Leech Lake Association Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2023

Meeting called to order at 9:35 by President Robert Gisvold. Board Members Present: Dave Laursen, Bob Gisvold, Jeff Holten, John Eaton, Mark Bovee, Jennifer O’Neill, Sharyn Nepsha, Steve Mortensen, Tom McGovern. Board Members absent: Jeff Brockberg, Bill Schultz. Guests: Doug Schultz, DNR; Matthew Buchacker. COE; Steve Henry, AIS Technician, ESD.

SECRETARY’S REPORT: John Eaton moved to approve the June 19 Meeting Minutes. Jeff Holton seconded. Motion carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Jennifer O’Neill reported that the June 30 bank balance was $75,297.90. Of that, $59,675.24 was in the cash accounts, and $15,622.55 in two certificates of deposit, both of which will be maturing in coming months. There were $9200 in deposits during the month, the majority being from membership renewals. At the end of June, 155 members had renewed, the result of the Newsletter mailing, which included a renewal form. Jeff Holten moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Mark Bovee seconded. Motion carried.

WATER LEVELS: Matthew Buchhacker, the Federal Dam COE representative, reported that the present water level on Leech Lake was 1294.75, within the summer band. Discharge at the dam is 200 cps, a minimum flow. Matthew mentioned that the Federal Dam Kids Fishing Contest was held this past weekend with some 40 kids participating. This is a popular event for both kids and adults. The Corps passes out fishpoles, bait, life jackets, plus water safety instructions. As part of the program, a movie was shown to the gatherers for which the Leech Lake Association contributed the rental fee. Rebuilding of the dam is still a few years away.

WATER TESTING: Tom McGovern reported that it was too rough on the main lake on Sunday to collect water samples. He will collect main lake samples on Monday and drop them off in Detroit Lakes.

DNR FISHING REPORT: Doug Schultz, DNR Fisheries Supervisor, sat in for Carl Pederson who was out seining for YOY walleyes. Doug said YOY growth rates appear positive at this point, and he is hopeful for a strong year class, but that won’t be known for some time. Doug mentioned that walleye fishing started slowly but picked up around Memorial Day, and the Leech Lake Fishing Tournament on June 2,3 was one of the most successful ever. Still, some resorts and guides are complaining about poor fishing and believe that stocking is the answer. Annual fish surveys don’t suggest that at this point. More likely, clearing water is making the walleyes spookier during daylight hours. This also happened on Cass Lake after zebra mussel infestation which has become a night fishing lake.

Doug mentioned that the DNR will be seeking grants and matching funds to construct a fish passage on the Girl Lake outlet. It would involve the removal of an old dam and construction of a free-flowing stream to allow fish to pass to points north, including Leech Lake. Matching funds to receive grant is estimated to be $15,000. Doug will get back to us when he gets more details. This will be on the agenda at the August meeting. John Eaton to work with Doug on the grant application in the meantime.

ANDERSON’S COVE PROJECT: John Eaton reported on the removal of Starry Stonewort by the Divers in Anderson’s Cove this past week. Some takeaways: The dive team could have used another day beyond the 5 days for which they were hired. Not all starry stonewort was removed (probably 60%?). Continual boat traffic in and out of the harbor interfered with  
the divers in terms of safety and turbulence, which affected visibility. The divers literally had to feel their way blindly along the muddy bottom. The boat traffic also caused delays when the divers had to resurface for safety reasons. The Dive Organization will be sending John a report in the next few days.

The Board then discussed what to do about Anderson’s Harbor (or other infected harbors) in the future. Should we let the owners and users of the harbor deal with the problem themselves? What should our involvement be beyond Identifying new infestations? Our role going forward will be decided in future meetings.

ANNUAL MEETING: The Annual Meeting will be held on August 4 at Ole’s Bar & Grill (formerly Mustang Sally’s). Jennifer O’Neill has sent out 400 plus Invitations. Sharyn Nepsha to receive RSVP’s.

MATURING CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT: Our two CD’s are maturing in July and August. They will be renewed automatically at an interest rate of 1.75%. Bob Gisvold to visit our bank (First National Bank North) to see if we can renew these at a higher interest rate, and whether we should put some of our available cash in perhaps an 11- month CD where interest rates may be 4.5 %, or higher. Bob and Jennifer to visit the bank where Jennifer will be added to the account as a person with check writing authority.

PLANNING AND ZONING: Mark Bovee reported on two site visits he had made during the month – one on Shingobee Bay and another at the Phelps property on the south shore of the main lake where harbors need updating. Mark also reported on a meeting at Howard Lake where the resort owner was seeking to put a trailor park behind some cabins. Homeownersn on the lake voiced concerns. Mark to review the Cass County Zoning Ordinance.

ACCL MEETING: Jennifer O’Neill reported that the next ACCL Meeting will be on July 28. Carl Pederson will be the speaker.

Jeff Holten moved to adjourn at 11:50. John Eaton seconded.

Minutes submitted by Dave Laursen