

Crystal Lake & Watershed Association
Annual Meeting
Saturday, July 18, 2020
Via Zoom Teleconference

MINUTES

Attendance: 35 present via Zoom; 126 ballots returned by mail; total of 197 eligible votes.

Facilitator Jae Gerhart reviewed Zoom procedures for the meeting.

Call to order:

President David Wynne called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Secretary Ellen Herscher announced that a quorum of members had submitted ballots by mail.

Minutes:

The minutes from the 2019 annual meeting had been reviewed and posted on the CLWA website. The formal actions taken were the election of new board members and officers, and the presentation of the Crystal Circle Award to Ted Fisher. The minutes had been approved by mail ballot.

President's report:

President Wynne thanked the board of directors: they are all volunteers, and it is their work that enables the CLWA to function.

Wynne presented a PowerPoint surveying the CLWA's primary initiatives and ongoing programs. These projects include:

- invasive aquatic plant monitoring and control – the Eurasian watermilfoil treatment planned for late June has been delayed; it is important to control the invasive at this early state;
- operation of the boat washing station at the DNR Crystal Lake boating access site – this deters other invasives from entering the lake; boat traffic is up 48% this summer;
- monthly water quality monitoring – over 50 years of data have been collected from Crystal Lake; secchi disk readings go down to 40 feet;
- lake-friendly land management practices – Wynne highlighted examples of rain gardens to control runoff;
- protection of shoreline through lake level monitoring – the CLWA installed and maintains the automatic monitor at the Outlet, which provides the data for the County Drain Commissioner; these live readings are posted on the CLWA website;
- promoting septic system health and enforcement of zoning requirements – currently working to update the watershed Overlay zoning;

- participation in educational events and outreach including the *Crystal Whitecaps* newsletter and website. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, the annual middle school Walkabout and the usual art fairs could not take place this year.

Wynne highlighted CLWA's swimmer's itch control and research program and the progress that has been made in reducing swimmer's itch on Crystal Lake. An assessment of the snail infection rate this summer demonstrated a 96% reduction from the beginning of the merganser trap and relocation program in 2017. Data available from the Congregational Summer Assembly beach show a corresponding reduction in the reported number of swimmer's itch cases.

He emphasized the wide extent of the Crystal Lake watershed and that a total turnover of the water in the lake takes about 100 years. The lake is the economic engine of Benzie County, and thus its protection is in everyone's interest. He urged those present to renew their CLWA membership and to encourage their friends and neighbors to join.

Treasurer's report:

The financial statement for 2019 was posted on line. Treasurer Ronald Ahrns reported that the CLWA's bank balances are healthy and that its investments are conservative, so were not impacted by the market downturn earlier this year. He presented charts showing the allocation of CLWA program expenditures from 2017 through 2019, with water quality as the major expenditure (33%), with the majority of that spent for operation of the boat washing station at the DNR public boating access site. Program costs have averaged \$91K annually over the last 3 years. He noted that swimmer's itch costs will probably increase this year.

Ahrns emphasized that the CLWA is a volunteer-driven organization, with countless hours of volunteer time going toward the implementation of its ongoing operations. He thanked the supporters for their membership and additional contributions.

Nominating committee report and election of officers and board members:

Susan Kirkpatrick, chair of the Nominating committee, presented the results of the on-line election; brief résumés of the nominees had been posted. She commented that this is a very talented group of individuals who bring skill sets that will be important to the CLWA's future success.

Officers for two-year terms (to 2022):

- President – Dave Wynne (for reelection)
- Secretary – Ellen Herscher (for reelection)

At-large board members for three-year terms (to 2023):

- Rick Cosaro (reelection)
- Tom Kucera (reelection)
- Steve Roszell (reelection)

Steve Stephens (reelection)

At-large board member to fill a vacant one-year term (2020-2021):

John Wheeler

The slate had been elected by mail ballot. President Wynne thanked the Nominating committee for its work over the past year. He also thanked retiring board member Barry Hahn for his service, and Treasurer Ron Ahrns who plans to retire as treasurer soon.

Questions:

President Wynne opened the floor to questions from those present. Most concerned the treatment for invasive Eurasian watermilfoil that was postponed in late June.

Answers: the principal person objecting to the treatment does not live on the lake, but others allied with him do; CLWA has been in discussions with the individual and his attorney. He is objecting to the use of the chemical Triclopyr, which is only a minor component of the CLWA plan. E. Herscher added that the individual is citing a report that is over 20 years old as the basis for his objections: however, since that time the products have been modified and thoroughly tested and studied, so his information is very outdated. Those who wish to express their views should contact the *Benzie County Record Patriot*. Wynne reviewed the pros and cons of trying to remove the milfoil by pulling it out: it would avoid the use of herbicide, but is very expensive, requiring a special boat and trained divers, significantly disturbs the lakebed and other beneficial life forms present. In use at Higgins Lake, this method has not shown measurable success. If the treatment is delayed, there is a danger that the milfoil may hybridize with native watermilfoil, which is much more difficult to treat: in any case, it will continue to spread. Nutrients from Cold Creek are probably helping to grow the milfoil around the Beulah Beach: CLWA is working with the village of Beulah and the Benzie Conservation District to find solutions to this problem.

Answers to other questions:

Boat wash finances: the CLWA owns the boat wash building and several improvements were made this year that involved keeping it functioning optimally; the financial statement also reflects depreciation for the facility; CLWA leases the land it sits on from the DNR for \$1/year.

The data from the drone shoreline survey done last year is still being analyzed as the CLWA has been occupied with other issues; we still intend to utilize this information for detecting failing septic systems, shoreline erosion, cladophora and other problems.

A participant noted that “green algae” along the shoreline seems to be worse this year: the identity of the plant is uncertain (could be cladophora), but its growth may be encouraged by additional nutrients in the water, possibly from failing septic systems.

Wynne encouraged participants to make their views on water protection issues known to their state representatives – Curt VanderWall and Jack O’Malley – and to attend their local “coffee hours.”

Adjournment:

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Herscher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

Ellen Herscher, Secretary

(Minutes approved by mail ballot July 24, 2021)