

Black Lake Association
Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2020

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm at the Grant Township Hall in the outdoor pavilion. Proper social distancing protocol was followed. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board members present included Brett Trepanier, Ron Dulak, Sharon Dulak, Roger Selvig, Cindy Trepanier, Erin McLean, and Dave Turzewski. John Roby and Linda Smith were excused. A total of 20 members were present.

Rules of Meeting

Questions were solicited at the end of each report. Time for public comment was provided at the end of the meeting.

Secretary

The minutes from the phone conference held on June 8 were read. There were no corrections and the minutes were accepted.

Treasurer

The treasurer's report was read and accepted subject to audit.

Membership

Paid membership on June 30 is 337 members. A handful of additional members have paid since June 30. Sharon Dulak requested funds for an updated version of Microsoft Publisher Software to be used for the annual membership newsletter. Cost is around \$150. Motion was made and accepted.

Fish

The DNR will not be stocking walleye in Black Lake this year, nor are there any fingerlings available from the Tribal hatchery ponds. The DNR is planning to do the fingerling survey again this fall to look for natural reproduction and/or ageing of our walleye population.

Townships

Bearinger Township large trash day is scheduled for Saturday July 18 from 9 am to 3 pm at the township hall.

A new well has been drilled at the North Allis Township Hall as part of the ongoing renovations.

Invasive Weeds

Sharon Dulak reported that Huron Pines did the lake survey at the end of June. They found one small patch of invasive phragmites in with the native phragmites. It appears to them that the phragmites may be hybridizing. They will be doing another survey of the lake this summer looking for purple loosestrife before issuing the final report. Any necessary treatments will be determined at that time.

Buoys

There was a discussion about the buoys that BLA has traditionally placed in the channel to mark the entrance to the lower Black River at the northwest end of the lake. We have held off this year due the closing of the marina and boat ramp. The ramp is now open. Brett has led the effort recently and does not have any time to continue with this effort. He is looking for someone to step forward and take the job over. The DNR is refurbishing the old marina property but has recently said they are not interested.

The board decided to wait and see if a volunteer can be found and/or the DNR sees the benefit and agrees to do it. For now, the pontoon that BLA owns is under wrap and being stored at John Roby's storage unit.

Swimmers Itch

Swimmers itch is becoming an issue again this year with cases being reported around the lake. BLPS has been working with a company to relocate flocks of mergansers to another area. So far, they have relocated one family and another roundup is scheduled for this weekend. The high bird mortality rate with this process was brought up. In addition, there have been more large flocks of Canadian geese seen on the lake and lawns this year. Some researchers believe that geese are also causing the swimmers itch problem. Cindy indicated that it can be very expensive to relocate the birds and it is believed the relocated birds will return again next year. The best recommendation for now is not to swim in shallow areas where mergansers and/or geese have been seen and at a minimum enter deeper water from the end of a dock or even from a boat.

Alverno Dam

Bob Macomber, Drain Commissioner, Presque Isle County, and Cam Cavitt, Cheboygan County Drain Commissioner, hosted a Q&A session regarding the ongoing controversy with the owner of the Alverno Dam and BLPS over control of lake levels during the winter and spring seasons.

Both counties have retained legal counsel to protect their interests in the FERC mediation and dam relicensing process. They also expect to be named in any legal action that results.

Both counties agree that Smith Rapids is a significant restriction on water flowing out of the lake. Removal of Smith Rapids was considered and rejected many years ago, and the counties believe that removal would not be permitted in today's environment.

Neither county is interested in owning or operating the dam should the current owner decide to shut it down. Note that the dam was abandoned with the spill gate wide open for many years during the 1960's and the lake still experienced many high-water events during the spring thaw.

The parties are waiting on the results of a USGS study. Best case outcome of the relicensing process would be an agreement by all parties for most favorable conditions to accomplish reasonable lake levels without requiring a special assessment district.

They also noted that a special assessment district could be established in the event of an adverse settlement against the counties to push the resulting cost on all of the lake owners.

USGS Study on Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs)

Dave Turzewski and Roger Bergstedt will meet with researchers from the USGS for the purpose of identifying areas in the lake to sample for their study of HABs. Our lake experienced an algae bloom last summer that was ultimately determined to not be toxic. As a result, Black Lake is one of nine lakes in Michigan chosen for this study which will be conducted this summer. The goal is to get a baseline and eventually place a buoy in Black Lake which will monitor for algae blooms and other data and stream the data to a satellite. See the EPA CyAN app available for Android users for more information. The researchers are available to present their study and its objectives at the August membership meeting.

Director Nominations

Sharon Dulak and Roger Selvig were nominated to be re-elected to the board. Roger Bergstedt was nominated to serve on the board to replace Linda Smith, who has resigned. Voting for these board nominees will take place at the August meeting.

Linda served on the board and as BLA secretary for many years. Thanks, Linda, for your service!

Dave Turzewski volunteered to assume the Secretary position going forward and the Board accepted.

New Business

Ron Dulak suggested that BLA donate our coffee mugs to each of our Onaway area business members as a token of our appreciation. Motion was made and approved.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm. The next meeting will be held on August 10 at 7:00 pm at the Grant Township Hall. The pavilion will be used if necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Turzewski