

## Iron River Pike Chain of Lakes Annual Meeting August 6, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 am by President Jay Johnson.

**Treasurer's Report** by John Coffey. Due to paying an approximately \$50,000 bill for this year's Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM), current cash levels are down but still strong. Membership mid year appears to be down a little bit but will probably pick up by the end of the year. We do have some DNR grant money coming in sometime and that should put in an even better position. We are now doing the payroll for the Clean Boats Clean Waters program.

### New Business

The dues have been \$20 per year. The dues are a small portion of our operating income, which mostly comes from donations. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously by members present to **keep the dues at \$20 per year.**

Board of Directors with expiring terms were re-elected. There were no nominations from the floor considering all 5 members up for re-election this year have volunteered to serve another term. **All 5 were re-elected unanimously by voice vote.** So, the current Board of Directors for 2022-2023 is as follows:

Jay Johnson, President (3<sup>rd</sup> term ends 2024)  
Joe Rapacz, Vice President (3<sup>rd</sup> term ends 2024)  
John Coffey, Treasurer (3<sup>rd</sup> term ends 2025)  
Tom Sandager, Secretary (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2025)  
Al Bochler, Past President  
Barb Beeksma (1<sup>st</sup> term ends 2024)  
Jim Bender (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2023)  
Jake Gress (1<sup>st</sup> term ends 2024)  
Mike Higgins (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2024)  
Paula Doty Millar (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2025)  
Kristina Sorensen (1<sup>st</sup> term ends 2024)  
Amy Arneson Wangensteen (2<sup>nd</sup> term ends 2025)

### Committee Reports

**Audit Committee** has reviewed the books for 2021. Joe Rapacz noted that John Coffey is doing an excellent job and everything is in order.

**Fisheries Committee** was reported by Al Bochler and Jay Johnson. Approximately 10,000 walleye fingerlings were released in Buskey Bay. Due to the small size of the young fish bout 10% were expected to survive since many get eaten by the bass. The density of walleyes prior to this was about 1 per acre and this brings it up to about 2 per acre. Working with GLIFWC too. Derek Ogle, Bill Swenson, Scott Bochler are also on the committee and they've been working with the GLIFWC = ??.

The DNR has hired a new fisheries biologist that started in March and the committee had their first meeting with him a couple weeks ago. It went well and the committee was impressed with his credentials that included 15 years working on Yellowstone Lake in Yellowstone National Park netting exotic lake trout. There has been some discussion of having walleyes stocked every other year to try and get our numbers up. GLIFWC has been very supportive in zoom meetings with them. Too many bass that eat the smaller walleyes is a problem. From 2001 to 2012 the bass population increased 1300% on our chain based on DNR shocking studies. So, if the limits on bass could be increased and size reduced that might put less pressure on the walleye population.

The panfish limit is currently 25 and the DNR is looking at a 10 bag fish limit for panfish to try and get their numbers up too.

Changing the limits can take up to 3 years due to the need for public hearings before a change occurs.

It was also noted that when the water is 65 to 70 deg F and there's a lot of rain, bacteria from the woods can wash into the water that gets on fish gills. This bacteria can kill the fish. When temp gets over 70 deg F the bacteria die out and it gets better. This year was better than prior years.

The DNR might be changing the walleye size limit in the chain as early as next year.

**Aquatic and Invasive Species (AIS) Committee** was reported on by Jay Johnson and Al Bochler with assistance from Kristina Sorensen.

The boat inspection program is very important to preventing the spread of Eurasian Water Milfoil plus the dreaded Zebra mussels. The [Clean Boats, Clean Waters inspection program](#) has been in existence for over 16 years on the Pike Chain. The DNR funds the Clean Boats Clean Waters program but it has to be administrated at the local level by volunteer organizations. Bayfield County and the Town of Iron River are not able to do the [DNR \(CBCW program\)](#) payroll because that might trigger the need to provide benefits for seasonal workers (usually students) and a program with a lean budget. This year we had a crisis when we found this out within a few days of needing to make a decision. Our treasurer, John Coffey took over handling the payroll for this program and Karen Austin noted that it has worked out really well and expressed her appreciation. She also noted that other lakes within a 50 mile radius not including Lake Superior have not had any zebra mussels and the spread of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) has also been very limited.

It was also noted that the Clean Boat Clean Waters grant is separate from the grant to fight Eurasian Water Milfoil. While volunteer hours are needed for the CBCW grant, they do not count towards the EWM grant. If you are interested in volunteering for the CBCW program please contact Karen Austin.

The BOD is thankful for the continued leadership and dedication that Karen Austin has brought to this program for many years. We are proud of our boat inspectors and volunteers working to keep zebra mussels out of the chain and making sure that boats don't transfer EWM to other lakes.

One of the IRPCLA's strong points has been getting large grants from the DNR to treat EWM and battle other invasive species. We've had a strong relationship with the DNR as a result of the people on our AIS Committee. In particular Al Bochler and Kristina Sorensen were instrumental in getting the application completed and submitted in time last fall. Once again we were successful even though it gets harder for lake associations that have received prior grants to get another grant. Al noted that the inclusion of a "barrier treatment" project was particularly helpful in getting the DNR to approve our latest grant.

This year spot treatment was done on Hart, Twin Bear and Eagle lakes using a new chemical called [Procellacor](#). Although the Procellacor is more expensive, it adheres to the plants better and gets into the root system. It's felt to be more effective than 2,4 D. In addition there was a he barrier project in the western end of Twin Bear that used [2,4 D](#).

