

FRIENDS OF THE EAU CLAIRE LAKES AREA (FOECLA)
Annual Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2024 Barnes Town Hall

Attendance: 49 people attended the business meeting.

The meeting opened at 9:00 AM with a welcome by board president Jim Bakken. Bakken introduced the current board of directors.

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting:

The minutes of the July 15, 2023, annual meeting were available to attendees at the registration table and had also been posted to the FOECLA website. The board approved the minutes on August 11, 2023.

Motion by Bill Stewart to approve the 2023 annual meeting minutes. Seconded by Lee Wiesner. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Kathy Stewart reviewed the Expenses and Revenues of the past year. FOECLA is in good shape financially, due to increased memberships which accounts for 62% of revenues. AIS remediation efforts represent over one-third of the expenses.

Cash on hand as of July 10, 2024 was \$75,477.61 compared to \$64,417.08, on July 10, 2023. The current Financial Statement and 2024 Budget were available to attendees at the registration table.

Membership Report:

Board member Marianne Paker reported that year to date we have 334 household memberships, compared with 316 household memberships at the end of 2023. This year we have had 39 new household memberships. Renewal letters will be sent in November. There is a need for additional board of directors with many ways to get involved.

Report from the Board of Directors:

- **Lake Ecology Education Program (LEEP)** – Board member Cris Neff reported that this year's class of 31 kids was "a group of exceptionally bright students." Volunteers are essential to this program as the ideal ratio of students to volunteers is 2:1. The mission of this program is to engage and launch young people on a lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship.
- **Student Scholarship Committee** – Board member Marty Olson announced the board approved a second year \$1,000 Student Scholarship for Alex Rasmussen, who attained a 4.0 GPA in his first year at Michigan Tech. In addition, a \$1,000 scholarship was awarded to Sam Tuttle, a graduating senior at Drummond High School, who had previous involvement with the LEEP program. Sam will attend Iowa State University in the fall, majoring in Soil/Agronomy.
- **Water Quality Monitoring** – Board member Lee Wiesner reported that water quality monitoring is conducted 1-3 times per month on the three Eau Claire, Robinson, and Bony lakes. Due to loss of DNR funding, FOECLA has provided funds to support water quality

monitoring on Bony Lake for the past and current years. He reported that the area lake's water quality is good when looking at long term trends.

- **Shoreline Monitoring** Wiesner urged attendees to volunteer as shoreline monitors to monitor shorelines for invasive plants such as Eurasian milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, invasive yellow (vs. purple) iris, and wild radish and to contact him or the Town of Barnes AIS committee if possible invasives are identified. Volunteer hours should be reported for grants.
- **Clean Boats Clean Waters** is funded by the DNR and posts volunteers and/or paid staff at area boat landings to inspect boats and trailers, hand out informational brochures and educate boaters on how to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Volunteers are needed throughout the week and interested people can contact the Town of Barnes AIS committee.
- **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Remediation Efforts** – Board member Cris Neff who is an AIS committee member and a diver for the Barnes Aquatic Invasive Species Sucker boat (BAISS) explained how the mild winter caused an early bloom and an increase of aquatic invasive species. There is a critical need for volunteers on the BAISS boat and interested individuals can sign-up online at townofbarneswi.gov under "Committees". Neff also reported that the chemical treatment of Eurasian milfoil on Tomahawk Lake appears to have been successful.
- **Enhanced Wakes and Wakesurfing** – Wiesner reported that there are safety and environmental concerns about the use of specially designed boats that generate wakes 3 to 5 feet high. An infographic illustrated the danger to smaller watercraft and wildlife and how these boats can stir up sediment, spread invasive plants and cause shoreline erosion. A 2022 University of Minnesota study along with other research being conducted will help develop recommendations for the distance from shore and water depth needed to minimize these effects. The FOECLA Board is advocating for statewide rules and regulations that are more restrictive than legislation introduced in 2023 that was for 200' from shore and mandated that local entities couldn't enact more restrictive measures.

Lake Level Monitoring – Board president Jim Bakken reported that there are 12 gauges placed on area lakes that are monitored by volunteers and data is reported to the DNR.

Healthy Lakes & Rivers (Shoreline Restoration/Runoff Control) – Board president Jim Bakken reported on projects by area property owners which are supported by a DNR Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant to protect and restore shoreline habitat and to mitigate runoff through planting of native plants, rain gardens and fish sticks.

Dark Skies – Board member Steve Wilbers stated that a new chapter has been formed, Dark Sky Wisconsin which is dedicated to reducing light pollution at night. Locally we have some glow from the direction of Hayward at night, but efforts are needed to educate people about the adverse effects of light on wildlife and the best types of lights that are shielded and emit warm/yellow light rather than unshielded with blue light. He encouraged attendees to watch the PBS program entitled "Northern Nights, Starry Skies" to learn more.

Election of the Board of Directors:

The Nominations Committee recommended the re-election of directors Jim Bakken, Marty Olson, Cris Neff and Marianne Paker for 3-year terms on the board. There were no nominations from the floor. Motion by Carol Le Breck to approve the re-election of the above four persons. Seconded by Laura

Urban. Motion carried with no opposing votes.

On behalf of FOECLA's board, Bakken thanked our volunteers, citizen scientists, and members!

Adjournment: Business meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Prepared by Barbara Cooper, Secretary

Educational Event following Annual Meeting:

Presentation titled "Wisconsin's Elk Herd" was presented by Josh Spiegel, Sawyer County Wildlife Biologist with the Wisconsin DNR; 63 people attended.