

Minutes: April 24, 2017 BCABLA Stakeholders Committee (prepared by LEAPS)

Meeting called to order by Dave Blumer, Facilitator, at 2:35 PM, April 24, 2017

Present In Person: Julie Thomas-Telitz, Fred Thomas Resort; Romaine Quinn, Town of Birchwood; John Depoister, Village of Birchwood (in place of Virginia Hurckman); Bill Zimmer, Town of Edgewater; Steve Longacre, Birch Lake.

Present via phone: Mark Robinson, BCABLA; Bill Miller, BCABLA; Jim DelMedico, Maple Terrace Resort; Gerry Johnson, RCLA and Red Cedar River Watershed; Alex Smith, WDNR.

Minutes: David presented the revised minutes from the March meeting, noting that the revisions were made based on comments by Alex Smith. **A Motion was made to approve by Julie Thomas-Telitz, seconded by Gerry Johnson. There was no discussion. Motion passed.**

A question was raised as to who should receive the minutes. It was suggested that they be shared with Sawyer County and Tribal Resources? In response to question as to why Tribal Resources should be included it was stated that due to the walleye spearing and presence of wild rice, any Management Plan would need to be approved by them. It was also questioned if Barron and Washburn Counties should also receive the minutes. **It was the Board's consensus that the minutes should be shared with Land Conservation Departments in Sawyer, Washburn, and Barron Counties and with Tribal Resources if they wanted them.**

Updates - Dave Blumer, Facilitator

Dave indicated the grant had been awarded, and includes Resort Fishing Success Survey, and Water Sampling. Two revised versions of the Resort Lake Use and Fishing Success Survey have been sent out. Revisions were made based on comments from the last meeting and centered on what Resorts to include. Final map is included on back of both surveys

Discussion ensued concerning the surveys. Questions as to whether the surveys should be done by each individual in a fishing party or if one person in the group should complete it. There was concern about the complexity and whether individuals would complete it. The DNR requires that fish be measured which puts more pressure on people. Size ranges were set up in tables to keep it simple. Some discussion related to fish identification, particularly as relates to bluegills and pumpkinseed indicating that many don't know the difference. Dave indicated he could get DNR yellow fish measuring stickers and/or a pocket measuring tape and perhaps some wild cards which identify various fish. It was agreed that these should be gotten. **Following discussion, the consensus was to include the number in the fishing party, use the group form, keep the classification of pumpkinseed and get rid of sunfish, include total hours of fishing per group, and identify size based on categories.**

A Chamber of Commerce, of who many of the resort owners are members, meeting was set up for May 1, 2017 at 6:30pm at the Birchwood Village Hall to discuss the Lake Use and Fishing Success Survey and the details of how it would be implemented. Julie had already sent out emails to those resorts who are members of the Chamber. The meeting will also provide a sense of if the resorts will support the

concept. The plans are to cover as many of the resorts as possible starting with the Fishing Opener on May 6th. A comment was made about letting the boy scouts hand out the form when they are doing CBCW. This could be done, but it is intended for short-term people, focused on resort clientele. The DNR would need to be checked with to see if they would support giving it to boaters. It was also asked about others (bars, bait shops, daily fishermen). Alex felt it might be better to not burden fishermen with too many surveys. Add a Contact Number on the survey form. The Survey is work in progress. See what the reception is ... To talk about fish survey.

Continuing his update, Dave indicated there would be two sites designated for water quality sampling, the inlet and outlet - between Big Chetac and Birch Lakes and below the dam. Nutrient information will be gathered and Secchi disk and Oxygen Profiles will be identified. Time was spent with Steve Longacre doing the sampling on Birch Lake. Pete Bratsos will be doing the sampling on Big Chetac. It is hoped that the two volunteers can connect and share equipment. Water sampling is built into the grant.

Participant Update, Comments and concerns - Newsletters, news releases, web pages, and stakeholder update.

Mark Robinson and Bill Miller: News Releases published in the Birchwood News. A BCABLA newsletter is at the printer but no date has been established for distribution. Concern was expressed about the cost which can be a \$1,000 venture when printed and mailed. Getting to electronic media would be beneficial. The BCABLA web page and Facebook page is established and up to date. Minutes from this meeting should be available on the web site as soon as they are available.

Jim DelMedico: No comments, except people are anxious to hear what the committee is doing.

