

Lakes Committee - Town of Plum Lake
May 21, 2025, 9:00 am
Town of Plum Lake Town Hall, Sayner WI

Present: Wayne Ax, Joe Heitz, Jim Haberle, Cathy Higley (Vilas County), Bob Jackson, Bob Munsen, Doug Pinney, John Richter, Mike Stroh, Tracy Wallace, George Lannert, Becky Gaskill (Lakeland Times), Jackey Postuchow (Town Chair) attended for the first part of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Bob Jackson, Chair.

1. Open Meeting Verification – Notice of the meeting was appropriately posted at the Sayner United States Post Office and on the Town of Plum Lake website.
2. Minutes of the October 9, 2024 Meeting – Upon a **motion** by Doug Pinney and seconded by Mike Stroh, the minutes of the October 9, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved.
3. Treasurer's Report – Doug Pinney sent a copy of the 2024 Year to Date Project Analysis to the Committee prior to the meeting. The report shows the income and expense for 2024 for the following Town Lakes Committee projects:
 - Clean Boats/Clean Waters (CBCW)
 - I-LIDS (landing cameras) Monitoring
 - Small Lakes Monitoring
 - Fish Sticks

Income and expense items have been reconciled with Town records with the assistance of Bob Klager, Treasurer. Note that the information is presented in a different format than the Town financial statements. The project reports are intended to show that the Committee activities have been performed within the approved Town Budget for the year.

The project reports also show that the activities that take place over more than one calendar year have sufficient funding to be completed. The funding for our activities comes from the Town Budget, Department of Natural Resources grants, and private donations from lake organizations and individuals designated for Lakes Committee projects.

Doug will update 2025 project reports at subsequent meetings. Doug hand-delivered bills to the representatives of the lake groups in attendance. The amounts billed are the same as the prior year.

Upon a **motion** by John Richter, and seconded by Bob Munsen, the Treasurer's report was unanimously accepted.

4. Recap of 2024 Programs (See Lakes Committee Annual Report dated February 2025 posted on Town Website for additional information.)

Bob Jackson thanked John Richter for presenting the Annual Report of 2024 committee activities at the April Supervisor meeting.

- Bob reported that cameras had recorded 4,305 boat launches on the seven landings; six violations of state law were noted in 2024, and Joe Heitz reported that letters were sent to boat owners by DNR Wardens. Joe has sent a letter informing the DNR of the installation of cameras on May 14, 2025, and said the notification process will be the same as last year.
 - Bob Jackson reported the Clean Boats, Clean Water (CBCW) program was successfully completed by UW Oshkosh interns last Summer. Bob thanked Bob Munsen for coordinating the Town employees for monitoring into the fall of 2024. Bob Jackson assisted Bob Klager, Town Treasurer, in applying for the final DNR grant and a check was received in early 2025.
 - Hand-pulling on Little Star Lake of Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) was performed twice in 2024 by Aquatic Plant Management. Weather conditions (no ice cover) were favorable for the growth of EWM in 2024. Doug Pinney stated that Bob Klager, Town Treasurer, is working on documentation to submit for the final reimbursement for the DNR Quick Response Grant. We expect to receive a check for slightly less than \$20,000 later this year.
 - Bob Jackson reported we completed six fish stick bundles on Lake Laura in January and February 2025. Lake Laura installation included assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Vilas County and Lake Laura property owners. Eric Wegleitner, Vilas County Fish Manager, also helped. Cathy Higley noted that the grant was extended and the new period for installing fish sticks on Star Lake has been extended to January-February 2026.
 - Bob Jackson reported that we worked with the Plum Lake Town Board to develop and pass a Boating Regulation Town Ordinance restricting certain enhanced wakes on all waters within the Town of Plum Lake. We installed required ordinance signs at all major public landings within the Town of Plum Lake.
5. New Business – Status of 2025 Programs –
- A. Lake Management Plan Update Surveys – With assistance from Tim Hoyman of Onterra LLC, the Town applied for and received a Surface Water Planning Grant to perform aquatic plant surveys on Plum, West Plum, Star and Little Star. This grant was amended to allow for additional monitoring on Plum Lake for a hybrid EWM identified after the grant was applied for. John Richter reported that genetic testing by the University of Montana has determined that the hybrid is unique to Plum Lake. The hybrid more closely resembles its Northern Water Milfoil parent rather than the invasive EWM parent. The recommendation was to monitor the plant for now as hand-pulling would be very costly, and no effective chemical treatments are available. Onterra LLC will also suggest a response after completing the survey of Plum Lake this summer.

Cathy Higley suggested doing an inventory of existing native milfoil weevils in Plum Lake. If weevil presence/absence and density may inform future management of hybrid EWM, and stocking weevils could also be considered. Milfoil weevils have been effective at managing some of the EWM recreational impacts on certain lakes, while at other lakes they make little impact. Weevils will not likely be enough to effectively manage all the EWM

on their own; however, weevils can be part of an integrated pest management plan.

