

## High-Fishtrap-Rush Lakes Association Annual Meeting

June 26, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Boulder Junction Community Center

High-Fishtrap-Rush Lakes Room

### **In attendance were 40 members including board members:**

Paul Egelhoff, President, Gary Tielens, Vice-President, Nicole Wilkin, Treasurer, Alan and Cathy McCully, Linda Pils, Loon Ranger, Rich Mathias and Wayne Guzy. (Absent Barb Wiesner, Secretary, Ken Wiesner and Mark Lavin.)

### **Welcome and Open Meeting**

President Paul Egelhoff opened the meeting and introduced the board of directors including newest members Wayne Guzy and his wife Martha Holman. They live on High Lake and were recently appointed by the board to take over the At-Large position #3, of retiring board member Linda Pils.

### **Treasurer Report**

Nicole Wilkin reported that at the start of the fiscal year, January 2020 the treasury had \$5,446.37. Deposits in total that year were \$25,557.80. Which included member dues, members undesignated donations, book sales receipts, donations for Walleyes for Tomorrow, and DNR grant reimbursement. Also included was \$5,504.45 donated in memory of Daniel Johnson. The expenses for the past year were very minimal. The largest was the liability insurance which was \$580. Total expenses were \$1,422.01. Leaving a balance as of December 31, 2020 of \$29,582.

The board did decide at its last meeting to purchase a memorial bench in memory of Dan Johnson with some of those donated funds. That bench now sits outside the Boulder Junction Chamber office. Ideas for using some of the rest of the memorial funds include reimbursing the Boulder Junction Township for their funding of the Clean Boats Clean Waters program at the High Lake boat landing for the last three years. That total is just under \$1,000. We have a few other ideas and will gladly take any suggestions for how these memorial funds could best be used.

### **HFRLA Projects**

#### **Membership**

Update our membership data base and recruit new members. Present members are encouraged to reach out to their neighbors who aren't members and encourage them to join the lake association by providing them with information about the lake and our mission.

Paul proposed that membership eligibility include not only those people who live within one mile of our water body but also those that living along the river to the Fishtrap Dam.

### **Website Updating Goals**

1. Use the website to share information about our lake on a more regular basis.
2. Archive reports such as the water quality data, grant and project documents so that they are available for future reference.
3. Archive Fishtrap Dam History – photos, dam operation information, culvert replacement and dam reconstruction etc.
4. Post water quality data on a regular basis.

### **Walleye Management Plan**

Tom Whitcomb reported to Paul about the Walleye stocking that has been done on our lake. He said there appear to be more walleyes that are catchable.

Paul suggested we consider preparing an RFP (Request for Proposals) for a fisheries consultant to review our water quality and our lake habitat to develop a more comprehensive approach to the protection of the species as they grow rather spending thousands of dollars on fish that aren't going to be surviving very long. We can then develop an approach that results in long-term solutions.

Paul suggested using the \$3,000+ monies donated by Association members for the Walleyes for Tomorrow program to get the biggest Walleyes available for now until we know more about how well smaller ones will survive.

### **Lake Education and Protection**

The following ideas were discussed. Use direct mailing and boat landing Kiosk to provide information to people living on and using the lake about boat operation, wave management, lead shot replacement, loon protection through nesting platforms and signage, and other information on being a good steward of our lakes.

### **Shore land protection problem**

Spruce budworms are attacking and devastating the shoreline Balsams. This is especially notable around the turtle pond water line with many dead trees. The amount of dead wood creates a hazard for fires and on roads that then need to be cleared off. The Board will research how to deal with this problem.

Cathy McCully brought up the need for reminders on speed limits and no wake zones on the lake. Would more signs and/or buoys be helpful?

### **Invasive Species** (Plants that are expansive.)

Helen Schott (High Lake), an invasive species expert suggested using some of the Association funds to deal with the number of invasive species in the lake. Narrow Leaf Cattail (Rush), Aquatic For-Get-Me-Nots and Wild Iris (boat channel), Rusty Crayfish, Mystery Snails to name a few. According to Helen except for Narrow Leaf Cattail all these plants come from nurseries and are brought in by people living on the lake.

## **Loon Ranger Report**

Our Loon Ranger Linda Pils reported the bad news that the Loon population in northern Wisconsin is declining. Chicks are smaller and less hearty than previous years. 82% perish after 5 weeks of age. Black flies are attacking the parents while nesting and causing them to abandon their nests.

### **The following are threats to the loon population.**

- Lead poisoning - 20%
- Aspergillosis - fungus infection caused by mold that affects the respiratory system.
- Monofilament line – gets tangled around the beaks and legs of loons. People should not throw this in the lakes. Instead it should be cut in 6 inch strips and taken to the DNR for re-cycling.
- Botulism
- Habitat degradation
- More human population
- Less clarity of water – loons are visual fishers so they need to see their prey.
- More polluted lakes and more chemicals in the lakes. Need to be careful what you are using on lawns and near the lake.
- Oil spills in the gulf killed many of the loons that return to our area in the spring.
- Climate change

In May there were territorial pairs in each of the four areas: Frog Island, Battleship Island, Bear Island and Rush Lake. They all nested but abandoned their nests due to the black flies that are indigenous to loons. 80% of the time they will re-nest and there are now 2 chicks on Bear Island and loon on a nest on Rush. The Frog pair and the Battleship pair do not appear to have re-nested.

### **Vote for open Board of Directors positions**

Cathy Royer - new	High Lake #2
Andy Kerecman- new	Fishtrap #2
Ken Wiesner - renewed	High Lake #3
Mark Lavin - renewed	Fishtrap #3
Rich Mathias - renewed	At-Large #4

Cathy McCully moved and Roger Larson seconded to accept the slate as presented by the Board. Vote was 40 for candidates and 0 against.

### **Open Discussions/New Business**

#### **Loon Protection**

Discussion was initiated concerning protecting the existing nesting areas and building loon platforms for nesting. Linda explained that if you put out a platform you have to guarantee that you are going to keep it up for years and years to come. Once the loons are used to the territory it has be available to them so a platform has to be maintained for generations to come. Val Geraldson asked how to get the required permit to construct a platform. Catherine Egelhoff (Rush Lake) volunteered to research the Loon nest platform permit.

Other concerns are that the present locations of nests may be washed out due to the lake level getting higher and that boats speeding past nesting areas and causing large wakes may also wash out nests. Posting Slow Wake signs or a Loon nesting sign near the nesting places warning people to stay 250 feet away may be a solution. Further research is needed on the legality of such signs.

**Business Meeting adjourned at 10:07 am.**

**Presentation – Northern Lights**

Emily Heald, Water Coordinator at the North Lakeland Discovery Center in Manitowish Waters gave a presentation enjoyed by all entitled, “The Aurora Borealis: The Geomagnetic Storm You Never Knew You Wanted”.

**A BYO picnic followed in the Boulder Junction Community Center shelter.**

Respectfully,  
Barb Wiesner, Secretary

**Next annual meeting – June 25, 2022**