Gerry Johnson: Roger Menk updated the Red Cedar Lake Association Board at its April meeting. Information should be in their spring newsletter indicating what the group is attempting to do. This newsletter should be out prior to Memorial Day.

Alex Smith: Didn't have anything to add. The DNR is working on the wild cards and measuring tapes.

Julie Thomas Telitz: Nothing to add

Bill Zimmer: Introduced himself. He reiterated the concern that a public meeting is wanted.

Romaine Quinn: Same about the public meeting. People are interested and reading the minutes. A couple of people from the lake have been interested.

John Depoister: Introduced himself. Nothing to add but likely more input after the Village Board Meeting next week.

Steve Longacre: made a trip around Birch and Little Birch Lake was made which indicated many people are not at the lake yet but those that were, expressed a desire to be kept up on activities. Steve is continuing to work on leaving a flyer in mailboxes letting them know they can contact him to find out what's going on.

Discussions:

Suggested motions:

Copies of the suggested motions were sent to all members and there are copies available if anyone didn't get it.

Steve Longacre is putting forth three draft motions relating to items he and some people he has talked to have been concerned with. The motions follow:

1. **Who can be on committee.** Proposal is that members need to be members of our community, a Property owner, or reside within jurisdictions of the Town of Edgewater, Village of Birchwood or Town of Birchwood.
2. **Who can vote.** Proposal is that they should be members of community or Lake Chetac, Big and Little Birch Lake Associations. This identification does not include Red Cedar and Hemlock for voting purposes. They are important collaborators and need to be in the process, but not as voting members.
3. The third motion which stated "any revision of the current 2010 Lake Management Plan (LMP) scheduled for 2017 and/or beyond must reflect and be consistent with decisions made, or guidance provided, by the BCABLA Steering Group during 2016-2017 deliberations and voting unless specifically excepted by the BCABLA Steering Group during a meeting" reflected things from the previous committee and is consistent with the plan for preparing the new lake management plan.

Dave Blumer, Facilitator indicated that the makeup of the committee is the direct result of what came across during the interviewing process. The committee makeup with nine voting members was deliberate. It is his opinion that the makeup is solid in terms of what stakeholder bodies are being represented. There are two lake association representatives which are given the responsibility and recognized by the DNR as taking the lead in establishing a management plan for the Chain of Lakes. Representation from Big Chetac Resorts and Birch Lake Resorts was necessary and people were found who were interested in being on the committee. Government entities (town and village) needed a voice and chose who they wanted to be their representatives. Someone outside of the groups was needed to represent Birch Lake and Fishermen and other constituents. Steve Longacre was suggested by the Lake group as a good possibility. Gerry Johnson was selected because he is the President of the Red Cedar Lakes Association and is part of the Red Cedar Watershed group. Planning consistent with the Watershed group can be part of the DNR TMDL phosphorus reduction project which opens doors to Federal and other funding which can be tapped if the group is in line with the overall goals of Red Cedar Basin. The makeup of the committee is solid, but what is worth discussing is who the representatives for those stakeholder groups are.

Motion No. 3 – tabled.

Motions 1 and 2

Gerry Johnson indicated that Big Chetac is in the northern part of the watershed and contributes in the area of 150 to 160 ppb of phosphorus in the entire watershed which goes into Balsam and Red Cedar lakes. Based on USGS survey, that is about 40% of phosphorus loading to the Red Cedar lakes and is three times larger than their next source of phosphorus. This phosphorus continues downstream and contributes to the 300-400 ppb occurring south in the southern part of the watershed, specifically Lakes Menomin and Tainter. The phosphorus loading is significantly higher than guidelines set out by clean waters act and a committee has been established that is dealing with entire watershed with a goal of 67% reduction of phosphorus within the next ten years. Currently there is \$600-\$1,000,000 available to this group for meeting that objective. Part of that money is fair game for the northern area. It is necessary to discuss the impact of what is happening in the northern part of the watershed and how that is impacting the rest of the watershed and the potential for funding to help us down the road. Gerry has indicated that he can't be a representative to the stakeholders committee at the Watershed Committee level unless he is involved and has voting rights.

Julie indicated her willingness to put forth a motion that the committee includes a representative with voting rights from the Red Cedar Watershed because The Birchwood Chain of Lakes association needs to recognize that they are the headwaters and are impacting what is happening downstream.

It is Dave's position that unless there is a major push one way or another, committee should stay intact.

