

# RLAA 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2019

The Rice Lake Area Association (RLAA) held their annual members meeting on Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-9:15 pm at the Cambria Suites motel in Maple Grove. The meeting was attended by 21 residents, representing 17 households for about 7% of our total potential members from our database, falling well short of the 2017 attendance of 50 residents and last year's 40. A free pizza buffet was held from 6:30-7:00 for those who paid their 2019 membership dues to the association.

The meeting formally started at approximately 7:15 pm as board member Rick Stulac introduced himself, then asked the other board members and the audience to give a brief introduction. Guests Dave Spatafore (President/Fish Lake Area Residents Association) and Mary Newman (WSB & Associates) were also present.

A review of the 2018 Financials and the 2019 Budget was also led by board member/treasurer Mike Thiede. 2018 Financial Objectives included:

- Increase annual dues participation (same vs. previous year)
  - \$25 discount when existing paying members bring in a new paying member
- Increase City funding for lake projects via the Lake Improvements Project (LIP) program.

In the Treasurer's Report, Mike noted that 2018 saw a negative impact on our Savings fund, putting RLAA at \$24,256 total cash in the bank. The number of paying members was down 1 vs. last year (45 households).

There was a suggestion by Don Waletzko if RLAA has considered putting the extra Savings funds into a CD. This suggestion will be considered by the RLAA Board off line.

There is still a lot of room for improvement for us to get more RLAA members to pay their dues! Out of the 100 residents who live on the lake/creek with lake access, only 45% of them are contributing dues. Although dues payments are voluntary, it is strongly encouraged to pay your dues if you live on the lake/creek, especially if you enjoy use of the resource. In 2019, we are planning on completing several large projects which will consume most of our funds. We need to increase our revenue base in order to complete these projects. *(Note: In 2017 & 2018, the names of those who paid their dues were posted on the RLAA website, so others may be encouraged to do the same. The same will be done again this year.)*

## **Guest Dave Spatafore from Fish Lake gave an update on their association and shared commonalities with Rice Lake:**

- Fish Lake is heavily invested in a multi-year Alum treatment program to improve water quality.
  - Alum binds to and reduces the amount of phosphorous in the water column.
  - Total project cost is over \$300,000
  - Partners with FLARA include: City of Maple Grove, Three Rivers Parks District and the Elm Creek Watershed.
  - Quality of water has improved with this treatment after year 1 and is expected to last many years.
- Since Fish & Rice Lakes share water access via the culvert under Weaver Lake Road, they are both invested in the Carp Management project (details coming up later in this meeting).

## **Board Member George Schneider gave the General Lake Update which consisted of 5 parts:**

- Review current Rice Lake surface water regulations
  - Reminder that City regulations state that all parts of Elm Creek and backwaters with Fish Lake are considered NO WAKE zones (maximum of 5 mph).
- 'Year in Review' look at 2018
- Impacts on Water Quality
- 2018 Project Review
- 2019 Project Plans

- **Surface Water Regulations**
  - No wake zones in creek and within 100 feet of shoreline or other water craft
    - This includes all of Elm Creek both upstream and downstream of the lake
    - Also includes the backwaters between Fish and Rice Lakes
    - No wake speed maximum is 5 mph
  - Speed limits
    - Daytime 40 mph
    - Nighttime 15 mph
  - See <http://www.maplegrovern.gov/about/lakes-and-water-quality/rice-lake/> for details
- **2018 Year in Review**
  - No need for drawdown since 2014-2015 as Curlyleaf Pondweed growth did not require it, although there was a slight uptick in CLP growth in 2018.
  - Water levels were above normal for most of the 2018 open water season
  - Water quality during the outdoor boating season was observed to be better than recent years without any major algae blooms for the 4<sup>th</sup> season in a row
  - Summer/Fall 2018 – Fishing was slightly better with a few actual catches of walleye (thank you to Fish Lake for stocking them). Visiting fishermen numbers were still down significantly as it was last year.
  - Winter 2018-2019 weather was slightly worse than in 2017-2018 with higher than average precipitation and lower temperatures.
  - Since the Winter 2018-2019 was above average for precipitation and snow cover, it should be resulting in good conditions for naturally preventing Curlyleaf Pondweed (CLP) growth.
  - Winter aeration was again done in 2018-2019 to help sustain 2015 & 2017 fish stocking. No fish kill was observed this past spring after the ice went out.
  - Spring 2019 water level has been slightly above average, but nothing significant.
- **Impacts on Water Quality**
  - Bad Weeds vs. Good Weeds
    - Reviewed Curlyleaf Pondweed (bad) vs. Coontail (good)
      - Curlyleaf Pondweed has shown little growth last year and early this season.
      - More Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) has been sighted again in 2018.
      - Coontail has still been heavy growth on Elm Creek entry on west side of I-94.
      - *Note: Special thanks to volunteer AIS Trackers Mike Thiede, Sean Miller and George Schneider under Hennepin County AIS grant.*
  - Nutrient levels
    - 75% coming in from rest of watershed; 25% internal to Rice Lake (per Elm Creek TMDL). TMDL cleanup efforts upstream should gradually improve the quality of water coming into Rice Lake.
  - Bad fish vs. Good fish
    - Rough fish (bad) consist mostly of Common Carp and Bullhead.
    - Game fish (good) population is low, but restocking efforts in 2015 & 2017 hope to help swing the pendulum to a healthy fish population.
  - Do we want a lake dominated by algae or by native plants?
    - Being a shallow lake, we have the dilemma of either being a lake full of nutrients/algae or one full of native aquatic weeds.
      - One positive about a lake full of native aquatic weeds is that the water quality/clarity should improve, along with the gamefish population. Weeds can always be controlled by cutting if necessary.
- **2018 Project Review**
  - Carp Assessment project with Fish Lake
    - Hired WSB & Associates to work with both lakes to measure level of carp in our lakes. Both trap netting and electrofishing was done in both lakes beginning in the fall of 2018.
    - This was the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of a potential 2 phase project to remove carp via commercial fishermen if the assessment shows heavy abundance of carp.
    - City of Maple Grove has helped fund 80% of this project; RLAA & FLARA covered the remainder.

