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## **MFA Annual Membership Meeting Minutes - 2024**

**Meeting Date:** June 1, 2024  
**Time:** 9:00 AM  
**Location:** Wascott Town Hall Wascott, WI

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**Call to Order:** Harlan Johnson, President. The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM

**Welcome:** Harlan Johnson

**Introduction of Board Members:** Adrienne Banaszynski (Treasurer), Harlan Johnson (President), Dave Vogt, Paul Gundersen, Marcia Vogt. (Pre-planned absence: Becky White - Vice President, Brian White - Secretary.)

**Introduction of Lake Management Committee:** Steve Johnson, Dan Maxwell

**Introduction of Lake Management Consultant:** Dave Blumer (LEAPS)

**Quorum:** Per the registration table, an attendance quorum was met to conduct meeting

**Review of meeting agenda:** Motion to approve agenda as printed, seconded. Motion passed.

### **STANDING REPORTS**

- a. Treasurer's Report - Adrienne Banaszynski
  - See attached financial report
  
- b. Membership Report – Adrienne Banaszynski
  - Current paid membership is 141
  - Discussion of membership inclusion of Cranberry Lake owners. Option for Cranberry Lake owners to join the MFA, kept in the new MFA bylaws. Hiway "T" is the dividing line between Cranberry Lake Association and the MFA. Cranberry Lake's association has become more organized in recent years so their members naturally gravitate to that association. MFA members are not eligible to join the Cranberry Lake Association.
  - Approximately 330 Flowage lake property owners are eligible to join the MFA

- c. Lake Management Committee – Steve Johnson, Dave Blumer, Dan Maxwell
- A great deal of DNR activity on the Flowage in 2023, results are now available
    - Requirement met for the association to submit an updated Aquatic Plan Management Plan (for 2024 – 2028) in order to apply for DNR grants. Very comprehensive plan generated by Dave Blumer (LEAPS)
    - Point Intercept survey was completed (lake weed sampling from many, predetermined waypoints on the lake). An annual task.
    - Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) update. The invasive weed covered 115 acres in 2022 but increased to 150 acres in 2023. Monitoring the spread closely. Need the association’s new APM plan to be approved by the DNR to apply for grants and utilize control options of AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) going forward.
  - Rice Harvest. Reports of bumper-crop harvest in the fall of 2023.
  - Boat launch fee (voluntary) continues to be collected at the County Campground boat launch. Lower dollar amount collected in 2023 than previous years.
  - Federally funded DNR project is in process on the Flowage to determine the impact of geese and swans on the wild rice plants. Noticeable, orange fenced-in areas in very northeast bays. Will be present throughout the summer.
  - Dan Maxwell explained the in-process grant reimbursement effort from 2023.
  - Dan Maxwell and Paul Gundersen explained various boating safety issues on the lake and the desire for a slow wake zone in the narrows. But the official shore-to-shore distance is slightly wider than the slow wake criteria. Therefore, unfortunately the MFA can neither consider the narrows to be slow-wake zone nor control the speeding boats & PWC.

**GUEST SPEAKER** Craig Roberts, DNR Fisheries Biologist, DNR office, Spooner, WI

Brief summary below. See complete report and presentation slides provided by Craig – available to view or download from the MFA website.

- Craig confirmed that the DNR did spend a lot of time and labor on the Minong Flowage in 2023.
- DNR performed extensive fish population studies in 2023, the same as in 2016 after each of the lake level draw downs.
- The Flowage is fortunate to have a natural occurring Walleye spawning area in the shallows upstream in the Totagatic River. Very beneficial - therefore DNR does not stock the flowage.
- The DNR performed its first ever Creel Survey on the Minong Flowage from May to October
  - DNR clerk was on the lake or at boat landings at least 4 days per week
  - Interviewed fishermen about their catch, recorded all data, was not a check for licensing
- In May 2023, the DNR performed another fish sampling/study specifically for Northern Pike, and tracked population of other species as well.
  - Northern Pike. 18 to 22” length average for the Flowage and in most lakes in NW Wisconsin. The Flowage has a healthy, average population of Northerns.
  - Walleye. The Minong Flowage has an excellent population of walleye. Average size is similar to other nearby lakes (which are stocked). During fish population netting & shocking, data showed over 200 young walleye per mile of shoreline. This is the highest count of walleye in any lake in northwest Wisconsin! Although many are not big enough to be “keepers” yet... they are growing and it’s great to have a large population of this popular fish. One theory is that lake level draw downs may have helped improve the walleye population.

