

Black Lake Association

Minutes of Board Meeting

August 08, 2022

Present	Brett Trepanier, Roger Bergstedt, John Roby, Cindy Trepanier, Sharon Dulak, Ron Dulak, Erin McLean, Roger Selvig
Absent	David Turzewski
Call to Order	Brett Trepanier, president, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. at the Grant Township Hall. In addition to the Board, 15 people were present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
Rules of Meeting	Questions and input were solicited for each report. Additional comments and questions were solicited at the end of the meeting.
Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports	Reading of the minutes from the July 11, 2022, meeting accepted. Treasurer's report approved as read subject to audit.
Reports and Updates	
Membership	Sharon Dulak reported that 17 of the 40 beach representatives have reported membership data totaling 406 memberships through July.
Fish	The program was an expanded report by Erin McLean on the history and current status of the Black Lake fishery. A summary is attached. Following Erin's report and a discussion of personnel change since Tim Cwalinski has been promoted, Roger Selvig suggested that we send a letter of congratulations to Tim and a thank you for the help and support that he has given us while in his position with our good wishes for the future. Action Item: Roger Selvig moved that if the earmarked fund for fish food still exists, then the BLA should donate \$5,000 to the DNR for fish food. Roger Bergstedt seconded. Motion passed.
Township Updates	Bearinger: N. Allis: Rapid progress now being made on township hall renovations Grant: Waverly:
Swimmers' Itch	Freshwater Solutions, LLC, has discovered a new species of parasite from snail not previously known to serve as a suitable host for the parasite causing swimmers itch in North America. This newly discovered species is very common in Michigan, often dominating the schistosome parasite community in lakes. In addition, Freshwater Solutions has produced data that showed removing summer resident waterfowl from our study lakes did not reduce the swimmers itch parasite load to acceptable levels.
Water Quality Monitoring	Katie Wolfe (TotM) has submitted a proposal for \$4,028 to Community Foundation North East Michigan for purchase of equipment for water monitoring on Black Lake.
Boat Washes	Four boat washes with TotM were scheduled, but equipment failed three times. One held on July 29, but high winds shortened event.

Recent Break-ins

Following a number of car break-ins along a route from the county barn on F05, to the UAW, and along Black River Rd as far as Taylor Rd, the police apprehended the people responsible.

Next meeting

Monday, September 12, 2022, 7:00 p.m. Speaker is Dennis Wiand re Zero Gravity Aerial's proposal to collect environmental data using drones. Drones used first to survey, then boats in targeted areas.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 8:05 pm

Report on the Black Lake Fishery

Erin McLean

Report is a chronological update on changes in the Black Lake fishery, actions taken, current status, and possible next steps.

Walleye

1980s-90s until now Visibility range was 17-19 feet in the summer, and 20-22 feet in the winter.

Mid-2000s Zebra mussels cleaned up the water and visibility increased.

About 2006 Walley fishing dropped off, and the BLA fishing committee arranged for Lake State students to do a study to help determine what was going on. Fish were spawning, but we weren't seeing any young of the year-- a situation similar to that of Mullett Lake. Second year follow-up study didn't occur because faculty member in charge of project left and no one else picked it up.

2006-2007 DNR did not stock because of VHS disease.

2008-2009 BLA purchased and stocked fall fingerlings, that were 5-6 inches long. When we shocked the lake to count walleye and see whether they were planted or native, we had fish.

2010, 2011, and 2012 DNR stocked walleye fry in the spring. In the fall, shocking showed that we did have fish. The fingerling plantings took.

The walleye were in the lake and spawning, but they were not maturing. The eggs don't mature or the fry don't grow to the critical two-inch mark.

The fish eat zooplankton until they are about two inches long, and then they eat shiners or each other if there isn't anything else available.

Mullett Lake had the same problem but somehow broke the cycle.

Spring plantings were 1.8K fry; fall plantings were 48,000 fingerlings.

Our walleyes spawn in Black Lake, in the Rainy River, the Lower Black River toward Alverno dam, and the Upper Black River toward Kleber Dam.

Black Lake now has poor spawning and rearing habitat for walleye that may be related to zebra mussels, which are now in a decline.

In Burt and Mullett Lakes, natural reproduction is OK now, although they also have zebra mussels and maybe quagga mussels.

Discussion Availability of zooplankton and fry are critical. Walleye need a food source to achieve survival size, and the zebra mussel eat the zooplankton.

Erosion and sand covering gravel is a problem, e.g. in the Rainy.

Small fish—perch, for example, spawn in the weeds without any problems.

The survival rate for walleye fry is about 10%; it's higher for fingerlings, but the cost for fingerlings is much higher. It's a trade off, as to which is the better route. We probably get more in the end from fry for no direct cost.

The fish committee keeps in close touch with the DNR, so that we know what's going on, and they know that we're active and concerned.

Pan Fish

Black Lake also has abundant pan fish: Rock Bass, perch, sunfish, and limited crappie.

Musky

When the walleye numbers plummeted, the musky numbers also started to decline a few years later around 2008-09. There just aren't as many now as there used to be. Erin says that he is still fishing the same way, though he isn't catching what he used to.

Pike

There are lots of small pike. DNR is in the process of changing the regulations for pike fishing on Black Lake and some other lakes as well.

Currently, you can take two pike that are 24 inches or longer

The proposed limit is five fish with one that is 24 inches or longer.

If the proposed change is approved by the MDNR before the rules handbook is printed, then new pike regulations would be included and in effect in 2023.

The pike do eat small walleye, so reducing the pike population may help the walleye population.

General Discussion of Fishery

DNR Personnel Change

Tim Cwalinski has been promoted from his current position that included Black Lake in his district. New person to be named. Erin will make a point of getting acquainted since Tim has been so helpful in his previous role. Roger Selvig suggested that we send a letter of congratulations to Tim and a thank you for the help and support that he has given us while in his position with our good wishes for the future.

Ron Dulak and/or Erin will talk to Tim about who his replacement is.

Proposed Rearing Pond

Fish Committee has visited Thunder Bay rearing pond and is considering establishing something similar. Criteria for pond are that it must be clay lined, and you must be able to fill it in the spring and drain it when it is time to remove the fish. We might get spring fingerlings from DNR. DNR traps and removes them. However, it is important to note that the fish reared do not belong to us, but to the DNR and could be distributed anywhere.

Roger Selvig commented that the DNR has a state-approved budget that includes a lot of the things that are on our fish wish list. We should wait to take action until we see what is actually there.

Contribution to DNR	<p>The Black Lake Association has previously contributed funds to buy food for the rearing ponds, and those funds are now depleted. It may be time to consider another contribution.</p> <p>Contribution to DNR was used to purchase soy meal to put into ponds to grow zooplankton after eggs are planted to provide food for fry.</p> <p>Roger Selvig moved that if the earmarked fund for fish food still exists, then the BLA should donate \$5,000 to the DNR for fish food. Roger Bergstedt seconded. Motion passed.</p>
Water Depth	<p>There is a 72-foot hole off the shore at Camp Norwood, maybe 400-500 yards from shore. It's about the size of a football field and isn't on any map, including the USGS map.</p>
Poaching	<p>Rainy issue of poaching walleye at the beginning of the season has not recurred the last year or so because the ice was already completely out when the season opened. In addition, DNR, local residents, and fishermen have been alert and monitoring the situation.</p>
Saginaw	<p>John Roby mentioned the fish refuge in Saginaw and said that the area is saturated. Question raised whether the DNR spawning beds put in in Saginaw were effective. John's opinion is that they are a disaster.</p>
