

Becker County COLA Meeting Minutes

Detroit Lakes Police Station, Thursday, July 20, 2023, 5:30 PM CST

Attendees:

Monette Lundquist – Bad Medicine

Tim Krieg – Big Cormorant

Ken Mattson – Big Sugarbush

Chuck Becker – Big Sugarbush

Becky Burns – Buffalo-Rice-Rock

Rich Cieslak – Buffalo-Rice-Rock

Jeanne Kauffman - Eunice

Garry Mowery – Floyd Lake

Cathy Backinger – Fox Lake

Stephen Corbin – Fox Lake

Jim Brown – Height of Land

Marietta Keenan – Island Lake

Sue Livermore – Maud Lake

Brian Johansen – Melissa-Sallie

Vicky Williams – Melissa-Sallie

David Suby – Pickerel Lake

David Oberlander - Stakke

5:30 pm Program presentation by Steve Corbin, Fox Lake Steward

The Lake Steward program has been sponsored by MN Lakes and Rivers since 1994. They are a small organization that directly advocates for clean water. Participants take a quiz to see if their shoreline protects water quality. The quiz can be found at:

<https://mnlakesandrivers.org/lake-associations/lake-association-programs/lake-steward/>

A lake steward visits other lake shore owners with a goal that 15% of their neighbors will adopt changes. Each Lake Steward is awarded a sign that says their lot provides clean, rather than polluted, runoff into the lake. The cost of the sign is \$30. (half is paid by MLR) 23 Lake Associations have adopted the program through MLR.

The history of Minnesota's Shoreland Management dates back to 1969 with the passage of the Shoreland Management Act. Minimum development standards - such as structure setbacks, height limits, impervious surface limits, lot requirements, vegetation removal and land alteration requirements - are established in state rules (Minnesota Rules, part 6120.2500 - 6120.3900) and administered through local ordinances.

The MPCA reports that 56% of the lakes and rivers in Minnesota are impaired and a degraded shoreline is a contributor. If we want to improve water, we must improve land management. Unfortunately, the trends are towards more development of shoreline. Across the state, we have already lost approximately half our natural shorelines on Minnesota lakes. Degraded shoreline is a problem that we can address. There is not enough regulation or enforcement, so citizen action is needed. We need to engage local organizations to support and encourage government to support grants for shoreline restoration, tax incentives and provide a list of approved landscapers.

Consider that:

- 1 lb of Phosphorus produces 500 lbs of algae in a lake.
- Lots with a lawn that runs down to the water's edge contribute about 0.2 lbs Phosphorus/lot per summer, or about 100 lbs of algae. On a lake with 100 lawns down to the lake, this results in about 10,000 lbs of algae.
- Simple strategies, like maintaining at least a 25 foot buffer of deep rooted native plants, directing runoff from impervious surfaces like roofs, patios and driveways away from the lake can reduce phosphorus runoff to .03 lbs per lot, or 15 lbs of algae. Cumulatively a lake that converts 100 lots to Lake Steward standards can reduce algae production from 10,000 lbs to 1,500 lbs.

The presentation was followed by a review of the quiz and the following observations:

- Shoreline and upland buffers are important.
- If you use rip-rap allow plants to grow in between the rocks. It slows runoff and stabilizes the rock.
- If you must remove aquatic plants, you can clear only a 25' path to the lake. Remove all cut vegetation from the lake. Do not remove Chara from the bottom of the lake. It stabilizes bottom sediments; provides food for waterfowl and cover for fish. Chara also supports insects and other small aquatic animals, which are important foods for many fish.
- Fertilizers, insect foggers and herbicides are destructive.
- Septic systems must be maintained.
- Ashes and pet waste need to go into the trash. Fire pits should be 25' – 50' from the shoreline.
- Docks should be stacked when removed from the lake to minimize lawn damage.
- A recommended native shrub for a lakeshore buffer is Rhus aromatic, Fragrant Sumac. Growing from long-rhizomes, it spreads to form colonies. The plant prefers full or partial sun, dry conditions and sandy or rocky soil.
- Ottertail Lake has been using Aquathol K to kill aquatic vegetation. The safety data sheet has the following warnings:
 - ✓ May be fatal in contact with skin.
 - ✓ Toxic if inhaled or swallowed.
 - ✓ Causes serious eye damage.
 - ✓ May cause damage to organs through prolonged or repeated exposure
 - ✓ Very toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects.
 - ✓ Very toxic to the soil environment
 - ✓ Toxic to terrestrial vertebrates
- Education can be gained by reading. MLR's Shoreland Guide to Lake Stewardship, available on Amazon, is a how-to manual for shoreline owners who want to help protect water quality.

In summary Corbin emphasized the importance of Citizen to Citizen communication and encouraged everyone to "do something". It all adds up.

Old Business:

Motion was made by Ken Mattson and seconded by Chuck Becker to approve the Minutes of the June 2023 meeting. They were approved unanimously.

Introductions:

Members introduced themselves by telling us one good and one bad thing that is happening on their lake:

- Fox Lake – A sand and gravel pit is opening near the lake. Chuck Becker will speak at their July meeting to give information on the wake boat study. Based on science, it appears wave boats and jet skis should stay 150' from the shoreline.
- Mellisa – Sallie – They may have spotted flowering rush on the lake. They will take a sample into the DNR. The annual meeting was very productive and membership has increased.
- Eunice – They want to get more information on natural landscaping and hope their membership will embrace it.
- HOL – There was winterkill of fish on the lake.
- Cormorant – The outlet was blocked causing a lot of shoreland erosion. No one on the board discusses "no mow" shorelines and they do have zebra mussels on the lake. The association is placing buoys and doing inspections at the public access. They have been having beautiful sunsets.
- Rice – There is a lot of natural lakeshore line and sharing with others on the lake.
- Detroit – The city does things during the winter that most members are not aware of. Lake weed pickup from private owners is no longer being done.

- Big Floyd – There is a lot of wildlife activity on Mud Lake and plants along the lakeshore. Kids are having fun fishing off the docks and the dog is keeping geese away.
- Bad Medicine – There are lots of jet skis and wave boats. The lake is still very clean and a 4 year old caught a 14” bass. You can use the cutout of a dog to keep the geese off of your lawn.
- Big Sugarbush – Dues were increased from \$25 to \$50 this year. Most people love a natural lot but you can’t force or educate some landowners. Not many people on the lake support Minnesota Waters and the Healthy Waters Initiative. Because of the drought, the lake is down 8 ½ inches but the water quality is still good.
- Maud - There are 4 wake boats on the lake. Since zebra mussels can live for 5 days in ballast water on these boats, they present a great concern. It will be good to see the final ruling in Vermont. They are proposing stricter requirements. The association is trying to provide more education to members on Face Book. There is still some native shoreline and they are contributing money to the St. Anthony Falls wake study.
- Mellissa – They are looking forward to the DNR and Pelican Water Shed exhibits at the Becker County Fair.
- Bad Medicine – The same members come to meetings and they would like more information on how to increase membership. They are afraid of potential large development of natural areas. They have started an Environmental and Legal fund to support smart development.

New Business: How can COLA help lake associations?

This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Our next general membership meeting will be held at 5:00 pm on August 17th. We will meet on the dock at the Detroit Lakes Holiday Inn. A pontoon tour will be given of shoreline restoration projects. The tour will take about an hour to an hour and a half.

7:11 the meeting was adjourned by David Oberlander, President.