

Minutes of RALALA Annual Meeting
August 5, 2023
Crooked Lake Township Town Hall

Call to Order: Bob Eddy, President of the Association, called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Approval of 2022 Minutes: Copies of the 2022 Annual Meeting minutes were made available for review. Upon motion made by Bob Lee and seconded by David Lawson, the minutes were approved as provided at the meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Sara Parke, Treasurer, provided copies of the financial report and expense summary and highlighted the following:

- The only fundraising initiative in 2022 was the membership drive. There were no raffles, silent auction, etc. that were sometimes done in prior years.
- Number of members: 298 in 2022, up from 256 in 2021 and 225 in 2020
- Community members have donated \$18,157.50 to be used for EQPI (environmental quality projects and initiatives), including prevention and control of invasive species.
- Milfoil-related costs in 2022 totaled \$10,842 for surveys on the four lakes (Roosevelt, Leavitt, Lawrence and Smokey Hollow), and milfoil treatment on Lake Roosevelt. No milfoil was found on the other three lakes. After receiving financial contributions from Crooked Lake Township and City of Emily, the treatment cost to RALALA was \$2,338.
- All programs and initiatives in 2022 were fully funded.

Board Elections: Bob Eddy reported he received notice from Jeff Caza and David Lawson, whose director terms expire this year, that they did not wish to run for another term. Since nobody has been nominated to fill those positions, no election of new board members occurred. The current board members/officers are as follows:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Officer Position</u>	<u>Director Term</u>
Bob Eddy	President	2022-25
Gary Langer	Vice President	2022-25
Diana Lee	Secretary	2022-25
Sara Parke	Treasurer	2021-24
Cyrus Malbari	CIO and Asst. Treasurer	2021-24
Kim David	Director	2022-25
Darril Wegscheid	Director	2022-25
Mary De Hanson	Director	2022-25
Anne Bonnerup	Director	2021-24
Bob Lee	Director	2021-24
Mark Mosman	Director	2021-24
Lloyd Thyen	Director	2021-24

RALALA Objectives: Bob Eddy outlined the association's objectives including:

- Preserve, protect and improve Lakes Roosevelt, Lawrence, Leavitt and Smokey Hollow (the Lakes) and their watersheds
- Design, organize and fund volunteer projects and educational programs to accomplish the above
- Seek funding, gifts and other assistance needed to accomplish the above
- Aid, advise and assist municipal, county and state policymakers relating to decisions and actions impacting the Lakes and watersheds

Dr. Nick Phelps (MAISRC) Presentation: Bob Eddy introduced guest speaker Dr. Nick Phelps, Director of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) and Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota's Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology.

Dr. Phelps' presentation entitled "From the Lab to the Lake" addressed the creation of MAISRC, its purpose/goals, its ongoing research and projects, as well as the resources they have available to assist in the fight against aquatic invasive species (AIS). Information included the following:

- MAISRC was created in 2012 to fight the spread and impact of AIS on Minnesota's lakes and rivers, and is funded by the Minnesota Legislature and a trust fund (proceeds from the Minnesota Lottery).
- Invasive species (non-native species invading new territories) is a global problem and a very real and growing problem in Minnesota. One-half of the invasions have occurred in the last 7 years.
- Prevention is the key. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Millions of dollars have been spent on prevention. Early detection is also important.
- MAISRC has acquired a vast amount of data by conducting research, gathering samples, lab testing, studying impacts and testing new approaches.
- Decontaminating gear in the boat is as important as the outside of the boat.
- Bait can spread AIS. It is illegal to release bait into the lake.
- In developing treatments for a species, testing is first done in the lab to study combinations of variables, such as what chemical, how much chemical, at what temperature, under what conditions, etc.
- Current AIS in Minnesota includes:
 - Eurasian Milfoil – they are learning how best to control it.
 - Starry Stonewort – the problem is getting worse and it's very tough to get rid of. New strategies are needed.
 - Zebra Mussels – once established, few options exist for treatment. Finding it early is key.
 - Spiny Water Flea – is now in 40-50 lakes in Minnesota.
- MAISRC website is: maisrc.umn.edu. The website has an interactive map to view field research projects and maps specific to each research category, along with an array of educational materials.

