

## ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING

March 18, 2021

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ruth Bay, Bob Campbell, Dale Claudepierre, Steve Francis, Jan Garvey, Dean Ginther, Andrew Hogarth, Mary Beth Kazanski, Bob Kingon, Ken Krentz, Kate Lett, Brenda Miller, Pat Pierce, Nancy Schreiber, Deanna Seifried, George Seifried, Phil Spangenberg

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Don Bonato

Mary Beth Kazanski, Elk Skegemog Lakes Association (ESLA) Board President, called the Zoom virtual meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The Guest scheduled for this meeting did not appear. Minutes of the February 18, 2021 and Agenda for this meeting were approved as written.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Phil Spangenberg gave the Treasurer's report (attached). Of note is an expense for the "intern" from 2020 paid in 2021. Also of note is dispersal of half of the \$10,000 donation made to ESLA in 2020 to the Grand Traverse Community Foundation (GRCF). This dispersal was based upon a decision by the Finance Committee with action made by the Treasurer. Discussion followed regarding whether Finance should make these decisions without input from the Board especially when smaller financial outlays are otherwise approved by the Board. Investment policy guidelines do not discuss dispersal of gifted monies. The Finance Committee will develop a policy and propose at upcoming meeting.

Phil also review the Vanguard fund performance.

The proposed budget for 2021 was reviewed and approved.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT:** Brenda Miller reported 246 paid memberships to date - 16 Admiral Plus, 71 Admiral, 10 Commodore, 67 at Captain, and 82 General. Reminder letters are in the process of being mailed. More reminder letters were required this year because of our change in timing of the dues renewal. The mailing should be completed this week.

Based on a recent donor request regarding business membership, Mary Beth tasked the committee to define a business membership category or business support category. Concern was raised about not wanting to be seen as endorsing various businesses but rather a venue for them to support our work. Dean Ginther reported that this has been discussed many times in the past and we never opted for businesses to join due to concern over conflict of interest. Bob Campbell reported that many businesses are members now but under our usual categories.

Publication of our members' names recently may have changed this and the need for a business category may now exist.

**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE:** Ruth Bay clarified that our prior use of the Twisted Fish Gallery for our It's A Shore Thing presentations is not amenable to Covid restrictions at this time. Alternate venues with increased space, ventilation and even outside venues are being considered. First meeting will be in April with an outdoor meeting at Rugg Pond by Mark Randolph, Kalkaska Conservation Officer. Zero Gravity Aerial is being considered as the presenter at the annual meeting to be held at the Harbor Pavillon, June 25.

**FINANCIAL COMMITTEE:** No additional input other than discussion under New Business.

**FISHERIES:** Ken Krentz will update under Old Business. He will update the website with a chart of present placement of fish shelters as well as fish stocking events.

**SAFETY AND RECREATION:** Pat Pierce reported that the Elk Rapids Dam is on the mark at "981.2". He will be working to replace the Elk River sign and will need to address the past difficulties with a floatable sign likely replacing it with a stationary one.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE:** Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring - Jan, Linda and Mary Beth had a Zoom conference with Carolyn Keson @ TOM to discuss this program and the 2019 data. Linda and Jan had reviewed the data prior to the meeting and generated a list of questions to guide the discussion. Carolyn reiterated that the quality of our lakes is good. She explained their sampling and testing protocols, which were well thought out. She gave us a much better understanding of the program and results. In 2000, ESLA had implemented annual water monitoring (and multiple times a season), in addition to the every three year monitoring that is a perk of TOM membership. No one at ESLA or TOM knew what prompted the annual testing. Carolyn recommended that we go back to comprehensive testing once every three years. In addition, she recommended that we add phosphorus testing in our Volunteer Monitoring Program. It would entail a small additional cost and a couple of additional samples a season. Other lakes in the Chain of Lakes are currently getting this Phosphorus data. Upon Jan communicating with Dale and Dean (who do the sampling on Skegemog/Elk respectively), it was agreed that we would incorporate those samples, along with the standard Secchi disc and Chlorophyll A data.

