

Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting of RALALA

2015 Annual Meeting of RALALA met on June 27, 2015 at 3:30 p.m. in the Crooked Lake Town Hall. President Bob Lee called the meeting to order.

Moved up on the agenda was speaker Jeff Forster, Executive Director of the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates. This association provides links among advocates for the Minnesota lakes and rivers with policy makers in St. Paul. Concentration is on the “Heritage piece.” They offer “legacy seminars” providing property owners with the ability to move their land ownership between generations. The group is a 501(c)(4), with no tax breaks for donations, and continues quite well in that status. They concentrate on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), saying that people transport AIS – not ducks or other birds. There are approximately 560,000 lake home owners in Minnesota – and 150,000 cabin owners. One hundred thirty lake associations take part in this group as of 2003 – RALALA is among them. He talked about research done at the U of M by Dr. Peter Sorenson, who designed the study and carried out the eradication of sea lampreys in the Great Lakes. The key to success in eradication of invasive species is the linking of people, lake associations and the DNR. The \$10 million dollars that comes from the state annually to the counties, needs to come to the local level. Initiatives are coming up. He talked about the frustrations of working with our legislators and representatives and that the group has a paid lobbyist. They count on that lobbyist to notify them as to when letters from constituents on which subjects will have the most impact and signal members and associates as to when to send e-mails that will have the most impact.

Bob announced that the Board has once again nominated him and Gary Langer as directors for another 3 years. He asked for more volunteers as board members and indicated that this was and would be an option for any who wished to serve. Motion to close the nominations was made and seconded. Bob indicated that election of officers is up to the Board, but that tentatively the Board plans that he will continue as President; Linda Van Stratton as Vice President; and John Rowell as Treasurer. Jackie Evans will take over for Sandy Dee as Secretary.

John Rowell gave a treasurer’s report. We have \$ 487.70 in the checking account; \$ 6,012.18 in one savings account and \$ 4,372.76 in a Wells Fargo checking account. There was a onetime donation from an anonymous donor for \$49.98. A long time member has also set up a \$50.00 monthly donation to RALALA to support the work we do. John indicated that 4 active members of RALALA are retired employees of the 3M Company in Minneapolis. The company offers a \$250.00 grant to each these former employees in exchange for 25 hours of volunteer work for the non-profit of his or her choice. So far, RALALA has benefited from this program through the work of Roger Brekken, Ed Evans, Mary Kowalski and Darril Wegscheid. If anyone knows of other retired 3M employees who would like to take advantage of this benefit, they are encouraged to talk to one of those participating now. RALALA thanks these people for their work in behalf of RALALA and 3M for its generous gifts.

Motion to adopt the treasurers report passed.

Gary Langer spoke first about the AIS committee, consisting of Jan Skjolsvik, Lloyd Thyen, Ed Evans, Bob Holman, and now Gary, the newest member. From the outset, RALALA has supported this committee's commitment to keep our lakes clean. In the past the Committee hired inspectors with funds from taxpayers and donations from RALALA and Washburn Lake Assn. Now inspectors are funded by Cass County. Inspectors are paid \$14.50 per hour and work on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at landings on Roosevelt, Washburn and Lawrence Lakes. People were encouraged to sign up for the training and possibility of part-time employment as an inspector. A sign up sheet was passed around for "lake ambassadors" RALALA members willing to touch base with these inspectors to see if they are having any problems during their working hours, to ask how they are doing, and to contact Cass County if there is a resolution to a problem to be had. Discussion took place as to how much these folks appreciate people just checking in on them. Their work is important, but can be boring at times. Gary also mentioned an initiative to deploy pieces of plastic pipe on docks in the lakes that members can check periodically for zebra mussels. Gary mentioned that when he went to Outing Hardware to buy some pipe for this purpose Vern at Outing Hardware told him he felt so strongly about fighting invasive species himself that he would give anyone who asks a piece of PVC and a piece of rope to tie at the end of your dock.

Gary also spoke about the annual rifle raffle. About mid-July, tickets will be mailed to members. The bulk of that money goes to keeping our lakes clean. There were sign up sheets passed to volunteer for 2 hour stints at the Holiday Station in Emily, Granny's and the Outing Station to sell tickets. Please call Gary if you would like to volunteer at any of these locations for a 2-hour stint.

There are several other ways for a member to volunteer to serve in support of RALALA:

The Water Patrol is headed by Greg and Wendy Koch. There are currently no volunteers on the list to receive training and get to drive a boat issued by the County Sheriff's Office. Call Greg or Wendy to sign up for this necessary and worthwhile service to our lakes.