- Assessment results received in late fall 2018 showed that both Fish and Rice Lakes had over 2.5 times the DNR threshold for carp (over 250 lbs./acre).
    - Next step: Track and remove carp in 2019-2020.
  - Channel Dredging project postponed as no affordable contractor was found.
    - Adjacent homeowners to the project have signed off on the dredging request.
      - Possibly utilize a Boaters Fund to help offset the project cost for one of the homeowners. More information on this will be circulated among membership now that we have found a dredging contractor.
      - A potential dredging contractor has been found and a RLAA sub-committee is working with them to formulate a detailed dredging plan.
    - Another RLAA sub-committee was created to insure on-going access to the private boat ramp. This group has learned that the boat ramp owner would like to continue allowing RLAA paying members use the ramp for putting in/taking out their boats on a seasonal basis.
      - This sub-committee is also researching better methods of controlling access to the boat ramp so only those who are paying members are able to use it. More details should be coming out soon to RLAA members on this objective.
    - RLAA will continue to pursue this channel dredging project in 2019-2020.
- **2019 Planned Projects**
  - Carp Tracking & Removal (Phase 2) project with Fish Lake
    - WSB & Associates will continue to work with both lakes to track carp movement in our lakes for eventual removal. Electrofishing will be done in both lakes beginning in Fall 2019 to surgically embed tracking devices in a sampling of carp in both lakes. Radio telemetry equipment will be purchased by both lakes to determine carp congregation locations so they can be eventually removed.
    - Additional funding from the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission (ECWMC) was obtained in 2018/2019. The City of Maple Grove & Three Rivers Parks District have also helped fund this project.
  - Winter Aerator replacement
    - A company has been found who will be working with Rice Lake to replace the existing winter aeration system with a submerged diffuser system, similar to what Lake Edward is running. This will be easier to maintain and deploy than our current model.
    - A task force consisting of Jeremy Coenen, Dave Wirig and George Schneider was instrumental in getting this project moving forward.
  - Continue to update the RLAA website
  - Reminded membership that we have a Facebook page for RLAA contributions
    - Please utilize it and if you'd like to help design pages, let us know!
  - Encourage resident shoreline restoration projects via Hennepin County Lake Improvement Grants
    - Residents can get up to \$750 reimbursement from Hennepin County on valid projects
    - Community submissions can be done via the Opportunity Grants from the county.
    - Visit the website for group or your individual submissions at:  
<https://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/natural-resources-funding>
  - Plan to Dredge Channel by Boat Launch (2019-2020)
    - Objective: To deepen the channel entering the lake from the Boat Ramp Bay, which has never been dredged out before and is getting shallower due to sediment contribution.
    - 100% approval of adjacent homeowners need to approve. (**completed**)
    - Next step: Hire a dredging contractor to both dredge the channel and install rip-rap along one shoreline adjacent to the channel.
      - A Boaters Access Fund is going to be set up to help the private homeowner with installing the rip-rap on their shoreline. Look for information coming soon directed to all boaters to help with this project, which has a direct impact on future boating on the lake.