Motion No. 2 – Who Can Vote

Dave Blumer indicated that some concern has been expressed about having Bill Miller as a voting member since there may be enough in the general public to make all the good intentions fall apart. While he stands by the makeup, he also realizes it is worth discussing. It is the Lake Associations right to choose who they want to represent the committee.

To explain choice of Bill Miller, Mark indicated that it his intention to create a committee of informed people who were committed to improving the lake. Bill Miller fit that criterion. There is not an intention to push any agenda, but feels that differing opinions were appropriate. He personally appreciates Bill's experience and knowledge and has used it in creating documents, etc. He recommends no changes be made.

It was expressed that the issue relates to going forward with some of the same leadership as before. This is creating questions from some of the public.

Another member indicated that there is a value to having knowledge and expertise on the committee and it makes sense to have balance on voting between public and private interests.

Considerable discussion ensued relating to who should be represented on the committee and who should be voting members. Some issues raised were the fact that Birch Lake has a citizen representative but Lake Chetac doesn't, that the makeup of the committee took into consideration that there were three lake associations and three government entities and that, in case of a variance between the two types of entities, there needed to be a "swing" vote. Also discussed was the need for

the knowledge and expertise provided by Bill Miller, and the need for a representative from the Red Cedar Watershed, which Gerry Johnson provides. The possibility of having another resort representative from Big Chetac was suggested.

Dave indicated that based on discussion, the makeup of the committee won't necessarily change; however, if a stakeholder group isn't currently represented consideration could be made to add another member. He also stated that whether Bill Miller remains a member is a Lake Association decision.

Based on discussion, Steve withdrew Motion 2, indicating that more thought needed to go into it.

Motion 1 – Who Can Be On the Committee

Considerable discussion ensued with some indicating they felt that now was not the time to bring on new people even though Big Chetac may be under-represented. Dave indicated that because most members of the Lake Association are from Lake Chetac, they in reality aren't under represented and in past years, Birch Lake was under-represented. He indicated he had considered not accepting a motion to change committee. This discussion changed that view. The motion would be accepted if made and seconded.

Another view was that voting members needed to be current owners on Big Chetac, Birch, or Little Birch, or reside full time or seasonally as property owners of Village of Birchwood, or Towns of Edgewater and Birchwood. It was pointed out that since this is a committee of the lake association, the Lake Association Board would need to agree to any changes. Bill Miller indicated that if the group felt he shouldn't be on the committee, he would certainly agree to that. He said he was asked to be on but wouldn't take it as a personal affront if he wasn't on. In any event, he felt the Lake Association should have another board member take his place.

Motion made by Steve Longacre, seconded by Bill Zimmer to remove the representative of Red Cedar Partnership and Bill Miller from the membership. An amendment to the motion was offered by Julie Thomas-Telitz that the member of Red Cedar Alliance be given a vote.

Basically, what the motion and amendment states is that other than an exception made for Red Cedar Alliance, if you're not a constituent in the afore mentions groups, you cannot be on the committee. A comment was made that it might be easier to just replace Bill Miller rather than pass a motion that would have to be reviewed and accepted additionally by the BCABLA as the committee does not have jurisdiction to determine who is on the committee. The Lake Association does that.

A call for vote was made on the amendment; however Julie wondered if the larger motion didn't cover Bill Miller, was it necessary to make it.

Results of vote on amendment are as follows – Two opposed and seven in favor. **The Motion was passed by majority vote.**

Call for vote on amended motion – With the exception of the Red Cedar Alliance, voting members of this committee must be on the water or in the jurisdictions represented. In the vote, five opposed, three were in favor, with one abstention. **Motion failed.**

Next Stakeholders Committee Meeting in Early June

Dave indicated the purpose is to start putting down goals and objectives for these bodies of water.

Public Meeting:

The purpose of this meeting is to take activities of committee to the public in order to remove stigma that things are happening behind closed doors. Currently set for May 21 in the Village Hall and planned for afternoon – late afternoon or evening.

After much discussion the meeting date was changed to Saturday, May 20, 10 AM in the School Commons. **A Motion was made by Bill Zimmer, second by Steve Longacre. Approved unanimously.**

Dave indicated he will be sending emails asking for some topic suggestions. Email will include other materials to assist with process.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:35pm. Next Stakeholders Committee meeting planned for the first week in June – between May 31 and June 9. **Motion to adjourn by Bill Miller second by Julie Thomas Telitz.**