

RLAA 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2014

The Rice Lake Area Association (RLAA) held their annual members meeting on Tuesday, May 6th from 6:30-9:00 pm at the Cambria Suites motel in Maple Grove. The meeting was attended by 21 different households, representing about 20% of our e-mail database. A free pizza buffet was held from 6:30-7:00 for those who paid their 2014 membership dues to the association.

Curt Cich from Edge Bowfishing (<http://edgebowfishing.com/> or (612) 802-8370) introduced himself prior to the actual start of the formal meeting to give a brief update about his company and their past and future efforts removing carp on Rice Lake. Curt indicated that the winterkill which occurred on Rice Lake this year may have taken out a lot of fish, including carp, and the lake may only have about 10% of the fish remaining. He said they did put one boat out earlier this season and they only shot one fish (a dogfish) and didn't see any carp, which is highly unusual. He was not sure how much they would plan to do any future trips on Rice Lake this year due to the apparent loss of fish.

The meeting formally started at approximately 7:10 pm as board member George Schneider introduced himself, than asked the other board members and the audience to give everyone a brief introduction. Denny from Lawn Care Services (LCS) was introduced by board member Scott Roeglin and provided the audience with some good practices for proper lawn care, especially for those living close to the water, including lawn aeration (which should be done at least 3 years in a row before significant benefits can be observed). Denny said that they may be able to offer members of RLAA a group discount if there is enough interest. His company specializes in mowing, tree & shrub care, aeration and snow removal services. If you are interested in learning more about LCS, feel free to contact them by phone (763-425-1400) or e-mail (denny.b@lcslawn.com), or just visit their website (www.lcslawn.com). *(Due to technical difficulties, LCS was unable to present their slide show to the audience and instead spoke to the material.)*

A review of the 2013 Financials and the 2014 Budget was led by board member Luke Johnson, who substituted for RLAA Treasurer Rick Stulac (out of town on business). There were no questions from the audience regarding the Financials or the Budget.

Board Member George Schneider gave a 'Year in Review' look at 2013:

- Winter of 2012-2013 brought less snowfall than average with average cold weather.
- Spring 2013 was wet and cold with high water levels.
- Late spring 2013 experienced heavier than normal Curlyleaf Pondweed growth, although there was not enough to warrant treatment.
- Mid-summer 2013 a drought dropped water levels.
- Winter 2013-2014 was a long and hard one with above average snow and late ice-out. This led to a winterkill on the lake, the first observed since 2008.

He also mentioned that there were 2 projects which were cancelled/postponed or completed. Those projects included dredging the boat ramp bay channel and a possible carp netting (if all the stars were in alignment). Water quality reminders and Best Demonstrated Practices (BDPs), including how drawdowns are used to reduce CLP growth, were also discussed during this lake update portion of the meeting. With the upcoming completion of the watershed-wide TMDL project, residents will need to decide if they would like to have Rice Lake to be a lake dominated by native plants or by algae. We are currently headed in the direction of an algae-dominated lake if we continue on our current practices. Otherwise we can allow native plants to help reduce the algae levels in the lake and live in concert with them. There was considerable interest in doing a drawdown this coming winter (2014-2015) to knock down the apparent increase in CLP growth. The membership was reminded that the current DNR requirements are for at least 75% of the homeowners owning lakeshore/creeksore property must sign approval to request this action. There were 3 members of the audience who volunteered to help solicit those signatures by going door-to-door if needed.

The RLAA Board greatly appreciates the interest and participation of the members to help us achieve our goals to improve water quality and our local environment. The Board will be reaching out to those who have shown interest in assisting us achieve those goals.

2014 plans include continuing to grow the membership, updating the website (www.ricelakemn.com), carp removal (if necessary), dredge channel (if approved), and encourage residents to participate in the Lake Improvement Grant program (see below for details). At this point in time, there are no major projects planned for 2014.

There were several questions/topics raised after the Water Quality portion of the meeting:

