

Lakes Committee – Town of Plum Lake
May 22, 2024
Town of Plum Lake Town Hall, Sayner WI

Present: Bob Jackson, Chair
Bob Munsen, Jim Haberle, Mike Stroh, Wayne Ax, John Richter, Joe Heitz, Jackey Postuchow (Town Supervisor Chair), Doug Pinney.
Cathy Higley (Vilas County Lake Conservation Specialist) attended part of the meeting.

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:01 am by Bob Jackson.
2. Bob Jackson noted that he and Kim Lechner, Town Clerk, had properly posted and noticed the meeting at the Sayner US Post Office and on the Town of Plum Lake website.
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of October 4, 2023. After a small edit, Doug Pinney moved to accept the minutes as revised. Mike Stroh seconded, and the motion was approved.
4. Treasurer's Report—Doug Pinney had previously sent an email with worksheets showing receipts and disbursements for calendar year 2023 for each Lakes Committee project.

For 2023, Doug noted that the Town had paid all bills submitted during the year. Doug also noted that all of the 2023 work on projects had been performed within the 2023 Town Budget.

For 2024, Doug stated that the Town Supervisors had adopted the proposed Lakes Committee budget with one exception: The addition to the Remediation Fund was reduced from \$10,000 to \$5,000.

Doug stated that he had reviewed all open grants between the Town and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for Lakes Committee projects not as yet complete. After the end of the various grant periods and after providing to the DNR the deliverables specified in the grant agreements, the Town is due \$46,233.01 from the DNR. In response to a question, Bob Jackson said the grant periods can run as long as four years. In such a case, the Town has to spend money to complete the project before the DNR reimburses the Town.

Doug said he has a detailed schedule for the open grants and offered to discuss the schedule with anyone.

Doug stated that he had prepared bills for the various lake groups as has been done in prior years. In 2023, bills were issued for \$10,100 and \$11,295 was donated. Doug thanked all the donors to the Town for their support.

Mike Stroh asked if these donations were segregated in the Town accounts. Doug said that some of the donations are used each year for Lakes Committee projects (primarily Clean Boats, Clean Waters). Bob Jackson said that we are working with Bob Klager, Town Treasurer, to make sure the funds are designated in the Town accounts for future Lakes Committee projects.

Jim Haberle moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Bob Munsen seconded, and the motion passed.

5. Vilas County Update

Cathy Higley joined the meeting in progress. This report is from later in the meeting.

Voluntary Boat Decontamination

Cathy reported that the mobile watercraft decontamination unit was going to be operational at Town boat landings this summer. They are hoping to have the unit at active boat landings every other weekend. A schedule will be available at the Vilas County Land & Water website soon.

Cathy also asked for volunteers to help educate the public about the watercraft decontamination unit. She hoped she could get 10 hours of volunteer time from Committee members to help fulfil the deliverable for the DNR grant that partially funded the decontamination unit. She passed out "2024 Decontamination Program Talking Points" and other forms for any Committee members that want to help. It was suggested that lake group leaders could discuss this at their various lake group meetings. Cathy said it need not be a formal meeting and suggested casual conversations over a beer or with others in a restaurant can sometimes be more effective. Cathy said to be sure to record all time including partial hours on the forms she provided.

Spiny Water flea Early Detection Sampling

Cathy said that Vilas County staff will be sampling "deep holes" on various lakes for the presence of spiny water flea and is coordinating with North Lakeland Discovery Center so as to not sample lakes they are surveying. The County expects to sample: Razorback Lake, Lake Laura, Big Muskellunge Lake, and Ballard Lake in the Town of Plum Lake.

Phragmites Surveying

Cathy stated that Vilas County Land & Water staff is continuing to look for Phragmites on county lakes. Lakes to be surveyed in the Town of Plum Lake are: Razorback Lake, Aurora Lake, Little Star Lake, and Lone Tree Lake.

CBCW Inspector Training

Cathy will be holding training for Clean Boats, Clean Water landing monitors on June 25 from 10 am to Noon at the Star Lake landing off of Hwy N. If any Committee Members know of potential landing monitors who need training, they should contact Cathy. Cathy said experienced monitors need training every two years.

6. New Business – Status of 2024 Programs

- a. BLIMS -Bob Jackson reported that the seven I-LIDS cameras were installed on May 1 by John Richter, Sam Patterson, Joe Heitz , Wayne Ax, and himself. John Richter reported that all cameras were up and working.

Bob Jackson stated that the annual Committee Report to the Town Board reported the number of videos capturing boat launches and the number of violations of state law identified. Bob provided copies of the annual report that had been delivered by Joe Heitz at a Town Supervisors' Meeting on behalf of the Committee.

John Richter reminded the Committee that the I-LIDS tanks, staffs, and solar panels were stored on his property last winter. John asked if these should be stored at the Town. A discussion was held regarding the cost to replace the property, the security at John's property, and insurance coverage. Currently only the controller (computer) part of the devices is stored in the Town Hall that is heated.

Jackey Postuchow noted that the Town is seeking a grant to build a Town building and that this building could be designed to include a secure closet for all of the I-LIDS devices. This heated building would be available in 2025-2026 at the earliest.

Mike Stroh moved that we continue to use John's property and that we self-insure for any losses not otherwise covered by insurance. Doug Pinney seconded, and the motion passed.

