

***Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association, Inc
Annual Membership Meeting on Sunday,
July 30, 2023 at 10:00 AM
Braywood, 4109 Braywood Ln, Eagle River, WI***

At 10:40 AM the meeting was called to order by President Chuck Berg. A full list of attendees is on file with the Secretary. **210** attendees participated in the meeting. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Teri Stecker confirmed a Quorum was present. President Chuck Berg introduced all Board Members, Officers and Co-Captains.

A 2022 Year in Review discussion by President Berg included a recap of the 2022 Cranberry Island situation, resulting actions taken by ERCLA and Cranberry Lake volunteers and the continuing partnership with Vilas County Board and the County Forestry Committee. An AdHoc Committee was formed to monitor the hazardous wake concerns. There is a need to keep abreast of the research, rules and regulation issues and the state's Conservation Congress actions. This committee is tasked with education and research studies. 2023 brings us more short term rentals homes and a new condo subdivision development that raises concerns of overcrowding in the Eagle Lake/Voyageur Lake corridor. Christine D'hondt, Eagle Lake resident member, gave a brief report of conversations she has had with DNR, City and County personnel regarding possible pier permits in the channel. She reported on two upcoming meetings if anyone has interest in attending: Town of Washington, short term rental ordinance hearing on Tuesday, August 2nd at 5:00 PM and Vilas County Zoning meeting for Delmark Development permits on Wednesday, August 3rd at 9:00 AM.

Secretary Teri Stecker presented the minutes from the 2022 Annual Membership Meeting for review and approval. Bill Marshal moved to waive the reading of the minutes and accept them as presented in the handouts; Jeff Emmerich, seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

President Berg introduced James Yach, WDNR Secretary's Director for the Northern Region as one of our Keynote speakers. James represents 13 northern counties and is 1 of 5 regional directors on WDNR Secretary, Adam Payne's team. The WDNR Secretary and his team has the following priorities for 2023: (1) build and enhance relationships with environmental & legislative groups, local associations and commissions, the WI Conservation Congress and many more.

(2) Clean water and PFAS is a priority. Everyone in WI should have immediate & consistent access to clean water. (3) Protecting our natural resources should not be a partisan issue. Their team will work with all sides of the legislative aisle & the public. (4) Encourage youth activities in fishing, hunting and all other outdoor activities to build future generations' usage and encourage them to be good stewards of WI resources. (5) Bring together Fire Response, EMT's, Patrol officers (water & land), state parks and land trust management groups so everyone can work to solve problems.

WI DNR Fisheries Division will complete a comprehensive CREEL Survey with no enforcement actions. This survey is an assessment tool used to sample fishing activities of anglers on a body of water and make projections of harvest and other fishery parameters. Musky marking will be done allowing a microchip scan sending the recapture data, in subsequent years, to the WI DNR. Lastly, a log and capture event is planned after ice out in 2024. James encouraged us to watch for the DNR boats, buoys and the netting process next spring.

James was aware of ERCLA's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) progress. He also highlighted the water clarity & chemistry actions of our volunteers, our clean boats & clean waters education program and the shoreline activities outlined on our website.

Our next Keynote Speakers were Deputy Jason Molle, Recreational Officer & Deputy Matt Wilson, School Liaison Officer, both with Vilas County Sheriff's Department. The 2022 annual boat patrol expense is \$26,000. The majority of the funding for the boat patrol came from WDNR's access to the US Coast Guard Fund; this fund paid 75% of the expense, but that has now been reduced to 69%. The balance is divided up by these 5 entities: ERCLA, City of Eagle River, Towns of Cloverland, Lincoln and Washington. There were 4 reported accidents on the Chain and only 3 complaints filed. The top 5 violations on the Chain are: (1) operating jetski less than 100' from boats (mostly teenagers), (2) slow no wake operations, (3) operating jet ski less than 200' from shore, (4) No registration numbers or decal, (5) persons sitting or laying on raised decks or standing or sitting outside pontoon rails, while under power. The officers concentrate on education and safety when encountering the boating public.

The program was turned over to Teri Stecker, Nominating Committee member to perform the 2023 Board of Directors nomination and election process. The Nominating Committee presented the following slate of Directors to serve a two year term: Director Chuck Berg, Director Jody Voight, Cranberry Lake Captain-Michael Queoff, Duck Lake Captain-Marc Groth, Lynx Lake Captain-Bill Krostue, Scattering Rice Lake Captain-Liz Rozkopf and Watersmeet Lake Captain-Hugh (Skip) McCann.

