Wabedo – Little Boy – Copper – Rice Lakes Association

2021 Annual Members Meeting July 17, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Stuart Memorial Pavilion, Longville, MN

www.wabedolakes.org https://www.facebook.com/WLBCR/

Annual Meeting Minutes

1. President Kathy Wagner called to order the 59th consecutive Annual Meeting at 9:05 a.m. on July 17, 2021. 28 people in attendance.
    a. Kathy reviewed the agenda. No additions to the agenda.

2. M/S/P – Bob Krahn/Bob Rosenbrook to approve minutes of 2020 Annual Meeting

3. M/S/P – Karen Kaehler/Joe Maertens to accept Treasurer's report.

4. President's Report
    a. Unfortunately, there is no fried chicken lunch or bingo again this year. However, coffee and pastries were served, including great donuts from Woman Lake Lodge. Thank you to outgoing Director Joe and Irene Maertens for coordinating treats for the meeting. And we were fortunate to have a guest speaker this year.
    b. Kathy announced that this is her last year as President and encouraged others to consider taking on this role. She is also president of the Association of Cass County Lakes (ACCL) this year.
    c. Cass County is updating their Comprehensive Plan this year and encouraged people to complete a public survey before the August 6th. 2021 deadline: Comprehensive Plans (cass.mn.us). Kathy will send out email to the association membership.

5. Treasurer Report: Gayl Hohbein. Approved by unanimous consent.
    a. Written 2020 financial report issued to members with the meeting agenda.
        i. Membership as of July 7, 2021, shows an increase from 42.66% of property owners that are members in 2020:

Membership Totals			
Lake	**Owners**	**Members**	**Percent**
Cooper	10	2	20%
Rice	18	5	27.78%
Little Boy	145	70	48.28%
Wabedo	189	97	51.32%
Total	**362**	**174**	**48.07%**

        ii. Income = $10,805.00
        iii. Expenses = $11.946.77
        iv. Contributions to the AIS and Preservation Funds are greatly appreciated.

6. Committee Reports:
    a. Community Outreach: Gayl Hohbein
        i. Fall Adopt-a-Highway clean-up: Saturday, Sept. 25th at 9:00 am. Meet at the Wabedo Township property off Cty. Hwy. 54, across from the Cass

County Highway Dept. buildings. The Longville Community Gardens are located at this property also. There's plenty of car parking space.

ii. Member Survey Results were briefly discussed. A projector wasn't available for the prepared power point.
    1. Power point of survey results available on both WLBCR website and Facebook.
    2. Winner of the $25 certificate drawing: Jim Aronson.

b. AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species): Bob Krahn & Cindy Gackle
    i. Aquatic species survey/AIS Detector report:
        1. The AIS Detectors, Gayl and Randy Hohbein, and Bob Krahn, are surveying both public accesses monthly, and are coordinating with resorts on both lakes for an annual survey. Demo of the throw rake that is used and education provided to the public at the access when present. No invasives detected.
        2. PLM Lake & Land Management Corp., Brainerd has been hired this year to complete 2 surveys at both Little Boy & Wabedo accesses. Cost is $300. First survey completed on 6/30/2021. Second survey will be conducted in September. No invasives detected.
    ii. Wipe, Dry, Run review conducted based on member 2021 survey results of action taken to prevent invasive species and minimal reports of running personal watercraft and wiping down fishing lines and reels.
        1. StopSpiny cloths distributed to members today to use to wipe down fishing gear, livewells and bait buckets and to prevent potential spread of spiny waterflea. There are none on our lakes at present; but prevention is of utmost importance.
    iii. Weekly visits to meet and thank the AIS inspectors continues to be done. Towels with AIS prevention reminder of the MN laws of Clean-Drain-Dispose continue to be issued that the inspectors distribute to miscellaneous boaters. 200 towels purchased for the lake season.
    iv. AIS Inspector update from Dana Gutzmann, Cass County Lake Technician: Both public accesses continue to be staffed through the summer:
        1. Little Boy – generally Friday-Sunday most weekends.
        2. Wabedo – 1-2 days/weekend, which is slightly less than last year which was consistently staffed at 2 days/weekend.
        3. Inspector staffing challenges this year. They have 25 staff for 38 accesses; most staff are part-time, and few are full-time.
        4. The AIS Explorer computer tool that ranks lakes by potential for AIS risk, is being used with staffing decisions. (developed by MAISRC). Data considered with the Cass County lakes:
            a. Between Leech Lake (#1 risky watercraft) and Cass Lake (#3), 5-6 inspectors are staffed. FYI: Cass County didn't staff Leech last year.
            b. Little Boy - #26 risk; Wabedo - #30 risk.

