

Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2026

Meeting called to order by Commission Chair, Bill Lochte at 11:00 AM at the Eagle River City Hall.

All in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Verification of posting by Secretary, Marc Groth and verification of a quorum was confirmed by Bill Lochte along with the rest of the Commission representatives.

The agenda will be discussed in order, therefore the approval to discuss the agenda in any order at the discretion of the chair is not required.

Chairman Bill Lochte asked for a roll call and introductions. Commission members in attendance are Francine Gough, Cloverland Township; Carole Linn, Washington Township; Bill Lochte, Lincoln Township; and Dan Dumas, City of Eagle River.

Also in attendance:

Dave Mueller, Commission Treasurer, the Commission/ERCLA AIS Coordinator and Otter Lake Captain; Marc Groth, Commission Secretary, ERCLA Shoreline Restoration Chair, and Duck Lake Captain; Steve Skora, Catfish Lake Co-captain; Al Wirt, Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department; Jim Egan, Washington Township Chair; Bill Marshall, Catfish Lake ERCLA member.

Approval of the May 28, 2025, meeting minutes.

Motion by Carole Linn to approve the October 29, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Francine Gough. All voting ayes. Motion approved.

ULERCLC Commission Business:

a. Treasurer report

Dave Mueller provided an update on the treasurer report. The 2025 beginning cash balance was \$2300.82. It shows in the final 2025 report ("**ULERCLC January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025**") that the ULERCLC took an advance on 4/11/25 from the DNR control grant ACEI-36825 of \$25,000.00 and received the final payment on 08/18/25 from the DNR control grant ACEI-24020 of \$17,542.97. Along with the support from ERCLA, Cloverland Township, Lincoln Township, and Washington Township the final 2025 income was \$77,538.10. 2025 expenditures totaled \$77,752.50. See the detailed expenditures on page 1 of attachment ("**ULERCLC January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025**"). The ending cash balance was \$2186.42.

b. Review and Payment of Bills

Beginning cash balance as of January 1, 2026, is \$2186.42. Receipts through March 2026 totaled \$1725.82. There are no expenditures through March 31, 2026, resulting in an

ending cash balance of \$3911.45. See attachment (**ULERCLC January 2026 through March 31, 2026**).

Payables total \$2423.81 and receivables totaled \$2500.00. On 04/01/26 the WDNR advance payment was received for the 2025 control grant for \$15,898.47. ULERCLC paid ERCLA for the loan amount of \$14,000.00 per an MOU leaving the current balance of \$5809.92 as of 04/01/26. The 2025 grant ACEI 36825 amount approved was \$150,000.00. We received an advance of \$25,000.00 and a partial payment on 12/31/25 of \$15898.47 leaving a balance of \$109101.53.

Motion by Carole Linn to accept the treasurer report. Motion seconded by Francine Gough. All voting ayes. Motion approved.

Dave concluded by thanking the WDNR, ERCLA, the city of Eagle River and the three municipalities for their continued support.

- c. ULERCLC Treasurer Succession Plan – Dave announced that Steve Skora will succeed Dave as the ULERCLC Treasurer effective June 1, 2026. Motion made by Carole Linn to accept Steve Skora as the new ULERCLC treasurer effective June 1, 2026. Motion seconded by Francine Gough. All voting ayes. Motion approved

2026 AIS Program Update

Dave stated that the DNR has changed the grant payout process. In the past ULERCLC was able to request partial payments when needed. The new rule is we're allowed only one reimbursement per year after the DNR receives proof of payment. As a result, our cash flow is a continuing challenge. In 2026 the total cost for DASH and Onterra is going to be approximately \$85,000.00. The ULERCLC will get approximately \$30,000.00 from the municipalities. We will be requesting approximately \$55,000.00 loan from ERCLA to meet our cash flow.

Dave explained the Onterra expenses for 2026 vs 2025 will be approximately \$20,000.00 higher because Onterra will be executing a point intercept study this summer. A point intercept study is required every five years by the WDNR. It is a health report of all the different aquatic plants in the chain. In summary, Onterra is doing three surveys versus the usual two, an early and late season EWM survey and the point intercept study. It is imperative that we do the surveys to continue to qualify for WDNR grant money.

Dave went on to state the only tool we have right now to manage the EWM is hand harvesting. There are other tools, one which is mechanical harvesting. Dave will investigate the cost of leasing a harvester. The other is herbicides which we'd have to work with our DNR biologist to study it and may take a year to get a permit. There was a brief discussion regarding acquiring our own DASH boat. ULERCLC has investigated it in the past and tabled it. As DNR funding is reduced going forward the ULERCLC may take it up again for review.

Bill suggest the ULERCLC develop a 36-month strategic plan to work through the challenges of reduced funding support over time.

Marc mentioned we need to consider that ERCLA does have funds available for EWM management. It was also suggested that ERCLA may want to discuss constructing their own DASH boat at the 2026 annual meeting.

A brief discussion regarding the pros and cons of herbicide use concluded that the question of use will be on the upcoming stakeholder survey to get a feel how the stakeholders feel about it.

Bill also suggested that the Commission start investigating alternatives to hand harvesting in our long range plan.

Aquatic Plant Management Plan (APMP) Update.

Marc presented an update of the upcoming APMP grant. Two plan grants were approved by the WDNR in February 2026. Plan grants are capped at \$10,000.00 so we applied for two different grants. One grant is for data analysis and the other is to fund the stakeholder survey.

Onterra released the first draft of the stakeholder survey on April 21. It will be sent to the Planning Committee for review. Once approved by the committee and the DNR the survey will be distributed throughout the ERCLA homeowners and the rest of the community using a QR code to access the survey. The survey will be available all summer.

The timeline is tight for the final report which is due the end of 2027 for us to apply for a 2028 three-year AIS control grant.

Letters and Communication

No other letters and communications received.

Open Forum

Marc stated he applied for the Chamber tourism grant for \$25,000.00. The grant was approved for \$5000.00 which will go toward additional hand harvesting.

Carole informed the commission that the domain renewal is coming up for an expense of \$46.00.

Carol worked with Eddie to determine the date for the annual Onterra EWM project review to be held at the Town of Washington Community Center on November 18, 2026, at 7:00pm.

Next Meeting Dates

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2026, at 10:00am in the city of Eagle River City Hall.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:22PM by Carole Linn. Motion seconded by Dan Dumas. All voting ayes. Motion approved.