

ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION (“ESLA”) BOARD MEETING

January 19, 2023

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ruth Bay, Bob Campbell, Steve Francis, Jan Garvey, Dean Ginther, Andrew Hogarth, Ken Krentz, Bob Kingon, Bob McCririe, Pat Pierce, Nancy Schreiber, Deanna Seifried, George Seifried, Phil Spangenberg.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Don Bonato, Dale Claudepierre, Mary Beth Kazinski, Kate Lett

Samantha Ogle, ESLA Lake Biologist and Michael Ogle, ESLA Administration were in attendance.

Bob Campbell, Elk-Skegemog Lake Association (ESLA) Board President, called the meeting via Zoom to order at 9:00 am.

General Meeting

Bob Campbell began by noting the presence of Michael Ogle, the husband of our lake biologist Sam, and proposed that Michael, who has become well versed in our new membership software, Bloomerang, to become our new Administration Lead for the upcoming year. Discussion was held. Jan Garvey moved to approve a contract for both Sam and Michael for the upcoming year, seconded by George Seifried, and approved by all. Michael and Sam both expressed their gratitude.

Next meeting, February 16, will be a budget planning session.

The previous meeting minutes from December were approved without revision.

Matters were discussed regarding a confidential matter.

Committee Reports

Treasurer:

Phil reported that the balance in our Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association Fund is \$127,262 as of 12/31/2022. This fund is managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation and the funds are held in perpetuity and generate yearly income based of a three year average of the account balance. Phil asked that the board members provide him with their budget estimates for any plans or projects or activities for the 2023 to prepare of the next budget planning meeting February 16th (now the 17th of February).

Membership:

Deanna Seifried stated what we are all happy about – it’s been a banner year. More money from dues paying members than ever before. The Champions membership level has been successful beyond all expectations.

Fisheries:

Whitefish netting – the Little Traverse Band of Odawa Indians were supposed to do a study of Whitefish in Elk Lake. Apparently the tribe office is located in Harbor Springs and they have their own “DNR” position. The Tribe was only able to get out one night and caught nothing. Ken talked to the DNR Tribal Coordinator, Dave Carabino. Each winter/spring the Tribe and the DNR meet for planning the following summer activities. Ken will try to stay in the loop on these communications.

Ken / Sam made an appropriations request for \$4000 to do some Plankton sampling on Elk / Skegemog Lakes. The Plankton are at the bottom of the food web and give an indication of the health of the lakes. Sam / Ken will do the sampling and Fresh Water Solutions will do the analysis. The cost of analysis is high - \$150/sample. 25 samples will be taken and analyzed. 5 locations in Elk Lake at three times during the summer and 8 locations on Skegemog Lake at two times during the summer. The Torch River will also be sampled two times. Bob Kingon moved to approve these expenditures, seconded by Bob McCririe. Approved by all.

Safety and Recreation:

Pat Pierce will place three new buoys in Torch River in the spring, bringing the total to 20 buoys. The 3 lobster buoys will be permanent. The sign pedestal for the wake sign will be there in the spring. All the buoys will have the new ESLA identified, waterproof, weather-proof label on them.

Communications:

Bob Kingon happily reported that he found the permitting documents from the Cadillac DNR office for the buoys on Lake Skegemog to mark obstructions in the water. Evidently the permit is from 10 years ago. Our efforts have been properly permitted all along. This permit (for only 10 buoys however) is in place until the DNR revokes it. Since we currently have about 20 buoys in Skegemog and the Torch River we may need to see how to update that permit.

Environmental:

Linda Slopsema gave an update on the Whitewater Township capital project. The quoting process is in the works – they are collecting bids until the end of January. A decision will be made on the contract proposals by mid-February. The township is running out of time on this process for the \$500,000 project – the State will not give an extension, so it must be complete by the end of 2023. The Waterways grant has a matching component – WWTP will only be matched for the portion of the project they have completed.

The project currently includes money for a boat wash station. The Odawa Tribe has granted \$20,000 for the station, with another \$20,000 showing up as a line item in the project. Currently the boat wash is listed as a waterless unit, but there is support for a water-based system. The cost of the water-based system is similar to the waterless system, but more actual ‘work’ is necessary to complete it. The waterless unit is more or less a purchased and ‘put in place’ unit – the water-based system is not.

Linda also mentioned that Cheryl Goss stepped down as the Whitewater Township Park Administrator. This leaves some questions as to who will replace Cheryl (position is currently posted) and who will manage the capital project. The township may consider hiring an outside project manager because this is a significant amount of money to be spent in a short time line.

Samantha talked about two workshops that will be put on in 2023 focusing on greenbelt education. Locations to be determined, but we are considering a location at the north end of Elk Lake and at the south end – potentially Milton Township Park and Samuels Farm. The hope is to bring in multiple other professionals like contractors, conservations districts, nursery, etc. Sam would do some sort of brief introduction, discussion on what a greenbelt is, how important they are, etc. And then we will have an hour or so to mingle and people can talk to Sam and the other professionals. All of these details are still be sorted out.

Details on other projects have not been completely defined, but most are an extension of last year's projects. This includes sampling at Spencer Creek and potentially three other sites not yet chosen, shoreline consultations, and invasive species management for purple loosestrife and Eurasian Watermilfoil. OLC has obtained their license to do chemical treatment for invasives, which should save ESLA money and provide more targeted treatment when needed.

Samantha will register ESLA with NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) phytoplankton program to monitor for Harmful Algal blooms. This program was brought to our attention by Becky Norris at Torch Lake, as they are a participant. Sam will continue to support our work to install AIS signs at as many water access sites as possible, targeting the larger sites. In addition, she will continue with the Adopt-a-Stream program at Spencer Creek and the Rapid River (twice a year sampling at each) and to monitor the sedimentation issues on the NE side of Elk Lake.

Old Business:

Dean plans to issue the Membership Appreciation newsletter at the beginning of March and wants your submissions as soon as possible. Michael noted that for the first time we are sending out thank you notes to Champions and Business Supporters and will also include regular memberships over \$100.00.

Bob said that we had a \$1,000 from a riparian through the website on the basis that we provide the ability to allow members to pay their dues using a credit card. Also Bob announced that The Elk River Marina on Elk Lake is voluntarily gifting a \$50.00 ESLA membership to each of their slipholders. This will be a big increase in our membership levels. Bob McCririe is our one and only contact for this effort. Bob is also expecting to provide environmental tours on the lakes to show points of interest. This will happen on Tuesday and Thursday. Sam would be a key participant.

George requested that we contribute to Paddle Antrim as they are building a new boat launch on the river. We decided to forego funding Paddle Antrim at this time as we have contributed before and will keep an eye on the funding requirements.

New Business:

We focused on who will be the speakers be for our meetings in the summer? This is an ongoing concern. Several proposals were made including: Heather Hettinger; Leslie Meyers; Elk Rapids Historical Society; Liz Kirkwood from FLOW; The key is to contact Deanna to try to finalize the speakers for the Spring newsletters.

Steve Frances spoke about the effort to maintain donor retention and donor development. It is key to encourage our donors to continue to be part of our organization. He suggests an Ad Hoc committee to organize events focused on this objective.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Submitted by Correspondence Secretary, Nancy Schreiber on the day before the next meeting. Jan Garvey contributed significantly to the Environmental, Communication and Fisheries section.