Prairie Lake Improvement Association

Meeting Notes May 24, 2015

Fine Lakes Town Hall

Attendance was 42. Memberships to date are approximately 76.

The Officers & Directors were introduced: Merritt Linzie, President; Scott Moncur, Vice-President; Sandy Fontaine, Treasurer; Bob Sanft, Secretary; Directors, Ken Hallberg (15), Richard Collman (16), Bob Stemwedel (17)

Secretary, Bob Sanft reported the minutes of the August 31, 2014 meeting.

Treasurer, Sandy Fontaine reported the financial status. Income of $1314 and Expenses of $714 resulted in a balance of $2773.

Wayne Thom of Thom’s Nuisance Wildlife Control, 173 Prairie Lake Road, Wright, MN 55798, 218-644-3593; cell 218-390-7201 presented information about beaver control in Prairie Lake. Wayne offered a proposal to control beavers: $40 per set- up (or Address), $40 per beaver, and $30 per coon or other animal. Wayne does not “flag” his traps. There is some interest in removing beaver dams in Hasty Brook to restore a walleye spawning area. Wayne suggested that beavers in Prairie Lake have cut shore trees and moved them to other places and the population of beavers has increased since they have very little market value. A beaver lodge will support up to 10 beavers. Beaver season is from late October to late April. Property owners can deal with beavers anytime they have a claim of damage and grant permission to control them. There was concern that traps pose some threat to dogs, otters or children. After much discussion, members decided to table the proposal until the fall meeting.

Scott Moncur would like to be relieved of the buoy placement and removal task. A year round lake resident could better accommodate early placement (mid-May) and late removal (early October). An alternate approach would be “Adopt-a-Buoy” program where individuals would install/remove a single buoy each year. This may result in some inconsistency of buoy placement/removal as individuals may not place/remove buoys on the same days.

Ken Hallberg reported on water quality/clarity. Hasty Brook had a tube reading of 74cm this May. Prairie River had a reading of 93cm; both readings were about the same as last spring.

Prairie Lake had secchi disk readings of 6.5’ compared to normal readings of 3-4.5 feet.

Ken also reported loon activity on his floating nest. Loon activity was also reported on the “grass island” and possibly another location.

Kelli Rae Theiss reported that the lake level has risen one foot this May.

The Prairie River weir/dam and the nearby Prairie River culvert under Prairie Lake Road (Co. Road 51) were also discussed. The Prairie River weir/dam does not provide a relatively stable water level in the lake as lake levels generally fluctuates 15-18 inches every year. The culvert under Co. Road 51 does not accommodate extreme flows as such occurred in June 2012. Water flowed over the road as the culvert was not large enough. Hasty Brook, the main inlet to Prairie Lake, also overflowed Carlton County road two different places. These areas were corrected with larger culverts. Property owners are worried that the flow into the lake has been increased without increasing the flow out. This might result in repeat damage to lake shore property under heavy rain events. The lake association approved expressing this concern to St. Louis County with a copy to DNR State Hydrologist.

Big Sandy Lakes Watershed Management Project reimbursed the association for the 2015 newsletter and website domain renewal costs of about $200. Funds are available for shore erosion, native vegetation or rain garden project cost participation. The watershed will soon have $25 coupons available towards the purchase of rain barrels at local hardware stores: call 218-927-6565. An AIS Workshop will be held Monday, June 15, 10AM -3PM at the McGregor Community Center . A Shoreland Planting Workshop will be held Monday, June 29, 8AM-3PM at Big Sandy Lake: call 218-927-6565 for registration and directions. Willey’s Marine will host a free AIS decontamination station this summer.

DNR will perform a 5 year fish assessment on Prairie Lake later this summer

MPCA is planning a comprehensive water quality study on Prairie Lake this summer.

The Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates organization represents the views of seasonal, recreational & lake side property owners at State agencies and the Capitol. Members were encouraged to contribute to this organization. Prairie Lake Improvement Association approved continuing annual support of $125.

The association also approved a contribution of $25 to the DNR non-game loon monitoring program.

The lake association election resulted with incumbent officers and directors retaining their positions: Merritt Linzie President, Scott Moncur, Vice-President, Bob Sanft, Secretary, Sandy Fontaine, Treasurer and Ken Hallberg, Director (2018).

Next Meeting: September 6, 2015 (Labor Day Weekend), Fine Lakes Town Hall, 1:30PM

Notes by Merritt Linzie