Purple Loosestrife - Jan has been in communication with CAKE CISMA (Charlevoix Antrim Kalkaska County Comprehensive Invasive Species Management Area) regarding their availability to help with the eradication of purple loosestrife (PL). They did not apply for the second year of the Dole Family Foundation Grant that was utilized to treat PL in the Chain of Lakes last year. However, they do have a grant from the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians for invasives, which includes PL. So, ESLA will work with CAKE CISMA to see if we can get plants treated on the south side of Skegemog and possibly the Grand Traverse County section of Elk Lake. Last year CAKE CISMA did the chemical treatment in Skegemog but

could not do the section in Grand Traverse County. In addition, CAKE CISMA is going to pursue utilizing beetles to treat large infestations of PL. These costs will need to be born by the riparians and/or associations. Potential areas of interest to us include properties near the area where the Rapid River enters the Torch River, where the Torch River enters Skegemog and the areas to the east of Hoiles Drive in Skegemog. Last year ESLA / CAKE CISMA had difficulties getting "permission to treat" forms from the Copeland Farm and the Skegemog Wildlife Preserve, both of which are managed by the Grand Traverse Conservancy. Bob Kingon offered to help with that aspect this year.

Jan reported on the meeting presented by Glen Lake Association in February on freshwater issues including follow up from on the research from Freshwater Solutions.

**GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE:** In recent years this committee has been inactive. A recent suggestion was made to reactivate it. Mary Beth will research the history of this committee as well as discuss with past officers the possible roles this committee should take.

**ERCOL:** Bob Kingon reminded us of a TOM and ERCOL event aimed at introducing local government officials to the watershed protection plan. He invited all to participate. The water trail now encompasses over 100 miles, 12 lakes and rivers, 89 access points and 35 kiosks. Paddle Antrim would like to identify folks living near access points to adopt the site and help keep an eye on the area. Further information on this can be obtained from the Paddle Antrim website.

The lake level subcommittee will host a webinar to present their 2020 tracking. Bob shared our exploration of additional fish shelters with the group. He also announced to them that the ER township will be extending sewer lines with public hearings soon to be held. Bob will attend the hearings as an ESLA representative. Milton Township may also be starting feasibility studies regarding water treatment in that area.

**TOM:** Bob Kingon reported on the recent Board meeting. A presentation had been made regarding dredge and fill projects. This raised the question as to whether ESLA is receiving information on projects in our watershed. Jan and Mary Beth will investigate adding our organization to the EGLE alerts.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Rugg Pond: no update at present

Milton RV Park: project awaiting independent environmental and traffic impact studies

Freshwater Solutions (FWS) Project for 2021: The proposal from FWS was reviewed regarding cost as well as workload for the organization. Moving the science forward is a worthwhile effort as has been our participation in the Swimmer's Itch studies. But the ability to get riparian volunteers to participate is a variable. Jan will discuss with Ron Reimink to determine if any updates have been made to the project and proposal. We will then review and make a decision at our next meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Fish Shelters:** Bob Campbell has been working on permitting with EGLE. Once signed off by local conservation officers and assurances that depth would not impede navigation there should not be a problem. He also spoke to Dean Branson at Three Lakes Association and that they were not currently interested in the project. He suggests 4-5 shelters on the south end of Elk Lake.

**Adopt a Stream:** Jan informed us that the 2020 project did not happen despite our payment. The program does not rollover to 2021. The program should go on this year especially since all involved have a better understanding of Covid safety. Dale has made initial contact with the program director and was reminded by Jan of a couple new volunteers interested in the project. He also stated that sites previously checked by Dave Lawicki will not likely be renewed in the coming year due to high levels of sediment effecting samples.

