

WIXOM LAKE ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 11, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 10 AM.

Board members present were: Doug Hill-President, Mark Mudge-Treasurer, Susi Najmowicz-Secretary and Directors Bryan Gardner, Tami O'Donnell, David Rothman, Larry Woodard and Don Zakett. Dirk Meister-Vice President and Directors Gary Oliver and Bill Faust were excused. Director Len Pytlak was absent. Approximately 50 members were also present.

Everyone rose for the Pledge of Allegiance and remained standing for a moment of silence in honor of the victims of 9/11.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the agenda as presented.

Due to a miscommunication, the minutes from the BOD meeting on 7/10/21 and the GMM on 8/14/21 will be reviewed for approval at the next meeting.

Mark presented the Treasurer's Report. Our balance on July 31, 2021 was \$78,260.94. During August we had income from dues, donations, interest, Pamper Chef, T-shirt sales, the golf outing and ice cream social totaling \$7,648.22 and expenses of \$1,454.79; leaving a balance of \$84,454.37 on August 31, 2021. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

Susi reported we currently have 647 memberships and 941 members. Flyers promoting the Golf Outing were mailed to our 84 members without email contact information. An updated Board of Directors members list was distributed to board members present. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Secretary's Report as presented.

Tami updated the Social Committee's activities. Over 230 people participated in the Poker Run. They've held 2 membership drives and are getting ready for the Golf Outing on the 18th. Volunteers are still needed for that event. The Pontoon Alley Clean-Up is this Sunday from 10 AM to 4 PM and a Road Rally is scheduled for October. Doug complimented the committee on all their good work and reported over 60 people have signed up for tomorrow's clean-up at Pontoon Alley. Arrangements have been made for a dumpster, porta-potty and hopefully news coverage.

Tami and Bryan have letter packets available for members to send to legislatures supporting proposed funding for dam infrastructure repairs for our lakes. The packets contain 35 letters to State and House Representatives regarding bills currently under consideration in Lansing.

Dave began the FLTF update by thanking Doug for all the work he's done organizing lake bottom clean-ups. He also noted the letter campaign to the legislature in Lansing is making a difference in the attitudes of representatives.

Dam stabilization work continues at Edenville. Demolition of the spillways on the Tittabawassee River side of the dam is complete and the rubble is being cleared away from the foundation slab. The original river channel downstream of the spillways is drained. Parts of the shoreline are being armored with riprap. Sediment is being cleared from the original river channel. When this work is done, the breach in the dam will be closed with an earth and stone berm and the Tittabawassee River will be re-directed to

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flow through the demolished spillway area and back within its original channel. Completion date is targeted for the end of September.

In the Tobacco River side of the Edenville Dam, the spillway rollways have been demolished. A reinforcing structure called a “sister wall” is being constructed within the spillway structure, with a series of concrete pours. The sister wall will stabilize the concrete side walls of the spillways now and will remain in place when the spillways are eventually rebuilt and the lake is reflooded. Fishing access will remain closed during this phase of construction.

The Edenville Dam stabilization work is running on or slightly ahead of schedule.

The Michigan Legislature continues work to pass the \$500 million Dam Safety bills. Some part of that \$500 MM is targeted for repairing and rebuilding the dams on the Four Lakes. FLTF anticipates the bill will be sent to the Governor for signature in October. That is when FLTF will know how much money we will receive from the State of Michigan for dam restoration. Meanwhile, FLTF continues work on securing additional funding for the dams and for ecosystem recovery within the lakes themselves.

FLTF has been informally advised that FEMA will award FLTF a grant to begin engineering for repairs and improvements to the Edenville and Sanford dam earth embankments. This will fund the first steps beyond stabilization of the dams, including soil borings and subsurface studies of the actual embankments. The grant is from a national program FEMA runs for rehabilitating or removing high hazard potential dams. The program will award \$11 million in 2021 on a nationwide basis. This grant program is anticipated to greatly increase annual funding for its 2022 program due to increased federal focus on US infrastructure improvements. FLTF will make another grant application in 2022 for Edenville and Sanford dam rebuilding work and continue to apply for money under this program in future years until both dams are rebuilt.

Dam stabilization work at Sanford has not yet begun, awaiting EGLE permits. These permits are expected in the near future. Beginning stabilization work on the Sanford Dam will not slow down work on the Edenville Dam. Fisher Contracting is working on both dams.

Lake restoration includes study of and improvements to the lakes’ ecosystems. A team of freshwater mussel experts from Central Michigan University has completed field work for this year on Secord and Smallwood dams and lakes, as well as a preliminary study of the upstream Tobacco River side of Wixom Lake. The study has two goals: looking for the presence of a federally-endangered mussel (snuffbox) and studying the overall mussel population and species distribution in the lakes. The CMU team has a few months of lab work to evaluate the dead mussel shells they collected this summer. This study is a critical step in getting permits to rebuild the Edenville and Sanford dams, particularly in light of past reports of finding the shells of dead snuffbox mussels in the Tobacco side of Wixom Lake. To date, the CMU study shows no indication of snuffbox mussels living within parts of the Tobacco River that will be affected by reflooding Wixom Lake. FLTF looks forward to completion of this work.

