

Annual Birch Lake Association Picnic Minutes
September 19, 2020

A special "Thank you" to John and Jackie Alfords for hosting our picnic this year!

**If you were unable to attend the meeting you can mail \$30 association dues (checks made payable to: Birch Lake Improvement Association) to Emily Gangl, 15895 228th Ave NW, Elk River MN 55330.

***Longer set of minutes this year, but it was a good meeting with a lot of information.

- Review of lake aeration last winter. We came close, the ads for our "Thin Ice Warning" were placed in local papers, permit pulled and electricity turned on at the south end of the lake by the church camp. With the mild weather forecast ahead the DNR said our oxygen level held steady and we would not need to aerate before ice out. Which is very good since we didn't have to spend over \$1,000 on purchasing insurance and paying for the electricity to power the aerators.

The following is an explanation of what aeration is and why we need to do it some winters. Aeration is the process of opening up part of the lake, about the size of several football fields, during winter to increase oxygen levels in the lake to prevent fish from dying. All winter the DNR monitors the oxygen level in our lake and when it decreases too much we need to aerate. We aerate at the south end of Birch lake. We work with the DNR to open an area of ice by placing floating machines in the ice which moves water around to keep the water open for oxygen. We post warning signs of "thin ice" around the edge of the open ice warning anyone out on the lake that this ice is open.

We have a shallow lake, when we experience an early freeze and early snow this darkens the lake and cuts off the process of our lake making oxygen for our fish. If the oxygen levels are too low our fish will die and in the spring when the ice comes off the lake the dead fish float to the top and surround our shorelines.

- Bank financials. Current balance as of 8/31/2020 is \$4,094.95. Emily (Secretary and Treasurer) will close current bank account and reopen with a new Birch Lake tax ID and account number. Over the winter months boxes of old paperwork were examined and it was discovered that a personal SS number, probably from a former Birch Lake volunteer, was on the bank account. We will close that bank account and open a new account with Birch Lake Improvement Association on it

to avoid this issue and will be easier to transfer when the next treasurer takes over.

- In the not so good news category, Eurasian Watermilfoil has been discovered in Birch Lake and confirmed by MN DNR this past summer. DNR was out and plotted a map, shown at the meeting, with locations of the Watermilfoil. There are a few options for treatment, from handpicking, to scuba divers who are trained to spot and remove, to chemical spot treatments. There are also various grants available to help cover the costs of these treatments. Individuals volunteered in groups as follows and will meet this winter to share findings and develop a plan to treat:
 - Jesse and Gena Hane: research grants and develop a Birch Lake website for information to be shared with all lake residents.
 - Torsten Leines: research companies, treatment options, costs, needed permits and gather a plan from companies specific to our lake.
 - Keith Gangl: research our LLC, see if it's current and what is needed for the LLC to continue.
- Discussion to increase dues was tabled until next year's meeting when we have more information on lake costs. The cost of aeration and the cost of remediating Eurasian Watermilfoil may constitute an increase in annual dues or a one time increase to help with costs, stay tuned for what the committee discovers.
- Group had a discussion about the really noisy older model jet skis on the lake this summer. John Alfords volunteered to investigate if there's any noise laws, etc. that might help reduce the excessive loud watercrafts on our lake. John will check if the DNR has any enforceable laws or ideas. Right now local law enforcement can only check for license and registration.

Thank you everyone for your continued interest and investment in our lake! Have a great winter and hope to see you out next spring and summer!