

DRAFT Minutes

Meeting of Commissioners of the Pipe & North Pipe Lakes Protection and Rehabilitation District. Saturday January 11, 2025 by ZOOM

Township Report

Dan Lowe was not present to give a township report. The landing issue was discussed. The Town has not yet stated how or when the problems with the concrete slabs will be addressed. Michael Linden suggested that we research the legal requirements for public access landings.

County Report

Jim McCarthy reported on conversation with our County representative Brad Olson regarding proposed changes to boathouse and bunkhouse rules by Polk County. The changes include reducing the size of boathouses from 26 feet to 24 feet and changing the roof design from flat to gabled. Bunkhouses would be limited to 500 square feet, down from 1000 square feet. The county Environmental Services Committee would be the first to hear these proposed changes, with no final decisions expected. Ron Vantine expressed concern about the impact of boathouses on lake water quality, while Mike Linden suggested that the changes might not be widely adopted due to the expense involved. Jim McCarthy said he was not certain of the county staff's motivation for these changes. Brad Olson is a strong opponent thinking that they over regulate lakeshore construction.

The proposed rule change will be on the agenda at the county Environmental Services Committee Meeting on Wednesday. Tom McIntee and Carla Gillespie expect to attend.

2024 Landing Monitor report

Jim McCarthy discussed the 2024 Landing Monitor report (attached) noting a slight decrease in hours compared to the previous year, which he attributed to staffing changes. He also mentioned that Doug Effertz has agreed to continue to monitor the lake in the coming year. Tom Klein has volunteered to coordinate the monitoring activity.

Matt Berg's 2024 invasive species report showed no evidence of Eurasian Milfoil or other invasive species. Matt renewed his offer to help identify any suspicious plants. A copy of the 2024 Invasive Species Report is attached.

2024 Lake Monitoring Report

Lake monitoring was done this year Mike Linden and Marc Schulte on Pipe Lake and Jim Ladner and Tracy Van Steenburgh on North Pipe. The mean Secchi reading (water clarity measure) on North Pipe in 2024 was 4.5 feet (compared to 4.66 feet in 2023; 7.9 feet in 2022 and 3.25 feet in 2021.)

This year Secchi readings in Pipe Lake ranged from 16.5 feet on May 13 to 9.0 ft on Sept 9. The mean was 11.33 feet. This compares to 10.785 feet in 2023 and 12 feet in 2022. In September, the readings dipped below 10 feet. Just eight years ago in 2015, the Secchi reading was 15.625 feet. When data collection started in 1990, a Secchi reading of 20+ feet was common. Secchi readings over 20 feet have not been seen on Pipe Lake since 2012. A copy of the report is attached.

Water Quality Committee

Tim Larson reported on a meeting with Polk County staff about their study of the Pipe Lakes watershed, which involved the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework.

The County staff highlighted the minimal agricultural land in these areas compared to other watersheds, but noted some sites with significant potential for impact. The staff emphasized the importance of practices on properties adjacent to the lakes and the potential for agricultural best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality. A specific practice, a sediment basin, was identified for the land west of County Rd G, which would not take

any farm land out of production. Tim Larson said that county and state funding may be available to implement agricultural BMPs'. If such funding can be identified and obtained, Tim suggested that the District consider picking up the 30% share of the total cost for this practice. The next steps involve sending a letter to landowners to solicit their interest in installing BMPs and arranging site visits with Polk County Land and Water staff.

In the meeting, Larry Bresina expressed concern about the lack of a lake management plan and a system to prioritize projects. Jim McCarthy noted that the DNR staff stated this summer that the District's current plan is sufficient for the remainder of the decade. Ron Vantine agreed with Larry's point about prioritization, suggesting that the committee's focus on shoreline protection and other issues indicates a clear sense of priorities.

Jim Ladner brought up the issue of inlets into North Pipe, which Tim confirmed was discussed in the County staff report, but no specific recommendations were made. Jim McCarthy suggested consulting Andy Dixon for a preliminary discussion about the Danniger land. Tim mentioned the report's discussion about the flow from the agricultural land through the southwest culvert.

There was discussion about funding potential for the BMP projects. Tim reported that the Polk County had approximately \$30,000 remaining from the previous year's grant money. Mike Linden highlighted the importance of having a management plan in place for grant applications, and suggested that the watershed study could be an appendix to the current management plan. Tim emphasized the need for a 10-year maintenance commitment for the BMP project, which would be overseen by the district.

Treasurer Report

Gene reported that the organization's total balances for the year were at \$105,000, with an extra \$900 earned in interest from the previous year. The budget for the year was on track, with a variance of only \$130. However, expenses were less than projected due to the rolling of funds through to FY 25. Gene also mentioned that the organization was in a good financial position to start reinvesting money into improvement plans for the lake.

Applications for DNR Grants

Jim Ladner discussed the applications that the District submitted to the DNR.

Several proposals were initially rejected by the DNR before being retooled to better align with the district's management plan goals. Five grant applications were ultimately submitted, and the district expects to hear back in February about which, if any, are approved.

There was an Aquatic Invasive Species application for an annual study over three years by Matt Berg, and a decontamination station. Possible funding for an I-LIDS remote video AIS monitoring and warning system had to be postponed due to lack of information from the vendor and poor Verizon connectivity at the landing.

Two education grants were applied for, one for North Pipe and one for Pipe Lake, which aimed to recruit additional people for water quality efforts and encourage property owners to remove suburban lawns.

Two surface water grants were also submitted - one for North Pipe to test for possible alum treatment in the littoral zones, and another for Pipe Lake to plan for rerouting flowage from an agricultural pond that currently flows through the southwest culvert.

Tim raised a question about potentially seeking additional grant funding for a holding pond project.

The group discussed the lake monitoring plan for 2025. Larry Bresina circulated a draft. Jim Ladner suggested finalizing it at an upcoming water quality committee meeting.

Healthy Lakes Program

Tom McIntee has been working on the current cycle of Healthy Lakes grants as well as the final report for 2022.

Other Business

An update was provided on fiber optic internet availability around the lake, which some residents have already connected to. There was discussion of the significant upfront connection charges.

The next meeting of District Commissioners will be held by ZOOM on Saturday April 12 at 9:00 am.

