

Crystal Lake & Watershed Association  
Annual Meeting  
Saturday, July 22, 2017  
Community Building, Congregational Summer Assembly  
Pilgrim, MI

MINUTES

**Attendance: 169 proxies submitted; 82 additional members registered in person; total of 251 eligible votes. (Additional non-members in attendance and members present in person who had previously submitted proxies were not counted.)**

**Call to order:**

President Joel Buzzell called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. He announced that a quorum of members (including proxies) was present. He thanked the Congregational Summer Assembly for the use of its meeting space and for its ongoing collaboration, especially on swimmer's itch projects.

**Minutes:**

The minutes from the 2016 annual meeting have been reviewed and have been posted on the CLWA website. The formal actions taken were the election of new board members and officers. Reading of the minutes was waived without objection, and they were approved.

**President's report:**

President Buzzell thanked the CLWA committees and gave them credit for carrying out the work of the organization. He highlighted better lake level control at the Outlet and the new erosion control installations at Bellows beach as major achievements over the past year. He called attention to the two exhibits set up in the room: Jim Hamp's results of the aquatic plant survey on the east end of Crystal Lake, and Stacy Daniel's research on Crystal Lake geography. He recognized the initiative of AJ Duggan for his organization of the Crystal Lights event to benefit the CLWA.

**Treasurer's report:**

The financial statement for 2016 was distributed. Treasurer David Appleford reported that 2016 was a challenging year, due to two extraordinary expenses: a donation of \$13,000 to the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy for the purchase of the Wortelboer property near the Outlet (which was raising environmental concerns due to flooding), and payment of \$65,500 for the swimmer's itch control program, something of primary concern to CLWA members. As a result, the year ended with a deficit, but thanks to a surplus in 2015, the effect on CLWA reserves was manageable. Dues bring in only 33% of CLWA revenue, the rest coming from charitable donations and bequests.

The Endowment remains in its infancy and is growing slowly. When a contribution is made to the Endowment Fund, half is allocated to the Safety Portfolio and the other half goes to an Investment Portfolio. The Safety Portfolio is made up of 20% cash and 80% short term insured CDs. The Investment Portfolio is a well diversified mix of stocks, bonds and other similar investments designed to grow at a moderate pace over time. The CLWA does not currently tap into the Endowment Fund, as the hope is that it will grow to a meaningful size where we can start using it to help pay for our many important programs.

Appleford noted that he is coming to the end of his second term as Treasurer. He thanked the "passionate" board members with whom he has worked for four years.

**Review of CLWA projects:**

Hugh Walton, chair of the Water Quality committee, and Ellen Herscher, chair of the Education and Communication committee, reviewed the highlights of the major CLWA projects (other than Swimmer's Itch) over the past year. These included monitoring invasive species around the shoreline, surveying the east end of Crystal Lake for aquatic weeds, operating the boat washing station at the DNR boat launch at Mollineaux Road, monitoring the lake level and shoreline erosion, checking water chemistry regularly, and organizing educational activities such as the fall Walkabout for local middle school students, art fair presentations, and publication of the newsletter, *Crystal Whitecaps*. The CLWA website, [CrystalLakeWatershed.org](http://CrystalLakeWatershed.org), provides opportunities to report swimmer's itch cases and merganser broods and to follow the fluctuations in lake level and temperature.

**Nominating committee report and election of officers and board members:**

The nominating committee, chaired by Sue Brown, presented the following slate and had distributed brief résumés of the nominees. Nominees present were introduced.

Officers for two-year terms (to 2019):

- Vice President – David Wynne (for reelection)
- Treasurer – Ronald Ahrns

At-large board members for three-year terms (to 2020):

- Rick Cosaro (reelection)
- Barry Hahn
- Rory Heckman
- Charles (Chuck) King IV (reelection)
- Tom Kucera (reelection)

At-large board members for one-year term (to 2018):

- Barbara Leonard
- Tim Reznich

The nominations were seconded by Wanda Shreiner; there were no nominations from the floor. The slate was elected.

President Buzzell thanked retiring Treasurer David Appleford and board member Ann Pepper for their important years of service to the CLWA. He also noted that long-time board member Stacy Daniels has retired.

**Adjournment:**

There being no other business, the business meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

**INFORMATIONAL PROGRAM:**

***Swimmer's Itch Solutions for Crystal Lake: An Action Plan for 2017 and Beyond***

Ted Fisher, chair of the Crystal Lake Swimmer's Itch Partnership, described the work of the Michigan Swimmer's Itch Partnership (MISIP), which he co-chairs and which now includes 24 lake associations. They have successfully received appropriations from the state of Michigan, which are being distributed as grants for swimmer's itch control. MISIP is also supporting a research program on swimmer's itch on several northern Michigan lakes.

Fisher introduced the main speaker, Curt Blankespoor of Swimmer's Itch Solutions LLC, who is conducting the SI control program on Crystal Lake this summer.

Blankespoor emphasized the importance of community involvement in facilitating his work. He thanked several members of the CLWA who have provided various types of in-kind support. He described some background of swimmer's itch: There are about twenty varieties, involving different species of snails and birds. The predominant one in northwestern Michigan depends on the common merganser and the stagnicolae snail.

In 2015-2017 Blankespoor and his team carried out a 3-year, four-lake pilot project on Higgins, Lime, Glen, and Douglas lakes, designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of harassment and brood removal. In 2016 Crystal and Lake Leelanau were added, with the completion of a snail species and infection rate assessment on Crystal Lake. This year the Crystal Lake program consists of trapping and removal of merganser broods, along with an assessment of the parasite loads in a few hens.

Common mergansers are a poorly understood bird. A few things are known: after maturity a hen takes one year to locate a suitable nesting site, after which they return to the spot annually; they lay eggs in April-May, incubate in May, and hatch in June-July; chicks pass the parasite at 4-5 weeks of age. Mergansers are fish eaters, so it is not possible to lace their food with an anti-parasitic drug (in contrast to Lake Mitchell, where the infected species is the mallard which will eat corn).

Blankespoor illustrated the trapping methods being used by his team. So far they have trapped and removed 14 broods, consisting of a total of 126 birds. He emphasized that no effects on swimmer's itch will be seen this year: it will take a year or two for the reduction in mergansers to result in a lower snail infection rate. Another assessment of the snail infection rate will be done on Crystal Lake in 2018 or 2019. He showed tables recording the snail infection rate on Higgins Lake before and after merganser trap-and-relocate, which displayed impressive results. Following the initial program, Crystal will require future "maintenance," at lower cost and labor. In addition to the trapping program, they are attempting to close off merganser nest sites that they discover and are banding some birds to determine whether they return.

Some research questions that require answers include: What is a hen's "Plan B" if she discovers her preferred nesting spot has been covered? How long does it take for a chick to "imprint" on a location, so that it will return there in future? Why do mergansers nest on some lakes and not others?

There followed an extended period for audience questions. One concern was the recent appearance of swimmer's itch on nearby Platte Lake, where it had not been present previously.

The informational program concluded at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Herscher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ellen Herscher, Secretary

**(Minutes approved July 21, 2018)**