v. Report available on WLBCR website.

c. Fisheries: Mike Fresvik and Karen Kaehler for Bob Johnson
   i. Bob Johnson continues to have ongoing communication/meetings with Walker DNR supervisor, Doug Schultz.
   ii. DNR 2020 Creel Survey results:
      1. 1,429 anglers/parties surveyed. Little Boy=811; Wabedo=618. Entry onto lakes: 31% public access; 30% resort; 38% private residents.
      2. Angling pressure increased from the last survey in 2001. Impact of covid pandemic in 2020 and Canadian border closure seem to have contributed.
   iii. Blue Gill Initiative/Panfish Special Regulations Survey of Property Owners:
      1. The special regulation is part of the DNR's Quality Sunfish Initiative of reduced daily limits. DNR's goal is 250 lakes statewide to re-establish quality sized Bluegills.
      2. Member survey completed earlier this year regarding support, or not, of requesting to be included in the special regulations:
         a. 47 respondents. 72% in favor of lowering the panfish limit; 13% no; 13% not sure.
      3. Vote unanimously passed to authorize expenditure of no more than $1,100 on a mail survey of all property owners to collect opinions/thoughts about a possible new regulation for Sunfish and Black Crappie limits.
   iv. Bill Everts, guest speaker, was able to provide preliminary report of the 2021 gillnet surveys that were recently completed on both Little Boy (end of June) and Wabedo (this past week):
      1. Little Boy: increased walleye with good distribution of different sizes. Number of 18" fish/net has increased to highest levels in 20 years. Yellow perch numbers are low. Pike numbers and size distribution are the same. Muskie survey of 2020 was cancelled due to the covid pandemic so no data.
         a. Gillnet results: 10 walleye/net (goal is 8); >18" (bottom end of the slot limit) = 1 fish/net. Higher numbers of 14-15" walleye = 41; 16-17" walleye = 23.
      2. Wabedo: Walleye slight increase from 2015 & 2018. Yellow perch low. Pike increase since 2015.
         a. Gillnet results: 3 walleye/net (2018 = 2/net). 18" fish has increased. Good distribution of smaller size walleye which has increased and is good, despite the decrease number of walleye.
      3. Initial findings indicate that the current walleye slot limit is benefiting the lakes with an increase strong year of class (YOC).

d. Water Quality: Kathy Wagner and Karen Kaehler

i. Overview:
   1. Volunteers check water quality five times a season and Secchi disc readings weekly which provides data regarding water clarity. RMB Environmental Laboratories in Detroit Lakes records the data on its website and is easily accessed: https://www.rmbel.info/data/ Thank you Tom/Pam Fields, Randy Helland, Russ Link, Joe Maertens, and Kathy Wagner.
   2. Annual report available on WLBCR website.
   3. Water quality reports are available on WLBCR website.
   4. Wabedo NE bay has declining water quality, and we are researching what this means and what we can do.
   5. The SW bay of Wabedo is improving.
   6. Water has been more clear this year which may be impacted by the decreased rains and wind this summer.

ii. Loon Initiative:
   1. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded $5.5 million to Minnesota from the Deepwater Horizon-BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill settlement to help support its loon population.
      a. MN has roughly more loons than any other state except Alaska (~12,000). The juvenile loons spend ~3-4 years in the Gulf before they are mature and return north. Hence, the oil spill has impacted Minnesota's loon population.
      b. 3-year initiative with goals to reduce loon mortality and increase reproductive success of common loons in 8 MN counties which includes Cass County.
      c. Currently assessing for "friendly loon lakes".
   2. Get the Lead Out Campaign: About $1.2 million of the settlement is designated over the next 3 years for this MPCA program.
      a. Even a single small lead split shot sinker is fatal to loons, which will die within 2-4 weeks of ingesting. The loons are unable to detect the difference between small pebbles/rocks and any lead fishing equipment. Lead is one of the biggest killers of loons in Minnesota.
      b. 25% of loon deaths are attributed to lead ingested.
      c. Samples of lead-free tackle were available today for attendees. Members had been encouraged to bring lead tackle to the meeting to make an exchange.
   3. No reports of surviving baby loons this year.

e. Sustainability: Ron Stokesbary
   i. Conservation easement of the Siemering property on southwest end of Wabedo Lake has been completed with the Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLT). This includes 80 acres of forested land; 30 acres of shoreland; 800 feet of lakeshore. The land is owned by Cass County.