- Bass. Big increase in population after the latest lake level drawdown. Average length is 11 to 12" for Smallmouth. Lots of smallies! Large-Mouth, average size compared to other nearby lakes, and the population is much lower than small-mouth but remains about the same as previous studies at 5.8 fish per mile.
- Bluegill. The Flowage has a fantastic bluegill population. Approximately 80 fish per shoreline mile with the average length of 7".
- Muskies. A small population of muskies were located in the Flowage. Although few and far between - one fisherman's catch noted during the study, was 30" long.
- Carp. Very few common carp were found (thankfully)
- Crappies. Black crappies are present, but the specific dates of the fish sampling/study was not the right timing for this species – so population data was inconclusive.
- Craig explained more details about the wild rice –vs- geese project (previously mentioned by Steve Johnson) to show the impact of geese and swans eating the native wild rice. Amy Shipley, from the DNR, is running this particular study.
- Overall, Craig's presentation was very well received by the audience. Many great questions and interaction with the audience was noted.

#### **CBCW** - Paul Gundersen

- The CBCW (Clean Boats Clean Waters) activity continued in 2023 on the Flowage, was again funded by an annual DNR grant. Overall objective is to control the spread of AIS by inspecting and cleaning boats at the boat launches (especially transient boaters going from lake to lake).
- 2023 Inspection Data
  - At the county campground boat launch: 2777 inspections were performed
  - At the DNR landing: 900 inspections were performed
  - Smith Bridge and Pogo's boat launches – no inspectors are assigned to these two
  - Inspectors were on-site 8 hours per day during weekends and holidays only
  - The Coordinator and Inspectors are paid for their time, funded by the grant
- The MFA continues to work with the Washburn DNR to set up a decontamination station at the DNR landing. Already have the aluminum sign and posts but need to get a land use agreement from the WI DNR before progressing. The MFA wanted to have this set up early in the season, but probably won't be until July. Will be the standard setup like decon. stations at other nearby lakes: a designated area, signage, garden sprayer with very mild bleach solution, brushes, hooks. NOTE: it is a Wisconsin state law that when a decontamination station is available to use at a boat landing, every boater (launching or pulling out) must clean their boats to avoid spread of AIS.
- The MFA and the CBCW program recognizes and thanks Ron and Jeannie Brown for water quality testing again in 2023. They have diligently performed this test for many years and it's very much appreciated.

### Other Lake Quality Topics

- Wake boats – damage caused to lake bottom & structure. Still a tough topic being addressed, now reaching a state level. Very detrimental on a shallow lake. Unfortunately the MFA has no policing control over the use of wake boats. Initial, draft wake boat limitations are being circulated including no use of wake boats on lakes that have an average depth of 15 feet or less - or the surface area is less than 1500 acres. (The Flowage qualifies for the shallow water depth restriction.) Information from Dan Maxwell's attendance at the NW Wisconsin Lakes Conf. It was mentioned again that the MFA is not trying to ruin the fun and excitement of a wake boat. However this boating activity needs to be done on a deep, large lake.
- The Flowage is continually monitored for appearance of any zebra mussels (an AIS) using two acrylic plate "traps" that attract them. One is hung from a dock on the southwest shore (narrows) of the lake and the second is hung from a dock in North Basin (east shore of Eagle Point). This is a program funded and tracked by Douglas County DNR lead by AIS Specialist Zach Stewart. Periodic checks and reporting in 2023 showed zero zebra mussels were attached to the plates in the Flowage – so that is very good news. Unfortunately zebra mussels are found in lakes as close as Big McKenzie.

