

**Deer Lake Watershed Association**  
Board Meeting – Monday December 20, 2021  
Virtual Meeting via Facebook™ connection

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by President Bruce Steege at 6:01 p.m. This is a virtual meeting via computer where all members can hear each other and had visuals of members present.

ATTENDEES: Board members participating: Bill Cromell, Gail Blackmer, Bruce Steege, Vaughn Duitsman, Mark Smith, Todd Reynolds, Jim Clarke, and Travis Mangan.

AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL – Prior to this meeting, an agenda of topics to be discussed had been sent via email to board members and all DLWA members who had a listed email address on file. Upon review, the agenda was approved on a **motion** by Mark, **seconded** by Vaughn.

TREASURER’S REPORT: DLWA Treasurer Val Cromell was out-of-state in December due to a family emergency, so a prepared treasurer’s report was not available at this meeting. The board is still seeking to add a board member to fill the office of Treasurer. It was suggested to make one more appeal to recruit a treasurer board member. An end-of-year Treasurer’s report for 2021 will be published in the DLWA Winter 2022 Newsletter.

SECRETARY’S REPORT: Secretary Gail Blackmer reported that the minutes from the October 2021 regular board meeting had been sent to board members for review. Bill **moved**, Todd **seconded**, that the minutes be approved for filing and distribution to the membership. Motion **carried**.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Continuous Outflow Committee

1. Outflow creek condition – Bill, Todd, Mark, and Bruce reviewed their efforts removing beaver dams in Deer Creek. Work was done in late October and early November at dams along the creek and at the Rock Dam location. The beaver are efficient at rebuilding dams when they detect disturbances, which we agreed is truly “the nature of the beast”, and when water levels are low in the natural ponds as they are this year, beavers seem especially “eager” to create ponds. President Bruce Steege recognized Bill to thank him and the other volunteers for the work they have done.

The gauge level is at 4.6 on December 12, still somewhat low.

Discussion was continued on the use of the motor which Bill owns and is useful in navigating the creek. Mark suggested that if we could use a drone to check on the condition of the creek and where dams are present, that could be similar to the physical creek runs with boats that he has been coordinating. Jim Clarke agreed to research what it would take to get and use a drone.

B. Membership Committee – Val Cromell, committee chair, was unable to attend this meeting, so a report was unavailable. An end-of-year report will be published in the 2022 Winter Newsletter coming out soon.

C. Events – It was agreed that the Fourth of July Flotilla event could be planned as usual, as well as a spring highway clean up. We discussed the possibility of a summer picnic as a social event for members to get together. Jim and Gail will be a committee to consider logistics of a picnic, and Gail will co-ordinate the highway clean up. We will plan to hold a regular Annual Meeting again at the Carpenter Town Hall on August 5, 2022. Jim is willing to reserve the Hall. Bruce, Bill, and Todd will check the sign on CR 533 and repair as necessary. Gail reported on cost estimate to get new banners announcing the flotilla and annual meeting that will be hung at the sign. Vaughn **moved** and Jim **seconded** to purchase new banners, motion **carried**.

D. Water Sampling 2022 – Bill provided a recap of the water sampling project done last summer. The MPCA recommends that sampling the same lake two years in a row can give a better trend line, so Pickerel and probably Five Island should be sampled again in 2022. Two years' worth of data has been collected on Deer Lake. SWCD staff sampled Battle Lake last year, we don't know if that will be repeated. Gail will check on getting an application to submit to the Round Up program at North Itasca Electric Co-op's spring grant cycle requesting help to cover costs of the laboratory testing. Bill and Bruce will be leaders for the volunteers conducting water quality sampling.

#### OLD BUSINESS

1. Website Update – Vaughn Duitsman, website administrator, reported that the website has been renewed for two years, and he plans to continue monitoring use and updating information. Thank you Vaughn!

2. Map of Deer Lake Watershed – Upon Val Cromell's request, Kim Nelson, Regional GIS Support Specialist with the MN DNR, created an updated copy of the watershed map with correct geographical boundaries, and area roads labeled. Board members have viewed the map and discussion was held on next steps for utilizing this information.

3. Sand bar at Pickerel-Deer creek- Discussion held on the topic of a sand bar which has effectively stopped water flowing into Deer from Pickerel Lake. Low water and wave action has built up sand at this location which has previously allowed boat transit between the two lakes. Board members heard reports from Bill on the DNR's position following a site visit, and from Todd on his discussions with aquatic specialists on the role that reed growth can play in sand migration. Sand removal and reed re-planting would require a permitting process and mechanical intervention. Gail made a **motion** that the DLWA Board continue to explore the process by which sand could be removed and reeds re-planted in the area of the sand bar on Deer Lake. Motion **seconded** by Jim, **motion carried**.

#### NEW BUSINESS

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1. 2022 Newsletter – Bill will be coordinating the next newsletter publication, at President Bruce Steege’s request. Bill reviewed possible topics for board members and other contributors to write draft text for articles of each person’s interest and knowledge. He proposed deadline dates for submission to him, and will be in contact as the newsletter progresses to publication.

2. Fund raisers – Possible fund raising activities were discussed: Todd Reynolds brought up an idea to have DLWA create and sell a cookbook of recipes developed by our membership. Projects of this type can and have proved successful for other organizations. Todd and his wife Dawn would agree to research the requirements and logistics, as well as coordinate the process if the board chooses to proceed. Gail made a **motion** to proceed with a project to create a regional cookbook that would be promoted and sold publicly as a fund raiser for DLWA activities. Motion **seconded** by Vaughn, **motion carried**.

Ice Out contest – Last year Mark Smith brainstormed and resurrected an old contest, the Deer Lake Ice-out contest, which turned out to be an extremely popular and successful contest for the DLWA last spring. Approximately 45 people participated. Fun discussion was had by all! Approximately \$450 went to the winner and the same to the DLWA. Thank you Mark and Donna! Mark would coordinate this again, as it promoted awareness for our organization along with an interest in phenology and increased donations. An invitation will be sent to members who want to make a guess as to the date that Deer Lake will be free of ice in the spring. A date selection includes a donation, of which 50% of total donations will be returned to whoever guesses the actual ice out date.

Logo Apparel – Former board member Chris Fischer had worked with a company to produce our logo on shirts and hats for purchase. The board agreed we would like to offer this again. Bill agreed to research the company and report back to the board.

3. Adjourn – Bill made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m., **supported** by Todd, **meeting adjourned**. Thanks to Vaughn for making the virtual connections – next meeting scheduled for the second Monday in February, 2022.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gail Blackmer, DLWA Secretary

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