Leech Lake Association Meeting Minutes-- April 15, 2019

Meeting called to order by President Gisvold at 9:30 AM. Board members present: Bob Gisvold, Dave Laursen, Tom McGovern, Pat Mortale, Bill Schultz, Ray Gold. Absent: Jeff Brockberg, Sharyn Nepsha, Steve Mortensen. Guests: Carl Pederson, DNR; Timm Rennecke, COE; Jeff Holten; Jessica Manifold, Levi Bergstrom,Cass ESD.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Tom McGovern moved to approve December 2018 Meeting Minutes as written. Ray Gold seconded. Unanimous.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Dave Laursen reported that the LLA bank balance at the end of March 2019 was $41,982. 78. Checkbook balance was $25,578.56. There was neither income nor expenses during the March reporting period. Pat Mortale moved to approve Treasurer's Report. John Eaton seconded. Unanimous.

WATER LEVELS: Timm Rennecke reported that Leech Lake water levels were at 1294.7, the middle of the summer band and higher than the lake usually is at this time in April. The area received 1-1/2 inches of precipitation in April and there is another inch of water in the snow which will raise the lake to 1295 by summer. Timm also clarified a statement under Water Levels in the December Minutes which stated that the Corps is seeking cost sharing from private individuals to restore oxbows and fill in drainage ditches along the Leech Lake River. This is not technically true, but rather, the Corps needs cooperation and partnership with groups like the Nature Conservancy and the Forest Service to proceed. A temporary Operating Plan will be implemented during renovation of the dam. This will likely be a three-year process.

DNR REPORT: Carl Pederson reported that that 2018 gill net results showed walleye numbers meeting Management Plan objectives, but perch numbers remain well below plan, due possibly to the presence of too many large predators in the lake, though possibly due to other factors as well since perch numbers seem to be declining across the state. Allowing one walleye over 20 inches this year is expected to remove some predator biomass and aid perch recovery. The DNR will be implementing a new five-year Management Plan starting next year. Carl also mentioned that perch on Leech Lake seem to be maturing earlier, which may have a stunting effect in terms of ultimate size.

CASS COUNTY 2019 AIS PLAN AND BUDGET: John Eaton and Pat Mortale attended the Cass County AIS planning meeting which led to a plan and budget for managing AIS efforts during 2019. This meeting also led to the hiring of Levi Bergstrom to replace Rima Smith Keprios as Cass County AIS coordinator. During the meeting, ESD manager Jessica Manifold introduced Levi to the Board and she and Levi discussed their roles and responsibilities during 2019..

LEECH LAKE RIVER 1 WATERSHED 1 PLAN: John Eaton reported that this plan has been approved by both Cass and Hubbard Counties. The MPCA in a four-year study found water quality good in this watershed but ongoing efforts are needed to protect it. Money needs to be found to implement the plan -- some 45 million dollars over the next 10 years.

 MINNESOTA LAKES & RIVERS (MLR)/MN COLA JOINT MEETING: The Association of Cass County Lakes (ACCL)will be hosting this joint meeting on June 17 and 18 at Northern Lights Casino. John Eaton reported that ACCL is looking for help from lake associations with the program, including displays, field trips, tour guides, pontoon boats, etc. Linda Blake is coordinating the meeting for ACCL. John Eaton to check on the cost of attending. Tom McGovern volunteered to help with the program. MN COLA will also be having its annual meeting at this event.

WATER TESTING: Tom McGovern reported that we had received a $1000 grant through Cass County to conduct algal testing during 2019 using the National Resource Institute in Duluth. The Leech Lake Association will pay the monthly bills for this testing and get reimbursement from Cass County at the end of the season.

Annual water chemistry testing will continue during 2019 using RMB Labs. Testing containers can be picked up after this meeting.

BOARD RESIGNATION: John Eaton moved to accept Mike Frank's resignation from the Leech Lake Association Board. Pat Mortale seconded. Unanimous.

BOARD APPLICATION: Jeff Holten, a Brevik resident, has expressed interest in joining the LLA Board of Directors. Jeff spoke to the board regarding his background, interests, and reasons for wanting to join the LLA board. He was asked to send a formal letter of application to Secretary, Dave Laursen.

ANNUAL MEETING: The LLA Annual Meeting and picnic will be held at the Chase on Friday, August 2. Bob Gisvold has spoken to DNR Commissioner, Sarah Strommen, about being our speaker if she is available. Bob will follow up to confirm.

Bill Schultz moved to adjourn at 11:40. Tom McGovern seconded. Unanimous.

Minutes provided by Dave Laursen.