### Summer Activities - Dave Vogt

- July 4<sup>th</sup> Wascott parade, MFA members again rode the old fire truck and threw candy to the kids along the short parade route
- Ice Cream Boat – On the maiden voyage in the summer of 2023, a pontoon boat with MFA banners, cruised the shorelines of the Flowage on several holiday weekends and was instantly popular handing out hundreds of free frozen treats to kids young and old. May be an annual summer tradition!
- Invitation: July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Summer Social Hour & Membership Drive at Marsh's View Point. 2:00 to 5:00PM. Members, guests of members, and prospective members are all encouraged to attend for this fun, very casual gathering. Drawings for prizes too. Watch for the flyer.

### Minong Town Lakes Committee (MTLC) - Harlan & Paul

- Last year's reboot of this area lakes over-site committee of eight lakes (within the town of Minong) is already showing to be beneficial by sharing information, events, and various directives from the Minong Town Board.
- The expertise' of the MTLC members has lead to the committee being asked to guide other nearby lake associations with organizational planning and simply being a conduit to pass along helpful information.
- Harlan Johnson (Vice-Chair) and Paul Gundersen are the MFA reps on this committee
- Note: the MTLC is a long-standing, sanctioned committee of the Town of Minong with two representatives from each lake.
- Monetary Donations. It has been noted that other nearby lake associations in the MTLC rely on member donations as well as annual dues to stretch their spending budgets. The MFA will need to consider asking for this in the future. The MFA is a non-profit 501c3, so monetary donations are tax deductible. And a reminder was mentioned that dollars, from grants, can only be used for their respective projects – not operating expenses.

## Updated MFA Bylaws

- Harlan Johnson provided a brief overview of the overall work involved to update the bylaws.
  - The bylaws committee spent about 18 months to re-write and get initial approvals for our new, comprehensive bylaws document. The updated document addresses our changing business environment, (such as remote-access meetings), includes plans to handle many association scenarios (good and bad), defines Board member roles & terms, and allows for easy reading with consistent document formatting and terminology. It is these member-approved guidelines which the Board of Directors must adhere to.
  - Draft versions were sent to members in 2023 (as an update of progress)
  - During review of the “almost final” version by the DNR, it was found that our new bylaws document was out of compliance with several Wisconsin state statutes and thus the DNR would not approve of the new document. Editing and rewriting of the specific sections of the document was successful – as the DNR eventually did approve our final version.
  - The committee requested a legal review of the new bylaws document by two attorneys (pro bono) for concise language, avoiding loopholes, defining terms, and shortening the document.
  - Arrived at a final version of the document in spring of 2024, was emailed to MFA members for review prior to the annual meeting.
- A motion was made to approve the latest version of the bylaws. Motion was seconded. More discussion was held. Membership vote: unanimously approved by using voting paddles.

## Election of Board of Directors

Two existing board members are not pursuing another term. Becky White and Brian White. The Board and Association thanks them for their excellent work and dedication over the past two years.

Fortunately we had two new, volunteer nominees who were in attendance at this annual meeting.

- 1) Jim Sakara. Cabin on Eagle Point Road. Jim is interested in learning more about the operations of the Board and activities of the lake – then wants to participate more with specific Board member responsibilities. He was a guest at the April Board meeting in order to get a feel for the topics, responsibilities and objectives.
- 2) Zoe Wosnoski. Has enjoyed the Flowage for many years (family cabin first), located in the southern part of the lake down toward the dam. Very active and familiar with non-profit Boards.
- 3) Andrienne Banasynski has chosen to remain on the Board as Treasurer for her 3<sup>rd</sup> and final 2-year term.

