

IRON COUNTY LAKES AND STREAMS PARTNERSHIP
Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2022

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mike Golas, Callista Bortolmeolli

Members Present VIA ZOOM: Joy DeNicola, Diane Kut, Laurie Netzow, Debi Twardowski, Sally Davis, Judy and Dennis Kufahl

Members Absent: Tom Madden, Mike Bukovitz, Jim Novitzki, Vickie Browne

Guest Present: Tom Anderson

President Mike Golas called the meeting to order at 7:30am at the West Iron County High School Library.

Mike asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October. Being to corrections, Diane Kut made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as submitted, and the motion was seconded by Sally Davis. Motioned passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Since treasurer, Tom Madden was not present, Mike Golas gave a brief overview of the treasurer's report previously submitted to all board members via email. The summarized report is as follows:

Bank Balance as of 10/1/22	\$21,405.54	
Accounts Payable 10/1/22	(397.80)	Expenses Paid
Account Receivable	10.00	Member Dues Collected
Bank Adjustment	1.62	Business SD Earnings
Ending Balance 10/31/22	\$21,019.36	

Laurie Netzow made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as submitted, and the motion was seconded by Diane Kut. Motion passed.

AS of October 21, 2022, the Partnership has 254 paid members.

OLD BUSINESS

Bylaws: Mike Golas announced that he has not heard back from Attorney, Hannah Goodman regarding edits to our bylaws. He will follow up with her at a later date.

Strategic Planning Document for 2023:

Since our last meeting, Vickie Browne drafted a comprehensive and well thought out document outlining five major topic goals that the board has agreed are important in the coming year. They Include, but may not be limited to:

- ~Increasing involvement with CLMP,
- ~Increasing awareness, knowledge, and participation in Partnership goals,
- ~Leveraging opportunities provided by other like-minded organizations,

- ~Enhancing and growing membership in the Partnership, and
- ~Gathering data to support an economic impact study.

The style of the strategic planning document suggests that each topic goal be organized as a separate interest group or committee, headed by a chairperson, and followed by a set of action steps to achieve the desired goals.

President, Mike Golas opened a discussion and review of the strategic planning document for 2023, which resulted from ongoing discussions over the years, and questions raised such as:

- ~How large do we want to become?
- ~What do we want to look like in the coming years?
- ~What kind of events planning should we consider now and in the future?
- ~How will we manage our responsibilities?
- ~Do we need an educator?
- ~Can we achieve more community leadership involvement?

Mike remarked that it is likely that we will always be a volunteer organization without paid employees. However, that decision requires that we must consider what is reasonable to accomplish with a small volunteer group of committed individuals. Many of the items on the Partnership wish list may require commitments that we may not necessarily be able to meet, cost money we don't necessarily have, require more than volunteer efforts, and possibly create a need for a paid employee(s).

Some of the issues and topics that have been recently discussed could take the Partnership in a somewhat different direction than what has been our norm previously, could require us to take some new steps, and to accomplish things we haven't done in the past.

Mike looked at the strategic planning document for 2023 drafted by Vickie Browne, and attempted to tie each strategic goal to our organization's foundational goals, which include: AWARENESS, EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY, and COOPERATION.

1.) Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP) - Beginning with CLMP, which fits into our foundational goal of "technology," the board discussed and brainstormed our current and future involvement with CLMP. Mike explained that growing our involvement with CLMP could bring greater community involvement not only with CLMP, but also with the Lakes and Streams Partnership, and community members' own lakes. It was agreed that CLMP is a valuable organization and our relationship with them is a "cornerstone" and is important to grow.

Referring to the 2023 strategic planning document, Mike asked if anyone on the board would have an interest in chairing a CLMP committee or interest group, and carry out the action steps as outlined. No one expressed interest, however, Joy DeNicola asked

if Tom Madden (absent) might be a good candidate to chair a CLMP committee. She added that Tom has been involved with CLMP for a long time and has often expressed the importance of growing CLMP in Iron County. Since Tom was not in attendance, this question will be presented to him at later. Sally Davis also agreed that Tom would be worth contacting, and if he is not interested, he may know people within CLMP who maybe interested in becoming involved. Mike agreed to address this with Tom.

