

Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2026

Meeting called to order by Commission Chair, Bill Lochte at 09:58AM 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/ERCLA AIS Coordinator and Otter Lake Captain; Marc Groth, Commission Secretary, ERCLA Shoreline Restoration Chair, and Duck Lake Captain; Steve Skora, Commission Treasurer and Catfish Lake Co-captain; Teri Stecker, ERCLA Secretary; Al Wirt, Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department; Jim Egan, Washington Township Chair; Jody Voight, ERCLA President; George Katich, ERCLA Yellow Birch Lake Captain; Bill Marshall, Catfish Lake ERCLA member; and Scott Peterson; ERCLA VP Finance.

Approval of the May 28, 2025, meeting minutes.

Motion by Carole Linn to approve the April 22, 2026, 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. It shows in the attachment ("**ULERCLC January 1, 2026, through June 1, 2026**") the 2026 beginning cash balance was \$2186.42. Receipts through June 1, 2026, include \$1720.82 from the City of Eagle River, a WDNR partial reimbursement payment ACEI-36825 of \$15,898.47, \$4.08 interest income from the Commission checking account and a payment of \$250.00 from Washington Township totaling \$17,877.58. Expenditures included a short-term loan payment to ERCLA for \$14,000.00 resulting in an ending cash balance as of June 1, 2026, of \$6064.00.

b. Review and Payment of Bills

Dave presented a 2026 cash flow forecast. See attachment ("**Cash Flow Forecast 5-25-26**"). ULERCLC needs to cash flow \$85,273.33 in 2026. The source of the funding is 65% from grant funds which is \$55,427.66, The municipalities share is \$14,922.33, and

ERCLA's share is \$15,202.33. It is a reimbursement grant so the Commission will need to access enough funds to pay the bills before the grant payment request is granted.

In summary, the ULERCLC treasury balance June 1, 2026, is \$6064.00. Payables total \$2460.19 leaving a balance of \$3650.19. After the receivables from the municipalities and ERCLA, the cash balance will be \$33,774.85. Expected payments to DASH and Onterra equals \$85,273.33 leaving a balance due of \$51,498.48 prior to receiving the grant payment of \$55,427.66. The ERCLA Board has agreed to provide the Commission a short-term loan up to \$60,000.00 to cover the expenses until the Commission receives the grant payment at which time it will be paid back. An additional 4 days of harvesting costing \$10,000.00 is scheduled, which will be covered by the Chamber Tourism Grant of \$5000.00 and another ERCLA matching payment of \$5000.00 approved by the ERCLA Board of Directors at a May 20 ERCLA Board of Directors Meeting.

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

2026 AIS Program Update

Dave's cash flow presentation was the AIS program update. He also added that ERCLA is partnering with Vilas County Land and Water to execute the Clean Boats Clean Water program with two Vilas County interns to man three of the Chain's landings over the Fourth of July Holiday weekend.

Aquatic Plant Management Plan (APMP) Update.

Marc presented an update of the upcoming 2026/27 APM Plan. Onterra has completed the online stakeholder survey. It has been reviewed multiple times by the Planning Committee. Next step is for Onterra to complete the QR code to be used for stakeholders to connect to the survey. It will be made available on the ERCLA and Commission's websites, ERCLA's Facebook, the Vilas County News Review, Constant Contact email to ERCLA members, Postcards to be mailed to non-ERCLA riparians, posters distributed to our boat landings, marinas, bait shops, boat/watercraft rentals and more. Onterra is targeting June 15-30 to complete the QR code. It will be available to stakeholders all summer.

Letters and Communication

No other letters and communications received.

Open Forum

A brief discussion regarding buoy vandalism was held to update the Commission members. There are several avenues ongoing to hopefully minimize further vandalism. The Vilas County Sheriff's office has been notified along with The Vilas County News

Review who has agreed to cover it. Vilas County Warden Tim Price has also been notified, and he suggested hanging trail cams. Logistics are moving forward to hang the trail cams.

Bill notified the rest of the Commission and the public who attended that he, Carole L., and Dave M. met offline to brainstorm ideas regarding alternatives to DASH to manage Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) and look at future sources of funding due to the cash flow challenges the Commission faces year after year. The alternative to DASH discussed was mechanical harvesting. Within the two alternatives two scenarios were discussed. Contracting both out versus building our own DASH boat and purchasing our own mechanical harvester and doing it ourselves.

Carole presented the challenges to obtain DNR grant money these days versus year's pasts along with cash flow challenges due to DNR changes in their rules regarding reimbursement. The bottom line is it is not going to get better in terms of DNR funding, resulting in the need to look forward with a long-term strategy to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

We can continue to contract DASH at \$2500.00 per day for 10 days or set up our own DASH boat which costs approximately \$30,000.00 to set up a boat if we can get one donated. The annual operating expensed for our own DASH boat for 40 days is estimated at \$30,000.00 to \$40, 0000.00.

A mechanical harvester can harvest 2-3 acres of EWM per day. Contracting mechanical harvesting is \$2700.00 per day for 40 days totaling \$108,000.00 per year. Purchasing a mechanical harvester with a conveyer system costs \$180,000.00 in today's numbers. The Commission would still have to pay for labor to run the harvester and work through the logistics regarding maintenance and storage.

Bill presented a lake district as an alternative for future funding and put it out there to the attendees for further discussion. A healthy discussion followed without any conclusion except for all to consider it and investigate it going forward as a long-term solution.

Next Meeting Dates

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2026, at 10:00am in the city of Eagle River City Hall.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:23AM by Carole Linn. Motion seconded by Dan Dumas. All voting ayes. Motion approved.