- MAISRC has created a tool/app that can predict the likelihood of the spread of Zebra Mussels and other AIS to a specific lake. The data can then be used to inform decisions by the state, counties and other entities when prioritizing AIS projects and allocating available funds.
- The above referenced app shows that Lake Roosevelt has a 39% probability of getting Zebra Mussels within the next 5 years due to boat transport, and that 22% of boats coming into Roosevelt are coming from Zebra Mussel-infested lakes.
- MAISRC studies how people and watercraft move. AIS is spread two ways – water connection and boaters. Water inspectors quiz people as to which lake they are headed to and from where they are coming. There are 1.6 million inspection records.
- Lake associations are important in reducing AIS risk. Risk is reduced by:
 - Boater education
 - Inspections
 - Boat and gear decontamination
- Boaters should be inspecting their boats for 5 minutes (not 2 minutes) to improve effectiveness.
- It's important that decontamination stations are maintaining high enough water temperatures to kill AIS. Decontamination spray should be at 120-140 degrees for 10 minutes.
- Attendees were encouraged to be an advocate of and support MAISRC research. Fighting AIS requires a team effort.

RALALA President's Presentation: Bob Eddy presented information and updates on RALALA's current projects and activities:

- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) – RALALA is aggressively moving forward with AIS management and prevention steps.
 - Eurasian Milfoil: Surveys will be done this summer on all four lakes (Roosevelt, Lawrence, Leavitt & Smokey Hollow). Roosevelt was surveyed on July 11 and was treated with ProcellaCOR on July 31. The other three lakes will be surveyed in late summer. No milfoil was found north of the bridge. 14.96 acres were treated in the south part of Roosevelt to adequately treat about 0.6 acre of actual milfoil. The increase in milfoil this year over last year is believed to be due to: (1) the lake heating up early and fast; and (2) water clarity being better this year which fosters milfoil growth and also makes it easier for surveyors to find the plants. RALALA is considering hiring divers to remove the 23 individual plants found outside the treated areas, but the price tag is expensive (approx. \$7,000).
 - Starry Stonewort and Zebra Mussels: RALALA hired Freshwater Scientific divers to survey at both Roosevelt and Lawrence boat launch sites and neither species was found. The cost was \$400 per dive.
 - Management of Launch Sites:
 - RALALA follows DNR's Best Practices relating to AIS prevention
 - Use of decontamination station in Outing is encouraged but is underused. Steps will be taken to improve signage.

- Inspector hours at the boat launch site have been increased this summer to include more days per week and full-week coverage during holiday weeks.
 - I-LIDS are installed and functional. When the sensor detects motion, the video camera starts recording and a recorded verbal message starts playing reminding the boater to inspect their boat and clean/drain/dry. The videos taken, during the days/hours that no inspectors are present, are reviewed and violations (i.e. boats/trailers containing plants hanging off of them) are reported to the Sheriff's office.
 - There is a new kiosk at the Roosevelt launch site that was erected to hold signs relating to AIS, lake information, sensitive shoreline information, wake reminders & recommendations, etc. A sign was created to illustrate recommended wake boat operating areas and highlighting the sensitive shoreline areas where more caution and distance and low wakes are encouraged.
- Water Quality Testing – RALALA conducts testing in partnership with WAPOA (Whitefish Area Property Owners Association) to determine the health of the lake. Water testing is done monthly May through September. WAPOA has published 2022 testing results and RALALA's lakes are consistent with WAPOA results. Both associations encourage their members to keep phosphorus out of the water and let vegetation grow to form a protective barrier at the shoreline. 1 lb of phosphorus = 500 lbs of algae.
- Enbridge Pipeline – RALALA created a Risk Mitigation Plan in early 2022 due to the close proximity of the pipeline to the north end of Roosevelt. To ensure there is no leakage that goes undetected, the Board recently voted to implement a monthly water test in the area where the Spire Valley Creek enters the north end of Roosevelt. Testing by AW Labs starts in August of this year. Costs will be approximately \$7,000 per year. Enbridge is not willing to participate in testing or cost sharing.
- Protect Our Lakes Initiative – Per the Natural Shoreline Partnership paper dated June 2023, Minnesota has lost 40-50% of natural shoreline, which means lower water quality and more algae. Poor lake quality can equate to lower property values. RALALA participates in a Lake Steward Program to recognize homeowners who maintain natural shoreline or take appropriate steps to revert to natural shoreline. Interested persons can take a quiz that is available online at mnlakesandrivers.org website, which is designed to help us understand what helps and what hurts our lakes. To date, 29 people have taken the quiz, 18 arranged site visits and 13 received Lake Steward Awards (including a sign to post at the lakeshore). RALALA arranged for Prairie Restorations to conduct free consultations in June for people interested in restoring their natural shoreline. Prairie Restorations followed up by providing 10 site visits, including consultation, plans and estimates. RALALA is providing information and support for 4 of the participants who have started projects.

