



MINONG FLOWAGE ASSOCIATION

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## **MFA Annual Membership Meeting Minutes - 2025**

**Date:** June 7, 2025

**Time:** 9:30 am

**Location:** Wascott Town Hall

**Call To Order and Welcome-** Harlan Johnson, President

- The meeting was called to order at 9:35AM

**Attendance Count** – Establish and Confirm Quorum. 83 Attendees representing 60 memberships; Quorum established.

**Introduction of Board Members** – Harlan

Harlan Johnson (President), Becky White (Interim Vice President), Adrienne Banaszynski (Treasurer) Jim Sakara (Secretary) Directors: Dave Vogt, Paul Gundersen, Marcia Vogt, and Zoe Wisnoski

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

**Review of Meeting Agenda:** Motion to Approve as printed, seconded. Motion passed.

### **Standing Reports**

a. Treasurer's Report

- See Attached financial report.

b. Membership Report – Becky White

- Current Paid Membership Total is 125. Last year was 141 but Becky stated our membership rises annually soon after June 1<sup>st</sup>. There are approximately 330 Flowage lake property owners who are eligible to join the MFA.

c. Lakes Management Committee Report – Steve Johnson

- Invasive Species including Eurasian Milfoil (EWM) remain our focus.
- We are seeing record levels of EWM this year.
- We did apply for grants to remediate EWM but were rejected because we included a request including herbicides; all such requests were rejected by the DNR. Steve observed from past efforts that herbicide remediation

has heretofore been the most effective method of EWM control on the Flowage.

- d. Minong Town Lakes Committee (MTLC) - Harlan Johnson, Paul Gundersen
  - Harlan reported increasing attendance, credibility and objectives of the MTLC. This oversight committee includes two, voting representatives from each of the eight local lakes. The committee works to help the Town of Minong protect and manage lake resources and actively administer "Clean Boats Clean Waters." The summertime focus is staffing the respective lake boat landings with CBCW invasive species boat inspectors.

## **Recurring Business Topics**

### **Lake Quality and Safety on the Minong Flowage**

#### **Clean Boats Clean Waters – Harlan Johnson, Paul Gundersen**

- CBCW is run by the DNR, but the MTLC and the MFA bring on, and train, the inspectors (considered independent consultants.)
- Patrick Peterson now supervises the inspection effort for the lakes with approximately twelve inspectors. Many Inspectors returned from last year, so our inspectors are seasoned and do their job quite well. So much so that one Inspector noticed zebra mussels within the frame of a boat trailer at the campground landing. Were carefully cleaned out but we dodged a bullet since this invasive species is as close as Big McKenzie Lake.
- The MFA continues to bring on-board, schedule, and pay for the inspector for the DNR owned boat landing on the east shore along Flowage Rd.
- Grant funding for all other inspectors is applied for by the MTLC but submitted to the DNR by the Minong Town Board. The actual money from the grant isn't received from the DNR until the end of the season, so the MTLC has always requested a loan from the Town of Minong in the springtime in order to have funds to run the inspector program throughout the summer. Then the Town gets reimbursed when the grant amount is received.
- The MFA grant funds for the inspector at the DNR landing was denied this year (very unusual circumstances) so the MFA is paying the hourly wage for the AIS boat inspector.
- Douglas County is continually active with CBCW and Zach Stewart (AIS Director) is in contact with Harlan regarding specific tasks – such as the two zebra mussel traps set in the Flowage each summer.
- Lisa Burns is the Washburn County CBCW coordinator, and is a great resource for our Board members.
- In 2024 Inspectors noted 2,700 boats launched at the campground and 800 at the DNR landing – this was only weekends and holidays. Preliminary data for 2025 already has shown an increase in boat traffic.
- The procurement of a Decontamination Station (brushes, sprayer, sign) to be set up at the DNR landing continues in limbo. Paul Gundersen worked with the DNR over the past 2 summers but the effort is caught up in a puzzling scenario. At the Flowage DNR landing, the DNR approved the purchase and set up of the Decon. Station. But in the fine print of the

DNR guidelines, the DNR prohibits the use of any chemical (including a 2% bleach concentration) at any boat landing. So in 2026 our CBCW work may include the confirming of a Decontamination Station but possibly not include a sprayer with bleach. TBD.

- The MFA has created a safety brochure with information visiting boaters should know. Will be for distribution to VRBO owners and renters as well. Includes a lake map highlighting Points of Interest and areas requiring caution on the Flowage. The brochure is also intended to provide common courtesy tips while on the lake.