- B. Clean Boats/Clean Waters (CBCW) Monitoring Coverage – Bob Jackson thanked Cathy Higley for assistance in completing a DNR grant application for CBCW for 2025. This grant was approved. This grant is among the largest awarded by the DNR in the State.
 - i. Bob Jackson gave the lake representatives the dates the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh interns are scheduled to monitor landings. As in prior years, coverage will be supplemented by paid volunteers during busy summer periods and after the interns finish in mid-August. Bob Munsen said he has recruited an additional volunteer for this fall
- C. Little Star Remediation – Mapping of the EWM will be performed by Onterra, LLC during June and hand harvesting performed by Aquatic Plant Management later in the summer, if indicated.
- D. Rapid Response Lake Surveys –
 - 1. 2025 Surveys – The North Lakeland Discovery Center will conduct Rapid Response Surveys for early detection of aquatic invasive species on Star, Plum, Razorback, Laura, Ballard, Irving and White Birch lakes. Sampling for spiny water flea will be done on Star, Plum, Razorback, Laura, Ballard, and Irving. Habitat Surveys will be done on Razorback, Laura, Ballard, Irving and White Birch Lakes. Sampling for Zebra and Quagga Mussels will be done on Star, Plum, Razorback, Laura, and Ballard lakes.
- E. Fish Sticks – Fish sticks will be installed on Star Lake in January-February of 2026.
 - 1. Bob Munsen noted that ice had broken up the fish sticks installed on Lake Laura, and they may need to be moved back into the lake bed. Bob believes this may be done with a boat.
 - 2. John Richter stated that he is working on large tree drops on Plum Lake. Large trees can serve as an anchor for brush to form a fish habitat. Tree drops would also be beneficial for Star Lake.
 - 3. Cathy Higley noted that permits obtained for the fish sticks projects also authorized tree drops on those lakes for five years, but she cautioned that Vilas County zoning needed to be observed. She also stated that an exemption from the permit requirements exists for one-tree drops.
- 6. Vilas County Update – Cathy Higley reported:
 - A. Phragmites-Vilas County will remove phragmites from Razorback Lake monthly. Cathy believes eradication is possible.
 - i. Cathy is planning to conduct a training session for the Town road crew on dealing with phragmites on roadsides. She will coordinate directly with Jackey Postuchow, Chair, to schedule this.
 - B. Decontamination Unit-Numbers are down from the prior year as hours at the landings were less. The unit will be present in 2025 on landings at Star, Plum, Trout, and Big

Muskellunges Lakes. Cathy asked for volunteers to promote use of the decontamination unit around town and record their time. Bob Jackson, Joe Heitz, and Tracy Wallace volunteered.

- C. Clean Boats/Clean Waters-Cathy is conducting training for landing monitors. A self-study course is also available online.
- D. Cathy said that the brochure for new shoreland property owners has been updated. An electronic version is available from Cathy. A limited number of printed brochures are available.

Cathy said that 1,000 lake shoreline parcels in Vilas County (of the ~20,000 total) have new ownership between Feb 2024-Jan 2025. She developed the brochure for the purpose of mailing it to the new shoreline owners, which occurred in April.

7. Other New Business and Citizens' Comments –

- A. Mike Stroh asked if Vilas County could enact a requirement that boats use a decontamination unit when present at a landing. Cathy Higley said that the County Supervisors were unlikely to vote for this. In any case, someone other than she would need to present such a proposal. John Richter said the recent success of local ordinances in restricting enhanced wakes might mean that a local ordinance was a possibility.
- B. Mike Stroh said he understood that Oneida County had received a DNR grant to rate water quality on Oneida County lakes. He thinks these ratings may be used to promote tourism. A brief discussion of the pluses and minuses of a study for Vilas County was held.
- C. Bob Munsen asked if fish cribs that were used to hold brush and that still are intact could be refilled with brush. Bob said he believes 20-30 cribs are still usable. It was suggested that this should be cleared with Eric Wegleitner, Vilas County Fish Manager.
- D. Becky Gaskill said she is an officer of the Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association (OCLRA). OCLRA would be hosting a six-county conference on July 11, 2025 at Nicolet College. All are welcome to attend.
- E. Becky also said that OCLRA will hold a workshop on grant writing for lake organizations on September 26, 2025 at Kemp Station. She is expecting several grant-making organizations to be present. More information will come.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 am.

The next meeting of the Lakes Committee for the Town of Plum Lake will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 9:00 am in the Town of Plum Lake Town Hall. Additional meetings are scheduled for the following:

July 16
August 20
September 17
October to be determined

Respectfully Submitted,

Doug Pinney, Secretary Pro Tem

Approved 6.18.2025