1. WLBCR contributed $20,000 to the purchase, of which $10,000 was received as a grant from the Twin Cities Muskies, Inc., Hugh Becker Foundation. Thank you to those you made the generous contributions that made this preservation possible.
2. A nice article was published in the 7/11/2021 Minneapolis StarTribune.

ii. Additional properties are in the process of being further explored for another conservation easement purchase by NWLT which would be owned by the DNR. WLBCR would again contribute $15,000 ($10,000from Twin Cities Chapter of Muskies, Inc. grant) which would almost deplete the Preservation Fund - currently at $16,617.80.

1. Reminder that continuing to rebuild the Preservation Fund remains important.

iii. FYI: If 75% of shoreline of lakes is kept in its native condition water quality can be protected.

1. Camp Olson (YMCA) has a number of conservation easements on their property, preserving ~800-900 acres.

iv. Member Gary Ewald suggestion: lake association to make available tree plantings for members' purchase as a shoreline restoration project.

7. Election of Officers/Directors
   a. The slate of Officers/Directors for 2-year terms ending in 2023 (half of the board is elected each year).
      i. Incumbents: M/S/P: Gayl Hohbein/Jeff Engen
         1. Director Ron Stokesbary (Little Boy Lake)
         2. Director – Mike Fresvik (Wabedo Lake)
      ii. Open positions: M/S/P: Gayl Hohbein/Joe Maertens
         1. 3 of the 4 open positions have been filled. No one is designated for the vice president and secretary positions at this time. Thank you for volunteering and welcome to the board!
         2. Director – Rich Wozniak (Wabedo Lake)
         3. Director – Bonnie Ewald (Little Boy Lake)
         4. Director – Doug Williams (Wabedo Lake)

8. Setting of Annual Dues for 2022
   a. The board recommends no change to the annual dues. Approved by unanimous consent.
      i. Membership dues to remain as the following: $20 – Regular; $40 – Contributing; $60 – Sustaining; $100 – Benefactor.

9. Member concerns/issues
   a. Randy Reemts from the southeast side of Wabedo x7 years inquired about the drastic lake water levels that he's observed this year. Another member

questioned if there's an impact from Federal Dam and inquired if opening it would benefit our lake levels.

b. Guest speaker Bill Evarts shared the following:
    i. There is no water level control system in place that would impact Wabedo & Little Boy. Federal Dam takes the low water cycle out of play for Leech Lake, but not here.
    ii. Statewide, the lake levels are down; especially with drought-conditions and limited rainfall this year.
    iii. There is a natural ebb and flow of lake water levels which can benefit the lake. When levels are low, it exposes soil and emergent vegetation which re-establish shoreline vegetation and helps to minimize shoreline erosion when there's high water.

10. Adjourn: M/S/P: Bob Krahn/Rich Wozniak to adjourn at 10:30 am.

11. Guest Speaker: Fish Spawning Improvement Project with replacement and restoration of the Wabedo Creek culvert off Stony Creek Road (northeast section of Wabedo Lake) - Bill Evarts, DNR Northern Region Fisheries Specialist.
    a. Original culvert was installed in the 1960's. Due to heavy rains in 2012 significant changes occurred. Remediation at that time was an 8-foot channel around the culvert.
    b. DNR assessment in April 2021:
        i. 4/12 – trap nets for one night in the creek below and above the culverts caught 28 walleye/2 northern in the downstream net, and 11 walleye/2 northern in the upstream net. Evidence that the culvert replacement project would improve spawning for both game and forage fish.
        ii. 4/20 – survey of the physical aspects of the stream itself: water volume, width, elevation, and substrate materials. At present the culvert is a "plunge" system and fish can't swim upstream with low water level.
    c. Grant monies are available for the project which qualifies under the recently completed Leech Lake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, through Cass County Soil Water Conservation District. Kelly Condif with Cass County Environmental Services is assisting with accessing the grant monies.
    d. Goals of the project:
        i. Restore the ability of spawning fish to access key spawning areas upstream of the culvert, e.g., northern pike, white suckers, walleye.
        ii. Restore the ability of non-game fish species to access habitat upstream of culvert.
        iii. Convert altered habitat back to pre-settlement condition, including healthy shoreline with native plants that have a deep and extensive root system that will hold soil in place, protect erosion, and filter excess nutrients that might otherwise go into the lake.

1. Following member discussion about plants, Bill said he would check with the DNR/project coordinator and request plants that would not need to be mowed around the culvert.

e. Project design has been completed and bids are being sought. Construction tentatively planned for October. Currently looking at 2 – 10-foot culverts which would provide enough capacity to pass extreme high water in case of another 50- or 100-year event, and adequate width of the channel to prevent washout.

f. FYI: Cass County still has monies available for individual property shoreline restoration/preservation projects.

Submitted by Cindy Gackle