- Discussion items regarding this topic included:
    - Question #1: Why can't the Lake Improvement Project grants from Hennepin County be used to restore the shoreline?
    - *Answer #1: The grant parameters do not cover rip-rap as a solution.*
    - Question #2: Why can't RLAA general funds be used?
    - *Answer #2: The RLAA Board does not feel it is a good practice to provide funds to an individual for their own project. Others will seek the same from our limited funds base.*
  - Continue working with Elm Creek Watershed on Impaired Waters Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) project plan (in tandem with RLAA Lake Management plan)
  - Storm Drain monitoring with City Staff
  - Continue to increase our membership
- **Water Quality – What can you do to help?**
  - Manage your shoreline
  - Keep the street drains free of debris
    - Information on a city-wide 'Adopt a storm drain' program will be coming out soon. Stayed tune for details!
  - Pick up litter along shoreline
  - Don't use phosphorous in your lawn treatment
    - If you are using a commercial applicator, make sure they are not using phosphorous
  - Consider aerating your lawn on a regular basis (fall is usually the recommended best time for this)

#### **10000 Docks as a resource for any dock or boat work**

- Eric Swenson from 10000 Docks was unable to attend the meeting, but several RLAA members recognized him for doing affordable quality work on their docks. 10000 Docks also assisted RLAA this past winter with getting the winter aerator repaired and the ice cut out so the unit could be put out again.
  - Feel free to contact Eric Swenson at 10000 Docks for more:
    - E-mail: [leveldocks@gmail.com](mailto:leveldocks@gmail.com)
    - Website: <https://10000docks.com/>
    - Phone: (763) 227-5320

#### **Joint Carp Project by Mary Newman (WSB & Associates)**

- Background: In 2017, RLAA and FLARA (Fish Lake) solicited bids from both Carp Solutions (who presented at the 2017 RLAA Annual Meeting) and WSB & Associates to identify carp problems and assist in their removal, if necessary. Both organizations have worked directly with the University of Minnesota invasive species expert, Dr. Peter Sorenson. It was decided by a Joint Task Force made up of Rice Lake & Fish Lake volunteers to accept the bid from WSB & Associates to work on the Carp Assessment (Phase 1) project.
- Objective: Measure and determine if Carp are in fact a nuisance on both Fish and Rice Lakes.
  - Come up with an action plan to combat Carp
    - Phase 1 – Track carp
    - Phase 2 – Remove carp
  - Request support and financial assistance from these entities:
    - Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission (ECWMC)
    - City of Maple Grove
    - Three Rivers Parks District
    - Rice Lake Area Association (RLAA)
    - Fish Lake Area Residents Association (FLARA)
- Current status
  - WSB & Associates did both trap netting in and electrofishing to measure the quantity of adult and juvenile carp in both lakes and adjacent ponds/wetlands.
  - Each lake showed over 2.5 times the # of carp.
  - No juvenile carp were collected in the trap nets, indicating there may not be many young carp.

- Volunteers from both lakes will assist WSB in tracking the carp movement with radio telemetry receivers to determine where they congregate.
- The area commercial fisherman will be hired by WSB (already in the contract) to remove the carp in either open water or ice seasons.
- Next steps:
  - Each of the lakes will be seeking volunteers to help track carp in the coming months, prior to the installation of tracking devices this coming fall.
- Questions from the audience:
  - Is the lack of young carp a good thing? (Yes, and it probably resulted from the 2013-2014 winterkill)
  - Does the fin-clipping harm the fish? (No, although they may travel in circles) 🤖

### **Committee Update**

Although this was not discussed in details at the meeting, please sign up to join one (or more) of these teams to help us get our lake back into shape.

- **Lake Management Team**
  - Fish Management sub-committee
- **Membership Team**
  - This team has not been active and we need to resurrect it.
- **RLAA Facebook page**
  - Share your knowledge and experiences/concerns about Rice Lake on our own Facebook page. Find us at <https://www.facebook.com/RiceLakeMG/>.

### **Board Member Elections**

- Just 1 term was up for a current Board Member:
  - George Schneider
- Agreed to serve another 3-year term ending in 2022 as Secretary.

### **Rice Lake Trivia Contest**

Joy Roeglin hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Rice Lake Trivia Contest. Members present at the meeting took part by scoring their own results. Jim & Carol Malone correctly answered 9 of the 10 questions and received a \$25 gift certificate from a local retailer. Joy also conducted random drawings for 3 more \$25 gift certificates from local retailers. (visit the RLAA website for the questions/answers on our Events page)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.