Laurie Netzow asked if it would be helpful to determine how many lakes are already participating in CLMP and try to focus on creating a list of non-participating lakes and reach out to those lakes to encourage their involvement. Mike stated that we do already know which Iron County lakes are participating in CLMP; currently there are 18. We previously had about 22, but lost a few due to Covid and other circumstances. Laurie suggested we try to reengage those lakes that we have lost. Mike agreed and will send a list to the board of all Iron County lakes currently active in CLMP.

Mike also referred the board to the MiCorp website since they also have reports on their website of which lakes are participating this year and/or have participated in past years. However, he is not sure if the 2022 reports are on their website yet. Mike added that Tom Madden also maintains a list of lakes participating in CLMP

The board agreed to try some of the CLMP action points on the strategic planning document even though we don't have a leader or chair at this point.

Diane Kut asked is we should contact Whitewater to see if they can offer assistance with CLMP. Mike agreed that contacting Whitewater would be worthwhile. Diane also stated that if we could get Jo and Erik of MSU to come in the spring, perhaps they could help with CLMP efforts.

2.) Increase Awareness, Share Knowledge, Encourage Participation Goals -

Currently we have the Partnership website and Facebook up and running. We also have our newsletter mailing, and Laurie and Vickie expressed an interest in doing more with the newsletter. The strategic planning document suggests we do a quarterly newsletter, which would increase our mailing frequency. Mike added as a side note, that Vickie's husband is a writer for the Iron County Reporter, and he may be able to help us with getting more newspaper article space.

Laurie stated that Vickie would be a great committee chairperson for the "Increased Awareness" project, and added that "she is good at being in charge and gets things done." Unfortunately, Vickie was not present at the meeting to respond. The board will follow up with her later.

3.) Leverage Opportunities Provided by Other Agencies - We already interface with the Iron Baraga Conservation District and the MSU Extension. Mike is not sure what value

we can get from other agencies listed on the strategic planning document. He believes that large state agencies are not likely to be a huge resource for us. Debi remarked that it appears that Mike has already been doing all that he can to leverage opportunities and develop relationships with like-minded organizations.

Mike acknowledged that we have a very good relationship with our neighbors to the east and west: Wild Rivers of Florence, WI and Invasive Species Control Coalition of Watersmeet (ISCCW) respectively. Diane stated that perhaps we should focus on deepening our working relationships with just these two groups. Mike agreed and will touch base with both Watersmeet and Wild Rivers of Florence.

4.) Enhance Member Experience and Grow Membership - ICLSP hasn't had an active membership drive in a long while. We tend to focus on word-of-mouth, existing members and renewals. Our strategic planning document suggests a more aggressive approach to membership such as choosing non-member lakes and approaching them directly to encourage membership in ICLSP. It was noted that having someone within the Partnership head-up this project and start to identify the lakes that we could target would be helpful.

Diane remarked that since Jo and Erick will be in our area for two weeks, from July 23 - August 11, 2022, we could ask for their help in growing our membership. They could be key people to address issues on the individual lakes in Iron County, and they could also talk about available programs and ICLSP. Mike agreed and stated that the December newsletter also makes a similar reference and request to our membership.

Diane suggested that a mailing to residents on county rivers would also be a way to increase membership. She suggested we focus on the Michigamme and Paint Rivers since we have not canvassed that area very heavily in the past.

Diane said that she could do an address search at the Crystal Falls Courthouse of river property owners. She stated that there will be a cost associated with this, and a recent inquiry indicated the current cost is \$0.25 to create label and \$0.25 to create a listing.

Laurie made a motion to approve Diane's address search. The motion was seconded by Joy. Further discussion revealed that no one really has an idea of how many residents there might be on the Paint and the Michigamme. Therefore, the final cost is unknown. The motion therefore is on hold until Diane has had an opportunity to determine how many properties there are and can then determine the full cost. She agreed to go to the Courthouse and speak to Julie Harp to get more information, which she will then bring to the January meeting. At that time the Partnership will hear a motion to either approve or disapprove the cost of an address search.

Laurie Netzow asked if the Partnership has ever approached WeEnergies to become involved with our organization. She added that the Michigamme Reservoir, which is the largest body of water in Iron County has a worsening milfoil problem. Sally commented that the invasive species problem may on the Michigamme may be attributed to the fact there only a small number of residence on the Reservoir and the visitors who use that body of water may not have as much a vested interest in the protection of the Michigamme Reservoir and River because they are not Riparian owners. Diane will ask Jen Ricker to post more signs out on the Michigamme.

