Leech Lake Association Meeting Minutes – April 20, 2015

Meeting called to order by VP Leff at 9:32.

Board Members present: Dennis Leff, Dave Laursen, Steve Mortensen, Chuck Allen, Gail Tufte, Jane Ekholm, Jeff Brockberg, Bob Poirier, Pat Mortale, John Eaton, Bill Schultz. Absent: Bob Gisvold. Guest: Matt Ward, DNR.

SECRETARY’S REPORT: Chuck Allen moved to approve December 15 Meeting Minutes as written. Jane Ekholm seconded. Unanimous.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Dave Laursen reported that total bank balance on March 31, 2015 was $20,901.16. Checkbook balance was $4597.60. Only expenditure of note over the winter was a payment to Cass County of $1160 for our contribution to AIS efforts. Jeff Brockberg moved to approve. Churk Allen seconded, Motion carried.

DNR REPORT: Matt Ward briefed the Board on a number of fishery issues, including 2014 survey results, creel census data regarding summer and winter fishing pressure, the kick-off of the reconstituted Fishing Advisory Committee, and other issues. In general, the Leech Lake walleye population is high, and the perch population low. High walleye fry densities appear to be depressing perch fry densities. DNR recommends not stocking walleye fry in 2015 so as not to further depress perch recruitment, and also to evaluate natural walleye recruitment absent stocking. Creel census showed that summer destination fishing pressure is down, but that winter fishing pressure is at an all-time high. The new Fishing Advisory Committee, of which Pat Mortale is the LLA representative, has met a couple to times to establish goals and groundrules.

SHINGOBEE FISHING PIER: Obstacles to replacing the Shingobee fishing pier have been overcome, and a new pier will be delivered to Shingobee Island in May. Permits needed to construct a path to the pier on highway right-of -way has been granted by MN Dot to Cass County, who has agreed to amend their previous permit used to construct the bike path.

FISHING TOURNAMENTS : John Eaton briefed the Board on the two fishing tournaments coming up in early June, and the need for boat inspectors and washing stations. It appears that there will be a washing machine on site at Walker Marine, and an inspection station at Northern Lights Casino manned by county inspectors. At the request of John Ringle, John Eaton asked the DNR for additional DNR inspection hours and was promised an additional 404 hours. Cass County has hired a new person to direct county AIS inspection efforts.

The Leech Lake Walleye Tournament, where John sits on the tournament committee, has asked the Leech Lake Association for help during the tournament. This would include a couple of people to monitor boat landings at 5:30 AM, and also two additional people to monitor and assist at the release tank during weigh-in (2 to 5 PM). John has also written the DNR under the auspices of the Leech Lake Association asking that tournament sponsors be responsible for their tournament participants arriving at the lake with certifiably clean boats. Muskies Inc has such a system where participants must sign a document that their boat is AIS free or been decontaminated if arriving from infested waters.

In other AIS efforts, Cass Co. has received 32 K in grant money to provide educational materials to resorts, which are not subject to formal boat inspections or inspectors. There is also grant money available to monitor nine stretches of the Boy River for AIS infestations.

ROOSEVELT CANAL Jeff Brockberg briefed the Board on his efforts to get the necessary permits to dredge the Roosevelt Canal. Ryan Bruns, with Chad Freeman consulting, did the dredging. Both ends of the canal were dredged. Levi Brown and Sue Brown from the Tribal Land Office were critical in getting the necessary permits in time.

MEMBERSHIP: Pat Mortale’s new membership mailing system allows him to sort our membership in a number of ways. He discovered that of 426 current and past members, only 253 are currently paid up to date. Rather than send a special dunning letter to our unpaid members, it was decided to send a notice to all members in late June or early July that dues are now due for the coming year. Those who do not respond to this mailing, within a reasonable period, will be dropped from our membership rolls. In other membership information, we currently have four lifetime members ($1000), 20 Sponsors, and six businesses.

Pat also recommended that we increase our family membership dues from $20 to $35, and our business dues from $30 to $75. Sponsor and Lifetime memberships would remain the same. The Board voted in favor of this increase. Since President Gisvold was absent for this vote, I believe we should give him the opportunity to weigh in on this dues increase at our May meeting.

WEBSITE: Pat has created a new LLA website which will be easier to access by registering our own domain (leechlakeassociation.weebly.com) The Board voted to delete our existing website through Minnesota Waters (Conservation Minnesota). Jane Ekholm moved to delete. Jeff Brockberg seconded. Motion carried.

THOMPSON JEWELRY OFFER: Business offered LLA 5% of sales if they could use our name and logo in their advertising of an expensive pendant in the shape of Leech Lake. Board generally uncomfortable with establishing such a relationship with a private business. Topic tabled

DIRECTOR LIABILITY INSURANCE: Travelors submitted a proposal costing $750 annually. Another estimate from Dick Sessings Agency expected. Due to time limitation, topic tabled until May meeting.

ROOSEVELT CANAL FUNDRAISING. Jane moved that Jeff and Bob Poirer lead fundraising effort. Chuck Allen seconded. Motion carried.

Minutes submitted by Dave Laursen