A presentation was done showing how the barrier treatment was done. Over 100 hours of volunteer time went into this project. So far, it looks like it has been successful. Onterra will be doing another survey in September to assess the EWM in the chain that will show if treatments this year were successful and also provide data for next years treatments. We realize that EWM remains in areas that were not treated this year like Buskey Bay among others. These other areas will be a focus for next years treatment plans.

Monitoring of milfoil beds in pontoon, snorkeling, work done on the barrier this year, serving on the BOD (while the grant is in effect) all count for the EWM grant.

We are grateful for everyone's efforts so far with the barrier treatment and rather complicated monitoring and sampling that goes with treating EWM.

Onterra, based in Green Bay, continues to be our consultant for EWM treatment and was instrumental in getting our lakes plan (every 5 years we have to do this) approved last fall so we could compete for the latest grant from the DNR. Including the latest grant, the cumulative value of grants to treat EWM is close to \$500,000.

## **Fundraising and Membership**

Jay Johnson noted that with our strong financial status, we are not doing any extra fundraisers for now. With the cost of EWM chemicals going up a lot due to resistance to 2,4-D there will probably be a need for a fundraiser in the next couple of years, but not yet. We appreciate the strong support of peoples annual donations. Not all lakes are so fortunate as we have been.

Paula Millar discussed that Barb Beeksma, Amy Wangensteen and her will be reaching out to have an “ambassador” for each lake that can welcome newcomers to the chain.

John Coffey noted that we had 148 members at the end of last year. Membership has been up to 180 in the past. We have about 350 places on the chain so theoretically if every cabin had one member we’d have at least 350 potential membership. Also, people do not have to be owners to be a member.

In 2012 we had a flyer that went out to everyone that included a map of the chain. There was some discussion about doing something similar again to increase awareness of what we are trying to accomplish. According to Jim Swenson, don’t have a copyright to the map so charging for it might be problematic. Also at that time, 6 posters with the help of Jim Gessner’s students at Duluth Business University, were created that we have all seen in the local restaurants and some of our homes. We still have some posters and it was requested that people who are interested in getting posters, let Jay Johnson know. Cost for printing was not discussed. Many have found the posters are attractive in their cabins with a nice frame.

There was a general consensus that the board should pursue more posters, flyers, maybe something to welcome new cabin owners, clothing and other ways to increase awareness.

Tom Sandager requests that people email their email address to him at [TSandager@outlook.com](mailto:TSandager@outlook.com) so that we can keep everyone better informed. A mailing to everyone on the chain can cost \$300 to \$500 depending on the size of the notice or newsletter.

### **General Announcements**

**Adopt a highway** was discussed by Julie Peck, who has been organizing this twice a year effort for over a decade. On June 25<sup>th</sup> 16 people participated and 5 bags of garbage were picked up from the ditches around the lake and on County Road H. It usually only takes about an hour and is a great way to meet people from the chain. A large number of people present at this meeting today have been volunteers.

While the Pike Chain of Lakes Party at Pine Point is not a PCLA sponsored event it is a very good way to meet people around the chain and have a good time. The party is Saturday August 20<sup>th</sup> this year.

Al Bochler noted that Gary Hagstrom has been doing water sampling for Eagle Lake for many years now and it’s fairly time consuming. Based on the latest date, there is **no change in the phosphorous content Eagle Lake since 1974**. PH is 8.3 and most of the area has acid rain. Ashland Bay is 6.5. This is great news for our chain, which has excellent water quality! We are grateful to Gary for his efforts.

**Pike Chain Pillars on Pine Lake Road** are being restored thanks to contributions from people around the chain. The goal is to get them looking like they have historically. If you would like to contribute, contact Sharon Coffey or Amy Wangenstein.

Joe Rapacz noted that if you have [buckthorn](#) on your property, now is a great time to [remove it](#).

Barrier wall treatment of EWM presentation will be on Facebook and website.

Minutes for this meeting will be posted to the [www.pikechain.org](http://www.pikechain.org) website for the IRPCLA.

### **Question and Answer Session**

It was noted that the [Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute](#) associated with Northland College in Ashland is studying loons. The project is called [LoonWatch](#). The site recommends trying to give loons 200 feet of space and also advocates using non-lead weights for fishing since the lead is toxic.

**Has there been collateral damage from the EWM treatments?** Al Boehler noted that the Northern Water Milfoil (this is the good stuff) is mostly gone, but other native plants appear to be thriving. Also, there has not been any problems with fish being killed by these treatments. Procellacor and 2, 4-D act like a plant growth hormone or [auxin](#). These chemicals cause the Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) to outgrow its food supply and die.

**What about the island in Millicent? Is the IRPCLA doing anything? It was noted that rocks are being removed, someone cut off some tree limbs and dogs present are presumably pooping on the island.** Jay noted that that's not within our mission statement. Karen Austin said that we have to go to the DNR with these type of concerns.

**Will EWM ever be gone from all the lakes?** We are not aware of a lake in which EWM was completely eradicated but with new more effective chemicals we can hope that might someday be true.

**What are those floating balls of green gooey stuff that wash up on shorelines?** Al Boehler noted that these are due to algae in the lake and normal. Not an invasive problem.

**Does Pike Lake have any EWM?** No reports so far. McCarry Lake did have EWM but treatment in the past couple years was successful and we have not see it come back yet. Based on experience across the country, it always comes back eventually once it's in a lake.

**Is it legal to clear out the culvert going from Buskey Bay into Pike Lake?** If there is beaver activity with potential for them clogging things up, it's OK to clear out the culvert. Same goes for the bridge into Eagle from Twin Bear since there has been beaver activity noted in the North end of Eagle. Al Bochler checked this out with the Army Corp of Engineers that has oversight for this type of stuff.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Sandager  
IRPCLA Secretary

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