#### Secchi water clarity

- Thanks to Ron and Jeanie Brown who keep us up to date with our Secchi reporting. Our clarity is between 2 ½ to 3 ft. Serenity Bay can be visible up to 7 ft. The Brown's have been performing this test for many years and it is very much appreciated by the MFA.

#### Additional hazard and No Wake Buoys – Dan Maxwell

- Four new buoys have been placed around the sand bar (sunken island) just SW of the channel to Pogo's.
- The DNR prescribes the necessary distances allowed for placement of a buoy, requiring minimum distances between shorelines, so while a "No Wake" buoy may be needed in a channel, a determination of the channel width (from buoy to end of shoreline docks) must be determined. The MFA Spring 2025 Newsletter addresses this in the "No Wake Zone" confusion by Dan Maxwell.
- Dan indicated we will be placing a No Wake Buoy near Kings Court (east shore of main lake). Shallow area. Lake home owner has been anchoring a buoy there for safety reasons. The MFA will add this one to the approved list.

## New Business

#### Budgetary Shortfall – Steve Johnson, Becky White

- DNR Grants for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) management were denied. Grant funding is extremely competitive, and our low score was a result of using approved lake-weed herbicides, which we have been permitted to use (successfully) during the past ten years.
- If we can regain the use of improved, approved herbicides, it is much more effective against invasive weed growth. Cost for herbicide application only on the worst, thickest weedbeds is around \$45,000.
- A lake level drawdown (winter months, freezing out root of shoreline weeds) has limited results. The cost is around \$40,000.
- 2025 was the first time in 15 years that the MFA has been denied all grant funding for AIS control.
- A separate grant for an AIS boat inspector at the DNR landing (which the MFA always has managed) was also denied. It is noted that there is a critical need for a boat inspector at that landing, so the MFA is paying the hour wage of that inspector for 2025.

- Membership Dues were increased to \$40 (previously approved by membership). The income from dues basically covers only MFA administrative costs. (Insurance, website domain, hall rental, etc.)
- The Board of Directors is ramping up our Donation Campaign in mid 2025 seeking to earmark donations for AIS remediation and lake management.
- Our Spring 2025 Newsletter referenced the names of two EWM remediation companies whose SCUBA Divers will hand remove EWM for any property owner. This method was use by the MFA many years ago, was expensive, limited results.
- In light of denied funding for our AIS efforts – a first for the MFA - future AIS efforts will likely need to be privately funded. We are asking for donations of \$500 to \$2,000 to offset the costs for Lake Management activities such as CBCW personnel at the DNR boat launch (Previously approved by the Board in order to start the inspector last May.), future costs for drawdowns and chemical applications to help control AIS and other AIS expenses.
- In response to member inquiries about new member plaques similar to those of the CLFA members, the board has looked into this and presented a prototype of a newly designed “Member” plaque that is larger in size and weatherproof.
- In appreciation of financial donations, slightly different “Sponsor” plaque would be given to members or any others that have donated \$500 or more. A reminder that we are tax status 501c3 and your donation to the MFA is tax deductible.
- Becoming a “Lake District” may need to be discussed, however this requires more serious, regulatory capabilities.
- A motion to allow the MFA Lakes Committee to consider a lake level drawdown within the next three years was presented, a motion made, seconded, voted upon my membership. Motion passed. This is simply approval for the MFA Board to consider a drawdown as an option for week control. Permitting still required.

## **Wake Enhancement Ordinance Update**

Harlan explained that wake enhancement restriction ordinance issue started many years ago and has made its way to NW Wisconsin in the past couple years. The Minong Town Lakes Committee was first notified of this issue which in turn, communicated the topic to the 8 lakes the committee supports (including the Minong Flowage). Lake management occurs at the municipal town level in Wisconsin, unlike all other States. Therefore the MTLC, the MFA, and other lake nearby lake associations have to petitioning both the Minong Town Board and the Wascott Town Board to first listen to the data, learn about the issue, hold public hearings, and eventually make a decision to enact a wakeboat restriction ordinance – or not. The Town Boards make this decision.

The Town of Wascott Board asked the MFA to survey our members before voting on this issue. The Minong Town Board tabled discussion, preferring to wait for the State of Wisconsin to act. Since 15,000 lakes in Wisconsin are unique, local lakes do have the authority to enact Ordinances.

Lake bottom scarring is the biggest concern for the Flowage as the DNR states that our average depth is 9 ft. Wake Boats are getting larger and a 300 hp motor is not unusual. The stern has

large ballast tanks (filled with lake water) which tips the stern down producing strong prop wash downwards 20 to 25 feet, enhancing the wake but destroying all plant life on the lake bottom.. The deep wake creates waves that take upwards of 300 feet to dissipate which can lead to shoreline damage. Known fact is the ballast tanks can never be completely drained, which can spread AIS from lake to lake. A proposed ordinance limits wake boat usage in ballast mode in shallow lakes but isn't intended to ban the use of the boats when not using stern ballast weight.