- b. Little Star Remediation – Bob Jackson reported that we intend to do both monitoring for the spread of Eurasian Water Milfoil by Onterra LLC and hand-pulling of Eurasian Water Milfoil by divers from Aquatic Plant Management as we did last year.
- c. Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW)– Bob Jackson stated that the Town has received a grant from the DNR to partially fund the landing monitoring. UW-Oshkosh has been hired to provide college interns for hours in the summer. Bob Munsen has arranged for monitors in the fall but said he could always use more workers.

A discussion was held about where to get some younger workers. Members of the Plum Ski-ers waterski group and Northland Pines high school students are possible sources. Jackey Postuchow estimated that the Town has 10-12 high school students in any year and these students would be best for our lakes.

Jackey added that, in order to graduate, Northland Pines High School students need to log 60 volunteer hours, so the students are motivated.

Bob Munsen suggested that we need to provide the monitors with apparel (hats or T-shirts) that identifies them as part of the CBCW program. Bob Jackson said that the towels that were handed out at landings in the past were discontinued this year. It was suggested that we can get this done locally and quickly when we are ready.

- d. Fish Sticks – Bob Jackson stated that all Fish Sticks projects for installation in January-February of 2024 have been deferred to 2025 due to 2024 weather conditions. We will be working on installations for Plum Lake, Lake Laura, and Star Lake early next year.

John Richter stated that additional volunteers are needed to help, and high school students could also help with these projects if the timing worked out. It was suggested that we check with Cathy Higley as she does educational work with Northland Pines High School throughout the school year.

Mike Stroh moved that the Committee contact Cathy Higley and ask her to assist with developing a program for high school volunteers for CBCW and fish stick installations. John Richter seconded, and the motion carried.

- e. Rapid Response Lake Surveys – Bob Jackson reported that the Town has contracted with the North Lakeland Discovery Center to conduct early detection of aquatic invasive species (AIS) on Star, Plum, Razorback, Laura, Ballard, Irving, and White Birch lakes. The work will be done using DNR protocols and includes spiny water flea surveys and fisheries habitat surveys. A summary of the findings is included.
- f. Plum Lake Landing Restoration – Bob Jackson said he had met with representatives of the Plum Ski-ers last year but he was not sure where the land use agreement between the Plum Ski-ers and the DNR stands. Further discussion was deferred until next meeting.
- g. Wake Boat Update – John Richter gave a presentation that had been developed by the Last Wilderness Alliance on the destruction of lake habitat resulting from wake surfing.

Some of the points made by John include:

- Wake surfing is different from wake boarding;
- Wake surfing stirs up lake bottom sediment in lakes depths of less than 20-30 feet depending on the study referenced;
- Damage to fish habitat can result from as little as one or two passes of a wake boat;
- Wake boat ballast tanks transfer AIS from lake to lake based on the large size and design of the ballast tanks;
- Ballast tanks cannot be fully purged, cannot be inspected and cannot be cleaned and dried to prevent transfer of AIS;
- Waves created by wake boats have been shown to swamp loon nests resulting in the loss of loon eggs;
- Waves created by wake boats can cause danger to other boaters;
- Waves created by wake boats can cause damage to docks;
- Wake boats themselves can create a navigation hazard due to the difficulty in seeing around the raised bow of the wake boat that results when generating large waves.

John Richter stated that action by the State of Wisconsin is 2-3 years away due to the way state government works. He said a number of local government units have enacted restrictions on wake boats.

John said there is significant danger in waiting. As towns restrict wake boats on their lakes, the wake boats move to unrestricted lakes and the damage to those lakes is intensified.

John said that the Town of Winchester has enacted an ordinance that restricts using a wake boat to enhance waves. It does not ban use of wake boats but it does ban use of technology (ballast tanks, fins, etc.) to develop bigger waves. John said this ordinance has been approved by the DNR and he believes a version of the ordinance should be adopted for all lakes in the Town of Plum Lake.

Jackey Postuchow asked if there were any lakes in the Town where use of a wake boat would not result in damage to the lake habitat. Several members responded "no."

Jackey Postuchow asked how quickly the Lakes Committee could make a recommendation to the Town Supervisors. She said this would be the way to start the consideration of any ordinance affecting wake boats.

Joe Heitz moved that the Lakes Committee recommends the Town adopt an ordinance restricting enhanced wakes on Town lakes. John Richter seconded; the motion passed.

Further discussion was held on the motion as passed. Concerns were expressed that, as a matter of due diligence, we should review the Winchester ordinance if the Winchester ordinance was to be the model for a Plum Lake ordinance.

John said he did not have a copy of the Winchester ordinance with him but would get a copy to the Committee as soon as possible.

- h. Lake Management Plan – Bob Jackson said he spoke informally with Tim Hoyman of Onterra LLC on the need to write a grant application to update the Comprehensive Lakes Management Plan for the Town. Bob will schedule Tim for a later committee meeting to make a proposal.
- 7. Other New Business and Citizen Comments and Concerns – No additional matters were discussed.
- 8. Next Meeting – June 12, 2024 at 9:00 am.
- 9. The meeting was adjourned by Bob Jackson at 11:45 am

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas L. Pinney, Secretary pro tem

Planned meeting dates:

All on Wednesdays and starting at 9:00 am
June 12
July 17
August 14
September 11