After hearing no other nominations from the floor; the nominations were closed. Secretary Teri Stecker opened the Election Process for the seven Directors to serve a two year term. Teri asked for a motion from the floor. Bill Morgan made a motion to approve the slate of Directors and Lake Captains as presented and Jeff Emmerich seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer Dave Cyrtnus and President Chuck Berg presented the Year End 2022 Financial Report. Dave discussed the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss statements found in the attendees handouts. The Accounting expense in 2022 was from the Kerber Rose Accountant's Review of ERCLA's financial statements. In addition, an independent internal review was conducted on the 2022 financial statements and both of these processes found no irregularities nor did they recommend any changes. Dave stated that ERCLA maintains its cash reserves to assure adequate funding for future invasive species removal, particularly if future grants from the WDNR no longer become available. Dave Cyrtnus and Chuck Berg shared that ERCLA Board initiated an Investment Policy statement to assist in managing the Assets of the Association. With this statement and due to FDIC's protected fund limit of \$250,000; ERCLA has transferred some of its funds to a new Schwab account. A motion was made by Marc Groth and seconded by Michael Qeoff to approve the Financial report.

Jody Voight, Vice President of Operations asked participants to refer to the 2nd Quarter Membership worksheet in the handouts. ERCLA has seen growth each of the last 3 years in membership numbers. The 2023 total is thru July, whereas the 2022 total is 12 months. Even with this growth we are only about 53% of potential members. As always, we ask for your assistance in talking to your neighbors and promoting membership in the Association. The Lake Captains are busy getting Lake Signs to new members. If you don't have them yet, please contact your Lake Captain. If you wish to join our leadership group as a co-captain or volunteer, our individual contact information is in our bi-annual newsletter and on the "About Us" website page.

Jody continued with the Buoy Report and asked everyone to keep calls and texts coming or email him at erclaonline@gmail.com and he encouraged members to report issues with buoys and channel markers. Since 2019, ERCLA has annually presented \$5,000 to the Town of Washington for buoy maintenance; in addition, ERCLA steps in with maintenance and install assistance when needed.

This year, 25 redesigned cages and lights were installed. The new cages are more robust in hopes of protecting the \$267 light that is atop a buoy. Each buoy is numbered and has a GPS location assigned by the DNR.

Lastly, after numerous conversations with Town Supervisors and DNR staff, Jody reported the WDNR will support additional channel markers in Catfish Lake to protect the sandbar near the STH 70 East bridge. The Town of Washington will submit the DNR application and permit documents.

Dave Mueller, AIS Coordinator and Chairperson of the Lakes and Shores Committee reminded everyone that our chain is in the monitoring and control phase in the fight against Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). An early season survey by Onterra, LLC was completed July 7th. Commission's harvesting maps are posted under Lake Reports at: eagleriverchaincommission.org Onterra's 2023 late season peak biomass Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) survey will be in September. Dave Mueller, also Commission Treasurer, advised the members that Onterra, LLC and the Unified Lower Chain of Lakes Commission would release the 2024 plans for EWM management in November.

Dave continued his report with our 2023 Clean Boats/Clean Waters educational program results. ERCLA hires a Vilas County Land & Water summer intern for 36 total hours. The Fourth of July week will see 24 hours of boat inspections and boater education and 12 more hours will be utilized on other weekends. The intern visits the T-Docks on Yellow Birch, Eagle Lake County Park landing and the boat landing on Catfish Lake next to Braywood.

ERCLA volunteers perform three (3) chemistry samples on Watersmeet, Scattering Rice, Otter and Cranberry. ERCLA pays for testing, reporting and data saving with the WI State Lab of Hygiene. The purpose of the program is to monitor the health of our chain and this is a WDNR funded program. Clarity testing on the Chain is also done by volunteers and reported to the State of WI.

Marc Groth, Duck Lake Captain and Shoreline Restoration Chairperson, noted his report and his contact information is in the handout. ERCLA has a written, comprehensive lake management plan that can be found on our website under Projects. One Management Goal from the plan is to lessen the impact of shoreline development on the Chain of Lakes. The action plan for this goal is threefold: (1) investigate restoring highly developed shoreland areas on the chain (2) preserve natural shoreland areas on the chain (3) investigate with the WDNR and private landowners to expand coarse woody habitat on the ER chain.

Mark announced a new Committee partnership with members to assist with their erosion & restoration projects. ERCLA works closely with resources provided by the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Dept. The Committee will visit members waterfront property to provide contacts and assist them with their grant applications. Members can get up to \$1,000 per practice for the implementation of these five best practices in shoreline restoration: fish stick, diversion, infiltration, rain gardens and native plantings.

The Open Forum discussion came from the audience questions written on 3x5 cards. A separate document is on file with the Secretary with this information.

A motion was made and seconded by Mark Slonik and Bill Morgan to adjourn. Motion passed.

At 12:10 PM Meeting Adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Teri Stecker, ERCLA Secretary