Both new candidates stood up to introduce themselves.

Additional nominations from the floor were solicited. No additional candidates came forward.

A motion was made to approve the slate of candidates by voice affirmation. Motion was seconded.

Motion carried unanimously. New Board of Directors in place.

## MISC TOPICS

- 1) Broadband internet. Old business from 2023 agenda but still open issue. Still pressing internet providers for more action or at least plans to provide broadband (fiber optics) internet signal for certain areas around the Flowage. Four options are currently available:
  1. Standard DSL from BrightSpeed 6 MPS \$60/mo No solid plan for fiber, possibly 2027.
  2. East Central Electric, fiber optics expansion, starting in central Minnesota. Wascott & Minong are the furthest away points east on their coverage map. So unfortunately highspeed broadband may not be available to this area until the end of 2027. No monthly rates have been made available for our area.
  3. Hughes Net. Free installation. Satellite dish on roof or tall pole. Avg 50 MPS, \$60/month

4. StarLink. Excellent, fast internet signal - works really well. More expensive. \$600 for hardware. Installation (on roof or tall pole) approx \$500. Monthly fee \$120. Very fast MPS.
  - Rates and options of the four carriers, listed above, are average prices for various MPS plans. These change frequently and are listed to simply show examples of provider options.
  - Per Dan, fiber optics internet is available in many areas around our lake (along County Road I and other main roads), but still an area of unavailability around the NW bays of the Flowage.
- 2) MFA Visibility at Regional Seminars - Dan Maxwell
  - a. Dan presented the MFA story at the NW Wisconsin Lakes Conference in Spooner. Our association has faced many obstacles (dam replacement, EWM spread and control efforts, flooding from Colton Dam burst, etc) but with solid, common-sense leadership, pulled through with the best solutions. Our “story” has been told at various forums to potentially help other lake associations – and is well-known at the DNR.
  - b. Dan attended a wake board seminar the Spooner conference as well. The future of this sport may preclude lakes with avg. depth less than 15 feet and less than 1500 acres. The Flowage shallow depth definitely qualifies it to be wake board prohibited.
  - c. Dan continues to promote the FishSticks program re: building fish habitat structure. See Dan for details if you are interested.
  - d. Volunteer Hours, remember to easily enter on the MFA website. Dan will use the meeting roster to submit hours for everyone attending today’s meeting. In order for the MFA to be eligible for various grants, there has to be a showing of volunteer hours (with a rate/hour attached) to prove the desire for the requested project and thus for grant funding.
- 3) Minong Flowage logo hats & tee shirts, etc. The Board is checking into swag vendors, will convey updates on this topic in the near future.
- 4) Question from member: How do we educate guests at Air B&Bs on our lake, about the guidelines and dangers of boating on the flowage? Harlan and Paul answered this question: The Board has already discussed this topic and plans to generate a printed brochure for guests. Would include a welcome statement, a lake map (showing hazards), and clearly worded guidelines (rules) for safety & courtesy. The MFA will provide copies to rental property owners and encourage them to give to guests. If possible, may make available at each boat launch too.
- 5) Question from member: How can the optimum lake level be maintained, especially in Serenity Bay? Dan Maxwell answered: By law, the flowage can vary approx 6” from its Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) but rarely varies more than an inch or two, usually after heavy rains. If the lake level is too low, it is possible that certain shallow shoreline properties will have problems to launch a boat off its boat lift. Washburn Highway Dept. maintains the dam, dam gates, and thus the lake water level. Anyone can report unusually low lake levels to the Highway Dept. in the future.

**Motion to adjourn** was made and seconded. Motion passed.

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Transcribed from audio recording by Harlan Johnson (in lieu of Secretary - open position)

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Post meeting notes:

- 1) Free BBQ lunch was served to attendees after adjournment
- 2) Approximately 80 attendees at this meeting