

Thursday, September 10, 2009

The Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) met Thursday September 10, 2009 at the Minnesota State Community & Technical College in Detroit Lakes. President Dick Hecock called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Patty Swenson, Zoning Administrator, attended along with 20 members present representing the following lake associations:

Bad Medicine - Ed Klepperick, Big Cormorant - Tom Riedman, Big Sugarbush - George Wallman, Big Toad - Fred Tuominen, Bijou - Lonny Bentley and Fred Wieck, Cormorant Watershed - Duane Henrikson, Cotton - Lanny Brantner, Floyd - John Postovit, Island - Marietta Keenan, Lake Detroiters - Dick Hecock, Little Cormorant - Keith Kaldor, Little Toad - Edsel Kercher, Long - Curt Noyes, Maud - Merle Hanson, Melissa/Sallie - Clayton Jensen, Pickerel - Wayne Lee, Turtle - Bob Link, Upper Cormorant - Larry Bergsgaard, Middle Cormorant - Bob Taylor.

Additions to Agenda - Discussion of development on Big Toad Lake.

Secretary's Report - Marietta Keenan

The minutes of the July 9, 2009 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented with no corrections or additions.

Treasurer's Report - Wayne Lee

The Treasurer's report dated August 2009 was reviewed and approved. Checking account balance as of August 31, 2009 was \$2,332.52 savings \$19,396.31.

We are still expecting some reimbursement of communications expense. The interim budget was presented and will be voted on at the next meeting.

The Membership Status report was presented. Membership dues are due September by 1st.

Executive Committee Report - The discussion of dues structure will be reviewed later this year or next spring in an attempt to reduce the disparity between very small and very large association contributions. Communication between COLA and Lake Associations was discussed. Fred talked about problems with the Minnesota Waters web site.

Nominating Committee Report - Brantner

President - Dick Hecock has agreed to serve another one year term.

Vice President - George Wallman has agreed to run for Vice President for 2010.

Treasurer - Wayne Lee has agreed to serve another one year term.

Nominations can still be made for all of the above offices.

Monitoring - Bob Taylor

Next Monday, September 14th, is the last time collection stations will be open. Any samples after that date will need to be dropped off at RMB Labs.

A legacy grant originally purchased 25 test tubes that will now be stored at RMB and owned by COLA. Joanna Schusler can add your annual report on the web if you have sent in reports in previous years.

Bob would like associations to email him at [bramts@loretel.net](mailto:bramts@loretel.net) with the #1 thing you would like to improve on your lake. The next meeting will focus on reviewing monitoring information in order to make specific recommendations for improvement.

#### Communications - Fred Tuominen

Extra copies of The Becker County Shoreland Guide to Lake Stewardship may be picked up at the Pelican River Watershed office on the second floor of the Wells Fargo Bank building.

Becker County has a copy of the guide on its website. The information is not protected by copy write and can be used by associations.

The next newsletter will be printed in late October. Any information to be printed will need to be submitted by the October 8th meeting.

COLA is still looking for a volunteer to run the web site. If you know of anyone who would be interested please contact Fred.

#### Environmental - John Postovit

The MN Shoreland Rules in draft form are posted on [www.mndnr.gov/waters/shoreland.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/waters/shoreland.html).

John passed out a sample of a personal letter to the DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten, 500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul MN 55155-4040. Individuals and lake associations are urged to write letters in support of the standards as published. He also read a draft of a letter from COLA to the commissioner.

Motion was made and seconded to send the letter as drafted.

John passed out a list of mitigation requirements on non-conforming properties in Becker County and stated that we are ahead of the curve compared to other counties in the state.

The request from Becker County Parks and Recreation was reviewed. They are asking for \$50,000 to develop an outdoor recreational plan. Roots of the request lie in a trails proposal that was done a couple of years ago for off road ATV trails. DNR approval was given for a 70 mile trail system and grants were obtained to cover the cost. Becker County dropped the idea under considerable opposition from tribal members, township boards and the public at large. It was felt that current trails were not being maintained, laws were not being enforced and there was no adequate emergency response for such a system. The county now wants to expand the plan to cover all recreational activities such as boat launches etc. After discussion motion was made to table the request. John will furnish additional information to the associations so that an informed decision can be made at the next meeting.

#### New Business - Fred Tuominen

Big Toad Lake has been trying to resolve issues with the Bambi Resort expansion for the past 2 1/2 years. Clark Lee presented a list of violations pertaining to funnel development, resort expansion, docking, and creation of a seasonal recreational development. The DNR and States Attorney have been consulted and Mike Fritz, Becker County Attorney has been notified. The county attorney, is of the opinion that Becker County Zoning is responsible for enforcement. They have not been following Becker County ordinances and should be held accountable. Big Toad Lake Improvement Association and Land Use Committee feel that litigation may be the only way to resolve this if further negotiations fail. Patty Swenson, Zoning Administrator, was present and did not comment on specific violations.

Since COLAs effort last year to establish a litigation fund was unsuccessful, it was decided that we need establish a subcommittee and go back to the associations to discuss what action should be taken. John Postovit explained existing resort exceptions that were put into place to protect the true "mom and pop resorts". The exceptions were intended to allow the 56 remaining resorts in Becker County to continue to expand and replace existing infrastructure. Bambi Resort has abandoned the concept of a resort and moved toward a seasonal development. The Toad Lake problem may be a good rallying point since how it is handled will affect each and every lake association.

Announcements -

The next meeting will be held October 8th and will focus on what is next for our monitoring program.

Merle Hanson of Northwest Divers asked that we alert our membership to be aware of scuba flags and would welcome any invitation to speak at a lake association meeting.

Program - Minnesota's Environmental Quality Board (EQB) presented by Clark Lee The Environmental Quality Board writes the rules for conducting environmental reviews. The actual reviews are conducted by governing bodies such as a county board, city council or a state agency when the project may have potential for significant environmental effects. The nature, size and location of a project determines this. The specifics are spelled out in a detailed set of rules. If environmental review is required or desired, the governmental body with jurisdiction over the project works with the developer to complete one or both of the following documents:

Environmental assessment worksheet: A screening tool to determine whether a full environmental impact statement is needed. The worksheet is a six-page questionnaire about the project's environmental setting, the potential for environmental harm and plans to reduce the harm. About 150 worksheets are completed each year. The maximum units you can develop without an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is 49.  
Environmental impact statement: An in-depth analysis used for major development projects that will significantly change the environment. The statement covers social and economic influences, as well as environmental impact, and looks at alternate ways to proceed with the project.

Twenty-five or more citizens can request an environmental assessment by petition. A citizens fact sheet explains how to prepare and file this petition. Many petitions are rejected because of errors. For help in completing a petition or a printed copy of the fact sheet or an environmental assessment worksheet, contact environmental review staff at:

Name / position Phone Email

Downing, Gregg

Director of Environmental Review 651-201-2476 gregg.downing@state.mn.us

Larsen, Jon

Environmental Review 651-201-2477 jon.larsen@state.mn.us

Environmental Quality Board, 658 Cedar St., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN  
5515 The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Marietta Keenan, Secretary