Water testing is done once per month on North Roosevelt, South Roosevelt, Lawrence, Leavitt and Smokey Hollow. Samples are taken from these lakes on Sundays and delivered to Brainerd on Monday for testing. It is an easy job to do.

I-Lid videos needs to be monitored. This is a job that one could do from their own computer at home. Currently, videos are taken of boats coming and going from our landings equipped with the I-Lid. The video records the license plate of the vehicle pulling the boat, the boat, and the trailer. These videos are being monitored – but loosely. If volunteers could monitor this footage, we could keep a better eye on how well boats and equipment are kept clean – and keep the invasive species from entering our lakes.

Mary Kowalski updated us on the Enbridge and Sandpiper pipelines for crude oil transport. Line 3 on the Enbridge line needs to be rebuilt. Enbridge routes will follow the Sandpiper. The concerns here are for Lake Roosevelt – because it will be the most affected by this pipeline. She spoke of the need for an environmental impact statement – only a study was done – and Crooked Lake Township asked the Public Utilities Commission to do a full review of the plans. Maps were displayed showing the proposed routes – and concerns noted of the importance of maintaining the lakes and our water quality.

Mary offered to update members in order to have the most impact on our legislators and representatives. In the meantime, we were encouraged to log on to two websites:

<https://www.eqb.state.mn.us>

<https://www.friendsoftheheadwaters.org>

Also, please contact Mary Kowalski at mjkowalski@earthlink.net or 651-210-9936

Thank you, Mary, for helping us to have the most impact in our correspondence with legislators, when to voice our concerns, suggestions for solution and reminding them of the weight of the they make decisions on our part.

A young, recent graduate of St. Ben's and St. Thomas, asked to come forward to showed us a poster advertising a concert to take place in Hackensack on July 15. The theme: " Love Water/Not Oil." She urged us to come and take part, to listen to what area tribes have to say about the Enbridge and Sandpiper pipelines and how it will affect their hunting and fishing – as well as their wild rice fields. No government officials sought the input from these area Native Americans – and they care deeply and will be deeply affected.

In the audience was Lindsay Ketchel, Executive Director for the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation. She spoke to the assembly about the advancements being made on The Woods Bay Project. There have been some difficulties along the way, slowing the final steps that need to be made, but the closing date should be coming up soon. She thanked the group for the generous donations of matching funds that have made this project possible. She spoke of the current easement programs and how land owners can preserve the lake shore for future generations through their programs. The group now has funds available to pay land owners who donate their property to offset the taxes they would continue to pay. If you are interested in this kind of program, contact Lindsay at the LLAWF.

Bob talked about the problems with the database that had been kept of members of RALALA. There was a drastic computer failure and data was lost. There was a computer at the back of the room, on which Bob's wife Diana helped people update or confirm their presence in the newly compiled database. If you are not getting information from Bob, please let him know. He expressed the ease with which he could e-mail a newsletter to members – and even non-members who request information. There is no cost whatsoever to sending newsletters via e-mail, whereas the cost of postage becomes exorbitant. We talked about the production of the business cards that list briefly the accomplishments of RALALA. The suggestion was made to produce a nice 3-fold brochure that could be given to people for information about the group.

Linda Van Straaten spoke about shirt sales. There was a piece in our newest newsletter with current pricing and Linda's contact information. Also, the pork shoulder sales are selling well. They will be ready next Friday – July 3rd. One of the options to pay for these is through PayPal.

Roger Brekken is our liaison to the DNR. The meeting with them will be in the next month in Brainerd. He will be looking for people to accompany him to that meeting. Please contact him if you would like to

attend with that group. He asked for volunteers to “adopt” a marker (buoy) for the lakes that we represent. Two markers ended up frozen in the ice over the winter. In order for this not to happen in the future, it would be nice for more people to participate in their installation and removal each year. He has the GPS coordinates for each buoy, making the work easier. This is another opportunity for volunteers to participate.

Discussion took place regarding the successes, and perhaps failures of this group. Bob asked that members let him know ideas for what we could do to make our organization more effective. The possibility of going on-line to sign up for helping with events – or for volunteering opportunities was discussed. We have about 230 members and that number seems to be pretty consistent over the years. Bob talked about use of “neighborhood captains” to encourage more participation and membership. Captains would make contact with their neighbors to allow them to ask questions about RALALA , give them opportunities to volunteer and to communicate to them about the effectiveness of RALALA programs and efforts.

A motion was made to adjourn at 6 p.m. Pizza from the Village Inn was served along with water and soda.

Respectfully submitted:

Mikie Walker, substitute Secretary