- Shoreline Initiatives Bennies Program – RALALA reimburses \$100 for Soil and Water District site visits and reimburses \$500 for completed shoreline projects (for a limited number of participants each year).
- Other RALALA initiatives and activities:
 - Concerns raised by members include:
 - Shoreline erosion
 - Habitat impacts on loons and other waterfowl
 - Boaters and jet skis too close to shore
 - Impact of large wakes on shoreline and other boaters
 - Lack of Sheriff presence
 - RALALA is restarting its Water Patrol program and is looking for additional volunteers to patrol the lake in the Sheriff's boat.
 - Get the Lead Out Campaign – RALALA has been working to educate fishermen on the dangers of lead tackle and the devastating effect on loons and other waterfowl. Messaging on this campaign has been conducted through signage, brochures, booth at Emily Day, booth at Corn Feed in August at the Pickled Loon, etc. Lead will be collected at the Corn Feed August 19 and those bringing in lead will be entered into a drawing for prizes.
 - RALALA hosted the second annual Youth Operators' Water Training on June 15.
 - Presence at Emily Day: This year RALALA had a booth at Emily Day in July as an opportunity to increase name recognition and to get the message out as to our purposes, initiatives and projects.
 - RALALA participates in the "Adopt a Highway" program and organizes clean-up days (a Saturday in both spring and fall) to pick up debris in the roadside ditches along a stretch of Highway 6 (from downtown Emily north to just past Mill Road). Volunteers are needed for this project.
 - Buoy Management – Members of RALALA assist with the management of buoys on the lakes.
 - Education and Communication – RALALA will make presentations at Emily City Council and Crooked Lake Township meetings to keep them apprised of RALALA's challenges and activities.
- Cost of Initiatives and Projects – The cost of fulfilling our mission to protect our lakes continues to rise. Although we seek and often receive cost-sharing (from DNR, City of Emily, Crooked Lake Township etc.) for many of our projects, our costs are still rising. In addition to current projects, RALALA is also considering (1) an on-site decontamination station at Roosevelt and Lawrence boat launch sites and (2) increased number of inspector hours at both Lawrence and Roosevelt launch sites.
- Dues and Other Contributions to RALALA: The Board will: (1) analyze whether to raise dues and by how much, (2) make it easier to donate (enhanced payment systems), (3) distribute more specifics on what the EQPI (environmental quality projects and initiatives) fund is used for.

Questions/Suggestions

- It was suggested that at next year's RALALA Spring Launch, milfoil samples should be available to educate people on how to identify the plant. RALALA will also provide information on how people can photograph the plant and record a GPS location upon finding milfoil so that surveyors can be pointed to those locations.
- A question was asked relating to the level of membership among lakeowners. Approximately 50% of lakeowners on Lake Roosevelt are members and the percentage is less on the other lakes.

Adjournment: With no further questions or discussion, Bob Eddy adjourned the meeting.