- Boat Ramp Access
 - Question: What happens if the current owner sells the property and the boat ramp, which is private to that property, goes with it? How do we get access to the lake?
 - Answer: RLAA will need to stay close to the resident who owns and property and maybe ask if they would be open to insuring the ramp is controlled access with a gate or some other mechanism.
 - Question: Does the City have a vested interest in the boat ramp, and do they pay on a lease to use it?
 - Answer: City staff member Mark Lahtinen from the Engineering department said he didn't know of a specific lease by the City to use the access, but will check it out and let us know later. (Mark later reported to the RLAA Board that there is no "lease" in place, but a mutual understanding with the owner of the boat ramp.)
 - Next step: RLAA Board will meet with the ramp homeowner to discuss current and future use for the ramp by RLAA dues-paying members only, plus those in authority who require access.
- Restocking of Fish
 - Question: Since we have suffered what appears to be a significant winterkill this past winter, can we restock in 2014, now that we do have some funds in the bank and the need to do so?
 - Answer: Yes, RLAA will look into restocking the lake as soon as possible. Resident lake experts Mark Lahtinen and Rich Brasch both agreed that stocking with predator fish that would eat carp eggs will help keep that population minimized. Since carp spawn in June, the sooner the restocking can be done the better.
 - Next step: RLAA Board will investigate restocking the lake and possibly get a good idea on the current fish population.
- Water Quality Testing
 - Question: How do we know the water is safe and we should be recreating in it. Recently, there have been "sediment blobs" floating in the water, which we do not know what they consist of. How can we get that information researched?
 - Answer: Rich Brasch from Three Rivers said this would be something we would need to check out with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for pursuing testing. They typically look for bacteria-based problems in their testing.
 - Next Steps: RLAA Board to follow up with MPCA to find out how water testing can be done.
- BDP Example by Jean & Mark Pogemiller
 - Jean discussed the Erosion Control project they are undertaking to help retain shoreline lost in the past and prevent further destruction. Last year they had buckthorn cut out and non-native plants removed with both a cutting and a burn-out of the impacted area. They had wildflowers and other native plants brought in after the clean up by Prairie Restoration. They are hoping to see benefits already in Year 2 of the project.

Maple Grove Lake Improvement Project grant program

As part of the city-wide Lake Improvement Project program, the Maple Grove Lake Quality Commission (LQC) a \$5,000 fund has been set aside for residents who demonstrate improvements made to their properties which results in a positive impact on the local waterways. The grant enables residents to claim a reimbursement of up to \$750 (or 50% if project cost is less than \$1,500) after all work is done. Photographic evidence must be given showing both before and after pictures of the area impacted. Grants are limited to one per household per calendar year. Examples of projects which may be undertaken include:

- Rain garden
- Shoreline buffer
- Erosion Control
- Sump pump retrofit
- Shoreline rip-rap
- Berm or other structure to direct run-off
- Consultative Services
- Rain Barrel

To apply for a grant, contact your local lake association via their website/e-mail (ricelakeassoc@comcast.net) for a project request form and details.

Guest speaker Rich Brasch (Water Resource Manager for Three Rivers Parks District and project manager for the Elm Creek Water Shed TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) 5-year project), gave an update on the project, which is nearing completion by 2015, and how it impacts Rice Lake and Elm Creek.

Board member Bill Kidder reminded everyone that the association has strength in numbers, and we need to increase those numbers so our voices are heard. He encouraged those who have interest in the lake to volunteer to be on a committee, spearhead a project, or join the board of directors.

- Dues payment recognition
 - Question from the audience: Can RLAA publishes the names of those who do pay their dues so they are recognized by others and maybe encourage others to do the same?
 - Answer: Yes, RLAA can publish the names of those who contribute by paying dues to RLAA.
 - Next step: Update RLAA Website with a page dedicated to those who pay their dues.
- RLAA membership levels
 - Question: Are there other membership levels besides Lake/Creek View and Lake/Creek Shore?
 - Answer: At one time we did have a 'Friends of Rice Lake' level of \$25/year. This level would be appropriate for those who enjoy the lake, but do not live on/near it.
 - Next step: Add a new membership level of 'Friends of Rice Lake' to both the on-line membership page and future meeting notices.

Audience Questions and request for action

- Curlyleaf Pondweed removal
 - Tim Zastoupil made a motion to conduct a CLP survey this year (2014) on Rice Lake to determine if we can do a drawdown to control the non-native plant.
 - Motion was seconded by Anne Marie Seward.
 - Vote was conducted by all members present and approved unanimously.
 - Next step: RLAA Board order a CLP Survey done to determine if drawdown can be done.
- Investigate Restocking Fish
 - Don Waletzko made a motion to have RLAA Board investigate and take action to stock the lake with predator fish in an effort to gain control over the rough fish like carp.
 - Motion was seconded by Tim Zastoupil.
 - Vote was conducted by all members present and approved unanimously.
 - Next step: RLAA Board check into restocking the lake with the approval from the membership.

There are two board member positions up for expiration this year and both members (Luke Johnson and Mark Ellingson) have agreed to stay on for another 3-year term. The RLAA Board strongly encourages others to join as either a board member (we have room to expand from our current number of 6 up to 15) or a committee member.

A trivia contest was conducted and there was a tie among those entering. Both Tim Zastoupil and Pete Raatikka got 9 of 10 correct answers; each won a \$20 gift card. Drawings were held for 3 remaining \$20 gift cards; Anne Marie Seward, Luke Johnson and Curt Puhland were winners. Thanks to Scott & Joy Roeglin for hosting this portion of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.