

Buffalo Lake P&R District DRAFT Commissioners Meeting Minutes

July 13th 2024 @ 8:30 AM

Packwaukee Pavilion

N3511 State St, Packwaukee, WI 53953

AGENDA

1. Call meeting to order

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Dustin, Karyn, Dwight, Darrel - bernie absent

Judi (town representative) & Chuck (county representative)

4. Accept minutes from May 11th 2024 & June 17th 2024

Darrel made a motion to approve - Dwight seconded

Minutes approved

5. Changes or Additions to Agenda

Dustin motion to approve agenda - Darrel seconded - Agenda approved

6. Treasury Report

Darrel Unsinn -

6/30/24 General Checking Account - \$10,117.94

Operating Fund - \$214,208.03

Equipment fund - \$69,457.62

Total all accounts \$299,783.59

Karyn made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Darrel seconded. All Approve

7. Lake Level Update

Dustin - Cason and associates have begun to do the Point Intercept survey. They are creating a map of the lake and are noting what plants they find. They are meeting with the DNR doing water studies.

The lake district will be presenting all the data over the winter so that if approved, the lake level at the dam will be changed next year.

During the recent rains the lake level had gone up to 9.3 but then the DNR adjusted the gates to lower the water to the approved level.

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8. Harvest Committee Update (equipment, personnel, and herbicide treatment)

Bob Fohey reported that things are going well. They have been making the laterals a little wider. They had some issues with hydraulic leaks but they are able to manage them. They had a problem with the shaft on the conveyor. The company picked it up and fixed it. No charges for repair.

Darrel reported that they are not going to do a second chemical treatment because the water flow is too strong and the herbicide won't stay where it's sprayed. Most people are reporting that the treatment was successful. Darrel said that the company found it more challenging than they thought it would be.

A lake district member asked if the harvester could backflush by his pier to help clear the dead fish. A discussion followed regarding using harvesters to clear dead fish from shorelines. Bob said that it would take a week to clear the whole north shore and they wouldn't be able to do the regular work.

A member asked if it would be okay to use a pump to push the fish away. Dustin stated that it is okay as long as you don't disturb the bottom.

A member asked why the fish are dying. Karyn will explain what we know during her report.

9. County/township Reports

Judi - The pier at Freedom Landing will be fixed. They don't know yet what to do about the end of the launch pad. The issue is people power loading. Rezoning is taking place along the north side of county road C and the south side of county rd K. They are changing properties to AG3.

The dumpster at the Harvest yard. The town board members are trying to police the area. There were some issues with people driving on wet ground. Bob asked for a better sign.

Causeway work is starting with pulverizing - weather dependent - and then they will add the soft material.

Chuck - Brian, highway department, said things are going well. The first layer of asphalt will be placed this year and the final layer next year.

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10. Ecology committee update

Read item 11

11. Funding for testing Buffalo Lake and feeder creeks for phosphorus levels

Karyn read this report.....

July 13, 2024

The Water Quality Committee has been meeting with Pat Kilbey, our county conservationist, and DNR staff Dave Bolha, Ted Johnson, Keith Marquadt, for a few months now. We are studying the Buffalo Lake watershed and its impact on Buffalo Lake.

The creeks that feed Buffalo Lake run through many farms. Those creeks carry silt and phosphorus into Buffalo Lake. The phosphorus feeds the weeds and the silt raises the lake bottom.

The DNR suggested to the Water Quality Committee that the lake district begin testing 7 creeks/sites for phosphorus levels. This would show which creek is doing the most harm to Buffalo Lake. After we have that data we will work with Pat Kilbey, the DNR, the farmers, and other property owners to put practices into place that will improve output from that creek.

There are a number of practices that can be put in place so that less phosphorus and silt are entering the lake on a daily basis. These practices will also greatly lessen the likelihood of a fish kill of this magnitude, happening again.

Better land practices will slow silt accumulation, weed growth and help to prevent fish kill.

It appears that the main cause of the low oxygen level and the subsequent fish kill, was the large amount of fertilizer/phosphorus and organic material that entered Buffalo Lake from the feeder creeks.

Healthy water should generally have dissolved oxygen concentrations above 6.5-8 mg/L and dissolved oxygen saturation between about 80-120%.

The reading on Thursday at the Packwaukee bridge was .23 DO and 2.7% saturation. This is far less than ideal.

