**Big Fish Lake Association Annual Meeting Minutes**

**June 17, 2023; 8:30 a.m., Collegeville Township Hall**

1. Call to order, 8:39 a.m.
2. Jeff Bertram, Stearns County Commissioner, District 3

County Commissioner Bertram gave an update on several issues of interest for the lake association:

1. New funding available for septic system upgrades
2. Aquatic invasive species update on boat inspections and the county’s Five-Star Lake Service Provider Program.
3. Shoreline ordinances including construction, shoreland alteration permits, and erosion control.
4. Spraying for noxious weeds: if landowners do not want their ditches sprayed, they may contact the county.

Commissioner Bertram also noted that he is working with the county highway engineer on the issue of salt on the roads.

1. Stearns County Water Patrol Deputy, Brandon Merkling

Deputy Merkling gave an overview to the association on water patrol activities throughout the county. The sheriffs use 4 boats throughout the county, but the same boat will always be used on Big Fish Lake and the boats are cleaned at the county facility in Waite Park. Association members had several questions about citations and violations; jet skis after hours and jet skis jumping waves are the biggest complaints the county receives.

1. Big Fish Lake Track Club – Rob Schwegel

Rob shared many pictures and stories about the Big Fish Lake Track club that his family organized from 1968 to 1978. The group would get together annually at the lake for a 17 mile run, 1 mile swim across the lake, shot put and javelin throwing on Schultz Road, and pole jumping off the dock into the lake. At one point, they had 75 members participating in their summer games and several of the athletes competed nationally and collegiately.

1. Membership Update – Kit

Currently have 199 properties on the lake, with 159 paid members for 2023. The membership drive goal is $35,000 with $32,000 currently raised. Most of the funds raised from the drive go toward the boat inspections at the access ($24,000 annually). Many lake association members have donated extra funds to BFLA through the sale of their boats, lifts, and docks. The association also has 20 business memberships that provide $3000 in ads to support the association.

1. AED Update – John

* John Ronning has installed an AED on his property on the road at 27301 Hidden Cove Road.
* Doris Westra is organizing fundraising for an AED near the boat landing. Missy and Josh Longnecker have volunteered to pay the electrical each year and the BFLA Board has voted to provide the annual maintenance fee ($600) for the device.

***Jim Sand made a motion to have BFLA members support the AED fundraising efforts. Nancy Fandel seconded the motion, and the motion was approved on a voice vote.***

1. Social Committee

The association discussed the need for a more organized social committee on the lake to organize more events than just the annual picnic. Ideas include: no motor gatherings, meet in the middle events, boating events for people with disabilities/special needs, and morning/sunrise events.

1. Loon Update

Currently the lake has 3 loon nests with 2 hatches and 4 chicks so far this year.

1. Secchi Disk Reading

Jim and Rose Sand oversee the lake’s water testing and secchi dish readings. The first read for 2023 was on April 23 with 23 feet of water clarity.

1. Treasurer’s Report – Matt
2. As of June 3, 2023, the Association had a balance of $61,102.58. The balance is higher than normal due to no deposits into the Emergency Fund due to the current stock market instability.
3. The biggest expense of the association is the cost of the boat inspections at the landing. The lake has an allocation of 1742 hours for 2023, with a cost of $48,776. The Association pays half of the cost at $24,000.
4. The current totals for the BFLA Legacy Funds are:

$111,244 Conservancy Fund (endowment fund with spending policy money limit)

$148,350 Emergency Fund (funds may be available anytime)

1. BFL Care of the Lake Committee

The BFLA Board will be forming a committee to include property owners as well as Board members to maintain lake and shoreline health. The committee will meet to gather information, compile document findings, and generate educational information for members. Possible topics include: watercraft rules and regulations, shoreline bank health, shoreline restoration, water quality, and proactive recommendation on topics affecting the lake.

1. Shoreline Restoration

Lake association member Julia Frerichs gave a presentation on shoreline restoration and native plants with deep root systems that homeowners can plant to help maintain a healthy shoreline on the lake.

1. Boat Inspections

The number of boat inspections during the 2022 season went down from 5204 in 2021 to 2227 in 2022.

1. Board Member Elections

The association bylaws state that the board shall consist of a minimum of seven and a maximum of nine individuals. The current BFLA Board has eight members leaving one open position to be filled.

Members up for re-election in 2023: Mark Backes, John Ronning, Matt Peters, and Hailey Bayer.

* ***Susan Eich made a motion to approve the slate of board members up for re-election. Jackie Adamek seconded the motion and it was approved on a voice vote.***
* ***Mark Backes nominated Nancy Van Erp to fill the current open position. Jim Sand made a motion to approve the nomination. Nancy Fandel seconded the motion and it was approved by voice vote.***

Current Board members with one year remaining on their term include: Kit Ferber, Megan Johnson, Doug Adamek and Bill Unger.

1. Big Fish Lake Cutting Boards

BFLA Board member Doug Adamek custom designed and made two Big Fish Lake cutting boards. One board was sold for a donation to the lake association and all members attending the annual meeting were entered into a drawing to win the second board.

1. Homeowners map of the lake

Kit is organizing a map of Big Fish Lake that will list property owners on the back to use as a reference for association members. Further information on the maps will be sent out in the association newsletter.

1. Adjourn, 10:48 a.m.

Minutes prepared by BFLA Secretary, Megan Johnson.