Mike said that we had not approached WeEnergies, but Jen Ricker gets grants from WeEnergies, and they have also funded a permanent and designated boat washer on the Reservoir.

Laurie suggested that we invite WeEnergies to become member. Their membership could provide some clout for the Partnership as well as create an increased responsibility from WeEnergies to be checking water quality on the Reservoir more frequently. Mike agreed that this could be very valuable.

5.) Gather Data for Developing an Economic Impact Study - Judy Kufahl asked if there was any new information on the economic impact study that Mike Bukovitz had been working on. Mike replied that there was nothing new at this time, and that as previously stated, the data that exists is either outdated, or from Wisconsin, which would not pertain to Iron County MI.

Diane Kut stated that she has been trying to connect with township assessors to see if they could provided similar information that Crystal Falls has made available pertaining to lake economies. She was able to get information from Iron River that was specific to Silver Lake. She also reached out to Mastodon Township and spoke to their assessor, but the assessor informed Diane that she could not provide the requested information. Diane then spoke to Frank Siewiorek of Mastodon Township and he is going to look into that matter and get back to Diane. Diane also sent copies of the Crystal Falls report to Mastodon and Bates Townships. She has not heard back from Bates Township.

The board agreed that we want to get this study done, and that it is in good hands with Mike B. and Vickie. However, it is a daunting and difficult project to get done. In the end, we may have to commit to have a University compile this information.

Laurie said that she has a friend who is a retiring teacher form Michigan Tech and she will contact him about lakes and streams economies. Mike also gave Laurie a contact person named Sigrid Resch, also from Michigan Tech who has in the past been very interested in what we are doing with invasive species in Iron County. She may be a good resource or could put us in contact that someone who may be able to help us

with the economic impact study. Mike will get the contact information for Sigrid and pass it on to Laurie.

NEW BUSINESS

Jo Laitmore and Erik Elgin Programs 2023: Jo and Erik will be available to dedicate an entire week to Iron County to provide training and educational programs. Their programs are very informative and interesting as well as a lot of fun. It is however, a big commitment to host them for a full week, and it may require more than one volunteer as their programs often start early in the morning and go into the evening. Mike asked the board how we can best utilize their time while here in Iron County this summer.

Diane suggested having them attend annual lake association meetings that are held during their time here. Joy DeNicola commented that the idea is great, but it would eliminate other lakes which are required to have their annual meetings at different times throughout the year, and are often unable to be changed due to association bylaws. Joy asked if a gathering of all lakes rather than a limited number of lakes would reach more people. Diane stated that a gathering would only attract interested people and her goal is to reach those who are less interested and would not likely attend a gathering, but would more likely attend their lake association meetings. Diane will try to determine which lakes are holding annual association meetings between the dates of July 23 - August 11, 2022 when Jo and Erik will be in Iron County. Diane also added that Jen Ricker may be interested to present at lake association annuals meeting as she is also a wealth of information.

Mike raised the question if we should try to get and Jo and Erik up here earlier in the summer or spring so that we could do a program with the schools. We could also have them at the ICLSP annual meeting next summer, which could draw a lot of people. Laurie also proposed having them come out on the Michigamme Reservoir to see what is happening there. She added that they might also be able help us with ways in which to deal with a big corporation like WeEngeries.

West Iron Country High School Activities: Mike asked Callista, our student director, if there are any school activities coming up that we can tie into. She will check with teacher, Joel VanLanen who schedules activities. Debi suggested that ICLSP sponsor a high school event such as the fishing derby. We could provide them with information as well as hot chocolate and cookies. Callista liked the idea, and thinks the students would enjoy that as well. Callista will bring this idea Mr. VanLanen.

Other Projects and Events For 2023: The board reviewed events from previous years and discussed what events we might want to repeat. Recommendations included the painting class, Paul Skawinski's plant identification tours, John Bates' bird

walk, and Tom Madden's Steger Lake tour, which could also tie into the annual meeting.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the ICLSP will be on January 26, 2023, at the West Iron County High School, Library.

Respectfully, submitted by Joy DeNicola, Secretary.