Scott Bunde, fishery dept of DNR, said

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The problem with high water, heavy rain and warm temperatures is the heavy rainfall and high water can result in more organics/fertilizer being washed into the system. When organics are decomposing they use up the oxygen in the water. The organics can also result in potentially unhealthy levels of natural bacteria and fungus. This can impact fish health, especially if they are already stressed” End quote

The testing of the seven suggested sites from now through October will cost approximately \$900.00

Those sites are Allen Creek, Chapman Creek, Ox Creek, Page Creek, Mad River, Fox River at O and Fox River at hwy 22.

Using the data we obtain, we, meaning the lake district, Pat Kilbey, and the DNR will create a 9 Key Element Plan to determine the best practices to put in place to improve the water quality of Buffalo Lake. There are grants available to implement those practices.

We don't know which areas of the watershed to focus on and we can't get grant money to improve conditions if we don't have phosphorus level data.

Our goal is to find solutions that will have a long lasting, positive effect on Buffalo Lake. When the founding members created the lake district, they charged members with the responsibility to Protect and Rehabilitate Buffalo Lake. Our committee is guided by the lake district's mission statement. We are "working to enhance the quality of the lake.”

I make a motion that we use money in the Restoration line of the lake district budget to pay for the testing which will be approximately \$900.00 for this year and that we include testing of the feeder creeks in our next budget and in our lake management plan.

Water Quality Committee Chair - Karyn Niin Kitigade

Karyn made a motion that we use the money in the Restoration Line to pay for these tests And that we include doing these tests in our next lake management plan.

A member asked how do we know if the problem isn't further upstream. Karyn explained that the whole watershed affects the lake/river. We are starting our work with the land and water that most directly affects Buffalo Lake and then in the future the work will move further out into the watershed.

Mike Marine, Water Quality Committee member, explained that we will look for the tributary that

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is sending the most phosphorus into Buffalo Lake and then follow up that waterway to see which farm, residential, business area, this waterway travels through.

Dustin asked who would do the testing. Karyn explained that she will. She is already trained and is doing water testing on Neenah Creek. The testing will be done the same way as it is done through other Wisconsin programs so that the data is considered accurate and credible.

A member asked if we know which fish are more at risk during the fish kill. Smaller or larger? Bottom feeders? Members in attendance reported that they are seeing all species are dying.

Darrel reminded us that people on the lake are also part of the problem. We need to be aware of what we are doing in our yards concerning runoff. We need to stop mowing to the water's edge and fertilizing.

A member asked if there is any organization that will compensate us for all the fish stocking we've done. Karyn said that she has asked the DNR but has not received an answer.

A member reminded people about the Health Lakes Grants.

Karyn reminded everyone that the negative impact on the lake has been taking place for 50 plus years and we are not going to change things overnight but we have to start.

There was a discussion of previous fish kills.

Darrel Unsinn said that what the Water Quality Committee is trying to do is a good thing.

Karyn reported that the testing of the water samples will be done by the Wisconsin State Hygiene Lab. They do the testing for the DNR. Karyn made motion - Darrel seconded - motion passed

A member asked about the timeline for testing. Karyn explained that it is done monthly May - October for all other water testing programs so that this is what we will be doing.

A member suggested that we put a link on the Buffalo Lake website to the Health Lakes Grant website. She also suggested that we remind people now about their part in caring for Buffalo Lake. Karyn offered to write up something and Dustin said he would email it to members.

Karyn reminded people that volunteers put in a native plant garden through the Healthy Lake Grant at the Freedom Road boat launch.

There was a discussion about algae. It was determined that we do not have blue green algae but

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we do have an abundance of duckweed. People are also seeing a sheen on the water which is from the runoff of nutrients from the surrounding area.

A member asked if we were still looking into putting in silt traps. Two Water Quality committee members explained that, at this time, we are not. Following the DNR's direction, we are focusing on phosphorus levels. But in the future it is possible that we revisit this idea.

12. Fish Committee update.

The fish committee is deciding if they will continue stocking fish in the future.

13. Petitioner to leaver Lake District

This is being tabled until the annual meeting. The board will look into this further.

Darrel made a motion that Dustin speak with the lake district attorney about this. Karyn scended. Motion passed.

14. Unfinished Business

Nothing

15. New Business

Nothing

16. Set date for next meeting

The next meeting is the Annual Meeting on September 28, 2024 at 9am

Adjournment at 10:00am

Notice

It is possible that members of and possibly of a quorum of members of the Town Board of Town of Packwaukee may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by the Town Board at the above stated meeting.