**Boat Wash Signage:** Linda Slopsema said that she and Ken Krentz will be visiting boat launches on our lakes in the next couple of weeks to determine what kinds of signage will be required and installation requirements. The signs themselves can be obtained from the State, but we are responsible for installation and costs to install. Linda believes we will need to have a larger sign made for the Whitewater Township Park, as it is a busy boat launch site and will have 4 ramps.

**Summer Intern/Contractor:** Jan discussed the background of our college summer intern program and the connection with studies of Freshwater Science at Western Michigan University. This degree has been dropped at WMU. That, coupled with potential difficulty in identifying new interns during COVID led Andy and Jan to pursue rehiring Samantha Krauss again this summer season. And, due to her increasing experience and self-direction, Bob Campbell suggested we increase her salary to \$18/hour. The Board approved both rehiring Samantha and the hourly wage increase.

**Grand Traverse Community Foundation (GTCF) Endowment:** Mary Beth and Dean reviewed the workings and intent of the fund. (Further information on GTCF operations and goals can be found at their website.) Dean stated that ESLA is guaranteed a 4% payout each year. Much discussion occurred revolving around whether ESLA needs to focus on the endowment to do the work we do or should we rely on the funds held in Vanguard as savings. Many on the Board have held Board positions with GTCF in the past and they spoke favorably about the fund and its longterm purpose. Steve encouraged the group to better define the needs the fund would address such as monies for special projects versus regular operation. Pat also made the group aware of the benefits of the fund managers' expertise at collecting large sums of money and other equities should someone wish to contribute such. Brenda touched on tax deduction differences of late. Many question the benefit of focusing on growing the endowment at the possible expense of growing direct ESLA monies. Why would one donate to GTCF vs ESLA? Pat's response was that individuals may prefer to donate large sums for longevity or invest in the future rather than immediate operating funds. GTCF is also better equipped to deal with such donations. Ken commented that both GTCF and ESLA are good options for our donors. Bob Kingon admits in the past that he has not been a huge supporter of the GTCF but has come to see Pat's point that it creates opportunities we have not previously pursued regarding donations. It does indeed provide future support for our efforts

well beyond the present. He is willing to pursue how TOM manages their funds vs the funds held by a similar local foundation on their behalf. The Board is encouraged to visit the GTCF website for a better understanding of their mission and function. Further discussion will take place at the next meeting.

**Drone Project Proposal:** Bob Campbell had sent out a summary of a drone imaging presentation by Dennis Wiand of Zero Gravity Aerial that was given at the the February Freshwater Symposium. Despite the ability of Dean and Andy to work on a drone imaging project, it was ultimately felt that the expertise of Mr Wiand was worth the cost. Mr. Wiand is also willing to share his routes making it possible for our ESLA team to do follow up studies as well. Jan presented more detail on the work. Mr Wiand has been getting high quality drone images of area lakes to gather information on invasive species, shorelines, runoff, etc. The Board agreed that this is of interest to ESLA. A question of legality of taking images of private property was raised. Mr Wiand reports few if any legal issues thus far as he takes efforts to explain the project along his route. The Board approved pursuing the project. Jan will get a firm proposal to conduct an aerial survey of Elk - Skegemog Lakes, including information on timing both of our commitment to the project as well as when the work is done. A breakdown on the costs would be helpful to determine how the project might be undertaken. The survey would ideally include Elk, Skegemog and Rapid/Torch Rivers for a total of 42 miles. In addition, could the survey include beyond Aarwood Bridge toward Rugg Pond? Ken mentioned the benefit of checking the sediment load from Aarwood to Freedom Park bridges. All are aware that this project would require effort to review the data obtained and to incorporate it into current activities.

Dale raised the question as to whether potentially incremental projects such as this would be the sort that endowment income could be used for and if it is, it is a selling point for growing the endowment.

Newsletter submissions should be in to Dean by the first week of April.

The Board was reminded of the TOM and ERCOL government symposium as well as dates of the next meeting (May 20) and It's a Shore Thing (April 23)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Mary Beth Kazanski



