PCLA MINUTES ANNUAL MEETING AUGUST 20, 2024

Dave Harris convened the meeting at 6:33 p.m. at Crooked Lake Yacht Club, thanking the club for hosting the meeting. He introduced the board members in attendance: Gail May, John Dolansky, Mary Netzky, Marty Walker, John Brockschmidt, Chuck Kneese, Wayne Blumberg, Ron Kardosh, and Ana Schwab. Dave also asked other attendees to introduce themselves and announced Ana Schwab as the speaker on Water Quality Issues. Ana serves as an attorney, dealing with water issues.

Ana explained that Crooked and Pickerel Lakes are Federal Waterways at the head of the inland waterway which goes across the northern lower peninsula to empty into Lake Huron. Both lakes are involved with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At any one time, our lakes have the highest rate of contamination from septic pollution. Both Ana and Ron take water samples once a month and test for phosphorus, nitrogen and fluorine. So far, the concentration of these elements are below the levels that are required by the federal government. Fertilizer is the main culprit for the concentrations in the lake water, especially if the water table is low for a particular riparian property. This can mean that fertilizer leaches into the water, with an increased contamination during a rainstorm. There are a couple of sewer systems that are close to the lake system; Indian River and part of Littlefield Township is part of the Harbor Springs sewer system. Water quality is controlled through the Clean Water Act of 1972. Nonpoint Source Pollution is the term for the water which flows into the lake from run-off and erosion. Septic pollution is the highest source of pollution, which means that there is an increased need for responsible development in lake communities.

One attendee asked if there was a connection between Oden Fish Hatchery and an increase in green algae in the lakes. There was also a question about how to determine the depth of the water table on private property. Ana volunteered to send information to a website to answer those questions. (There was also a remark about Nonpoint Solution Discharge?) Another question asked if algae and unknown weeds are present in lakewater, are they correlated?

PCLA and Tip Of The Mitt Watershed Council do surveys on the lake shoreline periodically. The last one was done in 2012, and the most recent was done this summer.

Dave asked why the Health Dept. issued a warning for E.Coli at Camp Petosega this summer. Ana said that storms could cause an increase in E. Coli. She felt that testing should be done more frequently to see what the foundation levels are. With more home development around the lake, there can be quite an effect on sewer systems. Residents should know whom to talk to concerning the sewer and what local officials should be contacted. Homeowners need to be educated about the sewer system. If the property is within a township government, then their officials can be contacted, but the county government is not always involved. There is grant funding available for homeowners to test their water for all conditions. Both fertilizer and road salt can contribute to water pollution. Unfortunately, many people don’t pay attention to water issues until there is a crisis.

Dave thanked Ana for all the good information.

BUSINESS MEETING

Secretary
Mary read the minutes from the June meeting and they were approved without corrections or additions.

Treasurer
John D. said that we are in good shape, receiving $23,000 from dues and donations of over 300 members. In 2023, we had $85,000 in the general fund, and $12,000 was spent. John said there was $15,000 in the Land Protection Fund, but there were no expenditures. All expenses and income is in John's report. A total of $53,000 was spent in 2022 to help Little Traverse Conservancy with the purchase of the Black Hole property.

Natural Resources/ Invasives
Marty reported that we have minimal invasive plants on our lakes because we have been proactive. We have over 20 zone or launch monitors who go out and actively survey their zones several times a summer during active plant growth. We would like to recognize and thank them for their time, effort, and dedication in helping us.

We have a lot of plant growth in our lakes and though it can be a nuisance, the majority of plants are considered "native" and are healthy for our lakes. The increase in native plants is due to a lot of factors: Zebra mussels can make our water seem more clear, which allows for more sunlight filtering through to those plants; warmer water temperatures enable more growth: and fertilizer from the lawns of riparians supports more growth. As an organization, the PCLA cannot treat or remove native plants. As a riparian, however, you do have some choices. We encourage you to contact the Tip of the Mitt with concerns and for information on how you can manage or remove those native plants in or near the lake.

Marty has talked with Mark Harrison from the company Clearwater Lake Management to express our concerns with excessive plant growth. He told me that his company and another area lake management company have both noted an increase in all the area lakes in northern Michigan this summer.

