

**BURNETT COUNTY LAKES AND RIVERS ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JANUARY 13, 2023 MINUTES**

Attendance: B. Baker, S. Wallin, P. Kipping, T. Adair, R. Noe, D. Ferris, E. Moore, and G. Loufek.

Absent: S. Johnson, M. McDonald, and L. McDonald.

Guest: K. Klucas.

T. Adair called meeting to order at 9:31 a.m., welcomed Kevin Klucas from the Burnett County Tourism Coalition, and presented Roger Noe a plaque for his 16 years of dedicated services as BCLRA president. Noe was surprised and deeply appreciative.

Minutes of the 11/18/22 meeting were approved unanimously (Kipping/Noe) with no changes.

Treasurer's report: B. Baker reported that the second dues notices he sent out in early November resulted in four more lake associations renewing their BCLRA memberships for 2023. That leaves only the Elbow, Lake 26, Long Lake (Danbury), and Yellow associations that still have not renewed. Since Long Lake (Danbury) has not renewed their membership since 2019, Baker indicated that he will not send them any further dues notices, but the remaining three will be sent a third notice next week. Baker pointed out that Pike Lake, which dropped out in 2020, is still thinking about renewing their BCLRA membership and will make a firm decision later this spring. Baker mentioned this is exactly what they told him last year but obviously never were able to come to a decision about rejoining the BCLRA. Thus we have received \$250 in dues payments since our 11/18/22 meeting for a total income to date from dues payments, donations, and sponsor advertising of \$2,675.00.

Our expenses since 11/18/22 were \$200 for 2023 and 2024 Wild Rivers Conservancy membership dues, \$45.98 to North of 8 for our website domain fee, \$130.88 for dues-related expenses (paper, triplicate invoices, stamps, and printer ink), and \$1,925.50 to UW-Extension for our *LakeLines* printing cost share. Total expenses came to \$2,402.36, giving us a total balance of \$5,366.81.

The Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously (Adair/Kipping).

Guest Report: Kevin Klucas, Executive Director of the Burnett County Tourism Coalition, explained some of the functions and goals of the Tourism Coalition including using tourism to keep local businesses thriving, avoiding environmental harm, and treating all visitors with respect. He mentioned that Burnett County needs to be responsible in how it markets tourism within the county. G. Loufek asked if the Coalition has a priority list of tourism-related problems such as transportation of invasives, or ATV damage. Klucas said that the Coalition has a web page that it uses to get out information about problems and issues to the public. Klucas pointed out that several townships have implemented a short-term rental tax that generates significant

revenue from hotels/motels and Air Bnb's that can be used for township improvements. In Siren, for instance, last year the short-term rental tax generated over \$70,000 in additional revenue. A discussion followed on how the county can ensure that Air Bnb's are properly licensed so that the short-term rental tax can be generated and collected. Klucas is aware that many cabins are being rented without proper licensure and indicated that the county will be stepping up enforcement in the coming months. S. Wallin asked if campgrounds are subject to the short-term rental tax. Klucas said that at this time campgrounds are considered long-term rentals and therefore not taxed. He mentioned that he had recently met with representatives from the Towns of Swiss, Meenon, and Oakland and presented information about the short-term rental tax for their consideration. T. Adair asked how the BCLRA can assist the Tourism Coalition. E. Moore and B. Baker suggested that Klucas write up an article for *LakeLines* which, with a distribution of over 7,000, might generate awareness and interest in the goals and efforts of the Tourism Coalition. G. Loufek offered to draft a *LakeLines* article addressing tourism issues. After some discussion, Baker/Adair moved that G. Loufek and K. Klucas coordinate and jointly compose the article. Motion carried unanimously. Loufek and Klucas exchanged contact information.

LIAISON UPDATES

Burnett County Land Services: Dave Ferris went to some length to explain the differences and functions of various government agencies including: State agencies such as DATCP (Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, DNR (Department of Natural Resources), and the NRB (Natural Resources Board) which oversees the DNR. The NRC (Natural Resources Committee) is a committee of the Burnett County Board of Supervisors. The NRC includes seven county board members as well as a representative from the BCLRA and a representative from agriculture. The NRC oversees the Conservation Division of the Burnett County Land Services Department, Forestry and Parks, UW-Extension, and tourism. Ferris fielded many questions about the roles of these various organizations and committees.

Ferris mentioned that he would like to see an additional lake association get involved with the Healthy Lakes program. No other Burnett County lakes have participated in Healthy Lakes since Lipsett Lake in 2016. He pointed out that this program provides funding for improvements that benefit both the land owner and the environment and include activities ranging from runoff diversion to rain garden development. Ferris mentioned that studies have shown that decreases in water clarity can result in significant decreases property values, depending on the lake. Such decreases in water clarity also shifts the tax burden to others and affects the revenue of the taxing authorities. Similarly, an increase in water clarity adds to property values. Noe suggested that might be a cogent argument for a wake boat ordinance since wake boats have been shown to do both property damage and cause significant algal blooms that severely reduce water clarity.

