyed this summer. Preliminary results available in the fall.

Karen: It is important for folks to stay engaged in the Rainy River Headwaters watershed project. The project is starting its final effort at developing future watershed management strategies and projects. Some groups are interested in a discussion about mining efforts and effects in the watershed and would like some discussion of that topic.

Little Rock Lake drawdown will begin in August and continue through September. The lake is located just north of St. Cloud. The focus of the effort is a reduction in the high levels of phosphorus by a drawdown designed to enhance the vegetative component of the lake. Several years of effort have gone into developing the project, with a wide range of groups having to come together to approve and accept the project. Various funding sources are covering the cost of this project. Little Rock Lake as an example is a good way to reach out to neighbors about how important it is to maintain water quality and good shoreline management. Prevention is always a better choice than restoration.

AIS: Irene will forward the county data to board members. \$104,000 awarded to AIS. No new infestations were found for rusty crayfish or the other invasives.

Irene: the sign at Caribou Lake is much more effective than the small metal signs. It is large, reflective, double sided. Gary suggested hiring a contractor to put up more effective signage for AIS and Boat Cleaning.

Biz: is concerned about Poplar lake level because of the "rapids" at Little Ollie. Also a problem with snowmobilers exiting the lake and damaging the shoreline.

The meeting adjourned on time after discussion regarding set up and refreshments for Dr. Edlund's presentation.