We also are concerned with the invasive plants, but we have minimal quantities. There are three different aquatic invasives that we are currently controlling successfully, through the help of Mark Harrison at Clearwater Management. We had three scheduled treatments with them this summer on June 15, July 17, and Aug. 14 for the following:
1. Eurasian watermilfoil at Little Traverse boat launch, which had two treatments of one each in June and August. Last year we had to do three treatments.
2. Curly leaf pondweed at the mouth of the creek which flows from the Oden Fish Hatchery into Crooked, which did not need treatment after two treatments last year.

3. Pragmites on the left side of Crooked Lake going toward the locks, which we have kept in control by a treatment in September of 2023 and continue to monitor re-emerging plants.

We appreciate the Windjammer Association and CLYC in joining us to control the Eurasian water milfoil that we discovered several years ago in the basin there. We are happy to say that through their scheduled treatments, we found no evidence of EWM in that basin area in August. Petoskey Outboard Cruising Club is also doing its part in controlling any invasives at their launch area.

There is a lot of invasive Purple Loosestrife blooming now along roads and ditches. The PCLA works hard to control it growing along the shorelines. Last year we worked with the Tip of the Mitt to purchase Bio-control beetles and strategically place them in two areas in mid July of 2023 on Crooked Lake on both sides as you are going towards the locks. Those areas are hard to reach and very marshy, with no home adjacent to them. It may take several years to establish a large beetle population, but that is the goal. These beetles chew on the loosestrife plants and kill them. At this point, we are not seeing much progress in that beetle population, but have contacted Emily Johnson from Tip of the Mitt to come out and survey those areas in September. We thank Doug and Mary Fry for being very dedicated and instrumental in helping us identify these areas in their zone and helping to place these beetles.

There are other ways to control the loosestrife, which Tip of the Mitt details on their website.

1. Cut off blooms, seal them in airtight bags, and dispose of them properly.
2. Dig up plants and dispose of them properly.
3. As a last resort, you could mist the leaves ONLY with an aquatic approved weed killer being very careful not to get the mist into the water or on other native plants.

PCLA seeks to educate our lake community through websites, which have articles on using fertilizer in ways to limit aquatic growth and harmful algal blooms. Though we have some algae in our lakes, none are identified as harmful (such as bright greenish blue color). Algae does form occasionally but then just dissipates.

There is an App called SEEK which can be used for identification of plants. Wayne also brought in samples of both invasive and native plants to help with identification. We appreciate everyone helping us in identifying any large outcroppings of Purple Loosestrife or aquatic invasives. Never hesitate to contact us if you see something suspicious. See something , say something!

Thank you to Ray McMullen, Marty Walker, our Invasive Species Chair, and Dudley Marvin, our past president. They have been so dedicated in helping PCLA with all its endeavors and efforts.

Communication

Gail said that 286 members had paid for membership in 2024. We sent out over 700 membership flyers and 300 reminders for renewal. Audience members complimented the

mailing flyer. John D. will make a list of folks that didn't renew. Dave mentioned the PCLA website and that our goal is to be a community that takes care of the lakes.

Voting for new Board Members

Gail and Wayne agreed to remain in their board positions for another term. Two new resumes were submitted by Dave Colaw and Dave Gloer, which then received unanimous votes to join the board. Dave H. said that we should reach out for new board members.

Fish/Wildlife

Wayne and Ron reported that gobies are becoming more numerous and affecting Burt Lake . They are aggressive feeders, eating smaller fish and eggs.

Closing comments

Gail said that the new board members had prior engagements and were not able to attend the annual meeting. Dudley said that a kayak was found near Oden Island. Wayne offered some extra lock schedules.

There was a question about the shoreline health survey that was just completed. The report will be released by the end of December. Cards will be mailed to riparians to give information about their property. This report will provide thirty years of information to be available through previous surveys.

There was a question about the fish study, which is available on the Department of Natural Resources website and the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians website. Ron said this was his fifth year without fertilizer, and his lawn was doing well. Dave thanked volunteers for all their help.

The next meeting will be on Sept. 17 at 6:30 at the Inland Waterway Museum. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00(?) p.m.