Clitherall Lake Association
Annual Membership Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2025
Approved

President Scott Early called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

Scott introduced the current board members: Mike Lipke, Steve Adams, Harley Anderson, Bret Sorensen, Beth Franklin, Chris Dietz, Tom Frank, Jeff Lindholm and Eric Pierskalla were present. Alan Storry was absent.
Scott stated that he, along with Tom Frank, Eric Pierskalla, and Bret Sorensen, were at the end of their 3-year terms and all are running for another term. Scott also introduced Jeff Stabnow, a prior member of the board, as a board nominee,

Treasurer's Report:
In Alan Storry's absence, Mike Lipke presented the Treasurer's Report.
The total of all funds is just over $65,000, with much of that invested in CDs to maximize return. Liquid assets in checking and savings are $22,365. These balances contributed to the board's decision to increase the amount of money earmarked for fish stocking this year.
Mike said that the number of memberships in the association is generally around 200, out of 340 properties. 2 years ago the CLA tried mailing and emailing membership forms instead of having beach captains deliver them due to the increasing difficulty of finding people to be beach captains. Last year and this year the CLA has sent membership information by email when possible and mailing members when email addresses are not available. This method has worked fairly well, memberships at 2024 year end was at 193.

Fisheries Report:
Tom Frank said that we have a new head of fisheries that is also supportive of our efforts to augment the DNR's stocking initiative. Walleye numbers while down historically were up from 3 to 5 fish in last year's test netting, a 50% jump. The DNR has us on a ramp up stocking effort, last few years including this fall they will target 800-1,000 pounds of yearlings stocked annually. As an association we stocked 400 lbs. in 2023, 500 lbs. in 2024 and have committed to just shy of 800 lbs. for 2025 at a cost of $15,000.
Scott added that all the funds collected at the lunch will go to the fish stocking fund, and that last year's lunch generated $800.

Guest Speakers:
The guest speakers were Ethan Soland and Jeff Moon from the Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office Water Patrol. Ethan began by saying that Clitherall Lake is a gem, one of the best lakes in the county in terms of water quality, fishing, and recreation.

He said that the primary goal of the 8 deputies in the Water Patrol is safety, and he and Jeff started with a discussion of life jackets. The key points were:

1) A life jacket is required for everyone on board and must be readily accessible.
2) Persons under the age of 10 must wear their life jacket.
3) Auto-inflating life jackets are much more comfortable, but they must be worn to be legal, cannot just have it on board. These can only be used by people age 16 and older, and over 90 lbs.
4) All boats 16' and longer in length must also have an approved throwable flotation device like a buoyant cushion or a ring buoy. This must also be readily accessible. Jeff added that attaching a rope to your throwable is a great idea. This will make retrieval much easier.
5) Life jackets are required when using paddleboards, they can be either worn or carried on board.

A member asked about expected lifespan of a life jacket. Ethan replied that it depends on how it is used. Every year they should be checked for fit, buckles, and operation. Jeff added if anyone has an old kapok filled jacket, they should get rid of it. More questions about auto-inflating life jackets were asked, including cost, brands, how to tell if they are working, and wearing them in rain. They replied that prices start at $80 and up, there are several brands available, including Mustang and Onyx. The inflation mechanism has a indicator window that will turn red when the cartridge needs to be replaced. It is possible for rain or splashing water to cause them to inflate, wearing them under a raincoat or getting off the lake during a storm was recommended.

They then talked about Minnesota's new boater education law. Persons age 12-21 who wish to operate a boat with a motor larger than 25 hp must complete an online course and issued a completion certificate. In 2026 this will expand to ages 12-25, in 2027 to ages 12-30, and in 2028 ages 12-40. Adult boaters who've taken the youth boating course in the past do not have to retake the test, but they need to have their printed completion card with them since this information cannot be looked up in the field.

The next topic was personal watercraft. They pointed out that the legal hours of operation are 9:30 AM to 1 hour before sunset, and must be at least 150' from shore, docks, or another boat. PWCs are not allowed to jump boat wakes, and operators and passengers must wear life jackets at all times.

They then talked about people harassing loons. If this is observed call the DNR tipline and if safely possible, get the license number of the watercraft. However, remember that loons are curious and will often approach boats, so make sure that this is not the case.

Wakeboating was discussed. They appreciated that the lake association is educating boaters on the recommended safe wakeboating areas of the lake, with depths greater than 20' and greater than 500' from shore. There are no state laws yet on wakeboating areas, however citations have been issued to wakeboaters for riding on the gunnels or at the back of the boat while the boat is in motion. Seats at the back of the boat cannot be occupied while the boat is in operation due to the danger of falling off and of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Several members asked questions on a variety of subjects, which Ethan and Jeff answered.

Environmental Report:
Chris Dietz described the water sample gathering process that is used to get samples to RMB Labs in Detroit Lakes for testing. The Secchi Disk reading in June was 13 ½' compared to 29' in May. The June reading was outside of the expected range but was likely influenced by storms occurring during that period.

A member brought up the subject of swimmer's itch, inquired about how prevalent it was on the lake, and if there were any solutions or treatments recommended. Chris said that the CLA had met with a Michigan organization that specializes in this problem last year, but the costs were prohibitive. The CLA is monitoring the situation at Pelican Lake, which has a huge swimmer's itch problem. The property owner's association there has met with the same Michigan company and have applied for permits to begin relocating mergansers. Another member asked about spreading copper sulfate in the water. It was explained that a permit from the DNR was needed to do this, and it could have harmful effects on the lake ecology.

Loon Count:

Tom Frank reported that 11 adult loons and 6 chicks were counted on the lake. Next year, the CLA will be putting up signs marking the nesting areas to keep people from getting too close to the nests.

Election:

Scott Early announced the results of the voting. All 5 people on the ballot were elected to the board.

Contest:
Scott also announced that there will be a coffee mug photo contest for next year. Members can submit Clitherall Lake photos via email. Winners will get a free coffee mug.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36.

Submitted by Eric Pierskalla