A member of the Whitefish Lake Assn stated that they are sympathetic to the Flowage, yet their membership is 90% in favor of the Ordinance; but they understand the need to allow wake enhancement.

Wake surfing is a lot of fun, the sport started on the ocean and deep lakes. Wake surfing must be done where the water is big enough and deep enough. Both Bond and Whitefish are big and deep enough so may allow wakeboating. While there are only a handful of property owners with Wake Boats on the Flowage, we do not know precisely how many Wake Boats come in from elsewhere

It was also stated that around ten days after July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, our lake observed a serious algae bloom, and a possible cause with the wake boats on the Flowage during the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday weekend.

We must also consider that we are surrounded by local towns passing ordinances so we may become a destination lake for wakeboating. There is no DNR enforcement. Since this would be a town ordinance, the county would not enforce. Other towns feel it is better to have an ordinance rather to at least deter wakeboating and help to educate boaters.

Chuck Youngquist from the Wascott Town Board stated that wake boats are simply getting bigger which can swamp smaller craft. Many letters requesting a town ordinance have been sent to the Town Boards. While the wake boat industry says there is no damage, Chuck reminded us of the Tobacco industry held the same view for many years regarding smoking. It is likely the DNR will not enact any law on this and will not enforce. Chuck continues to investigate other ways to enforce. Chuck considers an ordinance to be a "no brainer," showing a stack of scientific studies with a 15:1 evidence that wakeboats do damage shallow and small lakes.

Because the Flowage is a "border lake" both the Town of Wascott and the Town of Minong must agree to enact a similar ordinance on the exact same day. Both towns have asked the MFA to take a stand. 53 Wisconsin towns have already approved Ordinances.

Membership Vote: At this annual meeting, the MFA attending membership voted 60 to 0 to support the enactment of a Wake Enhancement Ordinance. Whereas this is not the opinion or vote of all Minong Flowage owners, the ratio and strong opinions of meeting attendees point in the direction of a town ordinance. These results will be shared with the Wascott and Minong Town Boards very soon.

**Board of Directors: Nominations and Election - Harlan**  
Three Board Member positions are open.

Candidate 1)

Karen Turnquist spoke of her 14 years on the Flowage, her experience as past Treasurer of the MFA and her enthusiasm for growing our membership.

Candidate 2)

John Rozman. He was unable to attend but asked Kriss Eickholt as his proxy to read a prepared statement of his experience. He referenced his 25 years of cabin ownership on the Flowage with a strong desire to preserve our lake.

Candidate 3)

Steve Johnson has lived on the Flowage since 1986 and has been very involved with the MFA and currently our Lakes Management Committee. Steve's Board position enhances Steve's credibility when he acts on our behalf with the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and during DNR negotiations.

Candidate 4)

Jason Pass. Prior to the annual meeting Jason informed the board he would not be able to attend the meeting. He was given instructions on how to have a member represent him via proxy to read his statement of experience. Jason had asked two current board members to act as his proxy. He was advised this would be a conflict of interest and may be perceived as favoritism, so was declined. Jason did not have anyone else attend the meeting as his proxy. Several attending members stated they didn't feel they had a proper understanding of Jason's qualifications and experience.

Individual votes were cast using paper ballots. Three candidates were elected to fill the three Board vacancies: Karen Turnquist, Steve Johnson, John Rozman. Congratulations!

The Board would like to recognize retiring board member Paul Gundersen. We are very grateful for his years of service, especially with the CBCW program, help with buoys and his love the Flowage.

## **2024 MFA Fun Member Activities**

- The MFA will be represented July 4<sup>th</sup> at the Wascott Parade.
- Over the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday the MFA sponsored Ice Cream Boat will once again visit Flowage residents on their shores a docks offering free ice cream treats
- After-Boating Happy Hour and Membership Drive: Location TBD. Time 6:00 – 8:00. Date TBD
- August 9<sup>th</sup>, Pontoon Poker on the Flowage, sponsor by Marsh's Viewpoint (A percentage of the proceeds will be donated to the MFA)

- Adrienne will share a new website from which MFA logo merchandise including shirts and hats will be available for purchase.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded and unanimously voted: Yes. Harlan thanked all attendees. A BBQ lunch was served to attendees.

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Respectfully submitted by Jim Sakara MFA Secretary, 06-23-25. Board approved 9-9-25.