Wetlands around Wixom and Sanford lakes’ perimeters were drained and new wetlands have formed on the dry bottomlands. FLTF is in discussion with EGLE on this, as wetlands in the bottomlands must be mitigated when the lake is refilled and FLTF currently has agreement that if refilling the lake rehydrates enough more wetlands that are flooded on the lake bottom, that will be sufficient mitigation. There are millions of dollars at stake in this agreement. FLTF has a consulting firm, Mergent, studying the dried up

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wetlands to establish how many acres of wetlands (and the quality of those wetlands) as documentation that refilling the lakes will rehydrate enough valuable wetlands to satisfy EGLE and avoid the need to create new wetlands somewhere else at great cost. If you are approached by Mergent with a request to perform a "transect" on your property or install monitoring wells, it will be a part of this wetlands study. Please give that permission.

There are many other areas of work in ecosystem restoration, including erosion control, shoreline stabilization, bottomland vegetation, fish studies, habitat creation, invasive species studies, studies of water-dwelling species other than fish, nutrient loading, cultural resources, recreation planning and environmental permitting.

The abundant "small" trees growing on the Wixom and Sanford lake bottom lands are a focus of planning work right now. Options that have been or are being evaluated include herbicide spraying from helicopters and mowing with a variety of equipment types. In areas where the bottom is stable and not mucky, volunteers have been mowing smaller areas of the lake bottom (with FLTF permission). FLTF is conducting tests with contractors for larger scale mowing operations. Mowing with large contractor equipment appears to clear ~1 acre/hour/mower. Equipment suitable to mow areas of trees 4'-6' high is different from equipment to mow trees 12'-14' high. Between the two lakes there are 2,000 acres of trees, much which can be mowed, but areas near the river, in tributaries and man-made canals are still too muddy to be mowed and will require a different solution.

Don explained that the Tobacco side of Wixom Lake involves two different assessment zones. East of M-30, the WLIB treated about 800 acres; while west of M-30, Tobacco Township treated about 100 acres. Prior 8' drops in the lake level allowed frost to kill some weeds. Both areas have built up extra growth and Sanford Lake is very covered with weeds. The Aspen/Cottonwoods grow about 5' per year. They can be dealt with using herbicides sprayed by helicopter or by mechanical treatment (mowing). Tobacco Township wanted to use mechanical treatment, which only needs a permit from the FLTF not EGLE. They are conducting test mowing in several locations done by different companies using various machines. The township is using surplus aquatic fund money to pay for the project. Mowing leaves stubble 4-5" off the ground and can only be done on high, flat sandy ground. Canals and bays are too wet and muddy. They'll be looking at the results next year. On the Tittabawassee side, the WLIB has not yet decided on a plan. They are considering using an aerial approach for treatment, but it will be expensive to do 800 acres. People should consider attending their meetings as well as attending township meetings. Bryan is looking into the canal situation through the WLIB and County Commissioners. Hay Township is not in the WLIB. The Supervisor of Hay Township has talked about a special assessment district north of the Smallwood Dam. It would make sense for the area south of the dam to join the WLIB. They would need to take the motion back to the township board and have the majority of property owners support the move.

Don explained much of the funding for engineering has been paid for by grants. The FLTF was going to seek an operational assessment for a 3-person crew operating dams, but postponed that decision. They are facing a short term funding crunch for expenses where state grant money cannot be used. Last year WLA donated funds to be used for activities on Wixom Lake only; and the FLTF hopes they will do that again this year. Don will prepare a proposal for that purpose and bring it back to the board at next months' meeting.

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Tami will chair a small sub committee to improve our website. She and Laura will be working together. Tami has spoken with someone at the FLTF regarding their website and is checking into another website. She hopes to present 2 website options to the board.

Packets are available of materials from the Restore the Lakes website. RTL also sponsors live letter writing events. Secord Lake has sent in over 5,000 letters.

After a brief discussion, the monthly Board of Directors meetings will be changed from the second Saturday of the month to the third Thursday of the month at 7 PM. Our October meeting will be on Thursday the 21st at 7 PM at the Billings Twp. hall. The WLA annual meeting will continue to be held on the second Saturday in August at 10 AM.

Larry thanked everyone for their cards and support in the loss of his daughter.

It was mentioned not all string trimmers are capable of cutting down the vegetation/trees growing in the lakebed. The string must be 130 or 155 in diameter. When using a blade trimmer caution is advised as the blade can shatter if you hit a rock you cannot see. Renting an outback billygoat cost \$90/day.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.