Ferris mentioned that he will be starting the county-wide groundwater inventory this year and is looking for someone who might be interested in earning some summer salary doing well-water sampling and developing a data base of the GPS coordinates of wells in Burnett County.

E. Moore reported that veliger tows in Burnett County found zebra mussel veligers only in Middle and Big McKenzie Lakes. She indicated that tow results showed an increase in the number of veligers in Middle McKenzie, and a decrease in Big McKenzie. In reply to a question

by P. Kipping, Moore said she thought the decrease in veligers in Big McKenzie might be due to the typical life cycle of zebra mussels because the 2022 Big Mckenzie plate samples found that the large adult mussels had been replaced by smaller juveniles. Moore reported that veliger tows found no other lakes in Burnett County with zebra mussels, although in Polk County tows found veligers present in both Balsam and Wapogasset Lakes.

Moore announced a virtual forum on zebra mussels at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday February 2. It is being sponsored by Polk County and Moore will be serving as moderator. She mentioned that B. Baker will be presenting a PowerPoint talk on the Lipsett Lake pressure-washing station. She will get log-in information out to the BCLRA Board as soon as it is available.

Moore explained that based on a question by S. Johnson at our 11/18/22 meeting, she did an analysis of the 75 lakes in Burnett County that participate in the Citizens Lake Monitoring program and found that the average Secchi disk depth was 8 feet, the average Total Phosphorus index was 20 micrograms/L, and the Chlorophyll levels average 9.5 micrograms/L. She added that the average mean depth of these 75 lakes is 11 feet. The Secchi data show that our water clarity is not very good overall, although North Sand and Middle Mckenzie the average clarity is over 18 feet. Interestingly Big McKenzie has a high trophic index. Clearly, although zebra mussels are filter feeders, they haven't improved the lake's water clarity, perhaps due to the ammonia they generate and the combined effects of frequent wake boat usage and the cranberry bog that drains into both Big McKenzie and Lipsett Lakes. Moore also found that the dissolved oxygen (DO) content of lakes in Burnett County drops as water temperature decreases with depth in the water column. This is an expected result since the capability of cold water to hold dissolved oxygen is less than that of warm water. This was especially true for Big McKenzie where the DO drops over 50% from the surface waters (epilimnion) to the bottom waters (hypolimnion). In Benoit and Viola Lakes for instance, the DO values drop only about 30-35%. Finally, Moore handed out copies of the new Sawyer County ordinance concerning wake boats and suggested it might be useful as we move forward with a similar ordinance for Burnett County.

Natural Resources Committee: R. Noe reported that the NRC has been discussing both short term rentals and wake boat issues. He feels confident the committee will be receptive to a well-written ordinance from the BCLRA.

N.W. Lakes Conference: E. Moore reported that although the conference will be held at Spooner High School, the facility will be undergoing some extensive remodeling this summer, including some of the larger spaces we have previously used for organization/vendor displays. Moving the conference to Hayward High School is not possible because it will be undergoing an even larger remodeling project this summer. The conference is scheduled for Friday, June 23 and the main theme will be climate change and its effects in this region.

Yellow River Conservancy (YRC): . T. Adair mentioned that he will need to step away from his commitment to serve as a BCLRA representative on the YRC due to time issues that have developed. He asked if anyone would be willing to take his place. R. Noe asked what the YRC is attempting to accomplish. E. Moore mentioned that she has attended several of the meetings

and mentioned that they seem to be more focused on the Yellow River in Washburn County and ways to raise monies to purchase land along the river. No one expressed a willingness to take Adair's spot on the YRC at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Wake Boats: E. Moore suggested we put together a PowerPoint presentation for the NRC highlighting the major concerns about wake boats usage. After considerable discussion it was decided that we would attend the March NRC meeting and make a wake-boat presentation. In the meantime T. Adair will convene a meeting involving Ferris, Baker, Moore, the McDonald's, and any other interested BCLRA board members to develop a PowerPoint presentation. Adair will attend the February 9 NRC meeting as R. Noe's substitute since Noe will be enjoying the warmth and sandy beaches in Ft. Morgan, Alabama at that time.

Other Old Business: Baker mentioned that the minutes from 11/18/22 meeting encouraged everyone to look at the BCLRA website and make comments on possible improvements. Baker said that in doing so, he noticed a few things that need attention. For instance when he checked the website on Thursday (01/12/23) he noticed that the home page listed our next meeting as November 18, 2022. The link to the calendar lists only the 2021 NW Lakes Conference, which is ancient history. Nothing is listed on the BCLRA news link. Perhaps when Garry Loufek sets the date(s) for his "Benthic Macroinvertebrate" water quality interactive stations at boat landings, the date(s) could be listed. These could arguably be listed on the BCLRA calendar as well. In checking the Lake Association links, Baker noticed that Lake 26 is not listed. Hopefully there are no other omissions. The link to Past Minutes on the home page has the minutes from our July 15, 2022 meeting posted and nothing else. And finally, perhaps a link to past issues of the *LakeLines* newsletter can be added to the website?

NEW BUSINESS

No new business items.

The next BCLRA meeting will be held on **Friday, March 10, 2023, at 9:30, at the Siren Government Center.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m. (Noe/Baker).