

Lake Puckaway Protection & Rehabilitation District Annual Meeting

Saturday, September 2, 2023 | 10:00 A.M.

Marquette Village Hall

127 E. 4th St, Marquette, WI 53947

Board Members Present

- Willy Stalker, Chairman
- Jaimes Johnson, Treasurer
- John Harter, Secretary
- Dustin Esselman, Commissioner
- Greg Navulis, Commissioner
- Bob Schweder, Green Lake County Appointee
- Maddy Wergin, Town of Mecan Appointee

Absent

- N/A

Call to Order

- Meeting called to order by Willy at 10:02 am. Roll call taken – all Board members are present as reflected above.

Certification of Open Meeting Notice

- The annual meeting notice was published for two consecutive weeks in the Marquette County Tribune and the Markesan Reporter (8/24/23 & 8/31/23). Written notice was sent out to District Members via mail. The notice was further posted on LPPRD's website and Facebook page. The notice was also posted at the Apukawa Boat Launch, Good Old Days, Freitag's, and Marquette Village Hall.

Agenda Review

- No changes or additions to the agenda

Secretary's Report

- Bob makes motion to approve the minutes from the last annual meeting/special meeting. Seconded by Dustin. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

- **Current Account Balances through 8/31/23**
 - Money Market → \$59,058.30
 - Primary Checking → \$12,354.96
 - CD → \$21,620.28 (matures 9/27/23)
 - Hatchery Account → \$6,336.40
- **Total Account Balance → \$99,369.94**
- **Projected Remaining 2023 Revenue → \$5,000 (levy, donations)**
- **Projected Remaining Expenses**
 - \$17,000 → Cason (LMP, Fall application monitoring, meeting charges)

- \$1,700 → D. Christiansen (Tern Monitoring & Reporting)
- \$50,000 → Buffalo Lake Harvester (pending approval)
- \$1,000 → Harvester related expenses (insurance, transport, storage)
- \$800 → Annual and special meeting notice expenses
- \$500 → Hatchery, Raft, Buoy Fall expenses
- \$1,000 → Misc. Expenses (grant writing expenses)
- **Total Projected Remaining 2023 Expenses → \$72,000**
- **Projected 2023 Year End Balance → \$32,369.94 (without loan proceeds)**
- Dustin makes motion to approve the treasurer's report. Seconded by John. Motion passed.

Fish Hatchery Report

- Paul Gettelman gives the fish hatchery report.
- The fish hatchery collected 2,133,663 eggs with a total of 1,264,000 fry released. We had a 59% hatch rate. The average female length was 23.3 inches. 28 females and 96 males were used. All the walleyes used were fin clipped and identified with a Genetic ID number – this allows us to further research and study the fish. In total, since 2010, 22,923,032 eggs were collected and 14,481,700 fry have been released!

Tern Rafts

- This was the 14th consecutive year where endangered and threatened tern birds were monitored during their nesting periods. There are currently three tern rafts out in the lake. Raft #1 had 50 adults and 43 nests with 110 eggs. Raft #2 had 36 adults, 20 nests, and 41 eggs of Forster's Terns – which is a little bit different because Forster terns usually don't nest on the rafts, they usually nest on Pancake Island. Raft #3 had 30 adults, 13 nests, and 28 eggs – all Forster's Terns. Total Forster's Tern adults at all sites was 243 with 40 nests. A total of 180 nests with 408 eggs were counted on Pancake Island. Lake Puckaway had the largest number of nesting Forster's Terns in the state in 2023! Adults numbered 534 with 267 nests with estimates of 500-550 chicks fledged from Puckaway this season! A total of 80 chicks were banded with a total of 723 over the past 10 years.

Dredge Bank

- The dredge bank project started on April 24, 2023, and was completed on June 7, 2023. There were many previous meetings prior to the actual construction set up. The project has taken over 4 years to get going with cooperative efforts from Ducks Unlimited, Green Lake County Land Conservation office, Fish & Wildlife Service, DNR, and LPPRD. The dredge bank project was an extension from the end of the old dredge bank to the east. A total of 3,085 feet were completed this year, They used roughly 8,080 ton of rock – at the beginning of the project they were hauling approximately 80 tons of rock per barge load and by the end they were down to 50 tons per barge. The cost was a little less than projected – still waiting on a few items such as road repair and rock cost. The project was completed in less time than projected and used less rock than planned. Everything went well and no complaints from the public. Currently, the bullrush is coming in nicely.

AIS/Lake Management Discussion

- We are still waiting on the LMP to be finalized/complete.
- Surveys were shown regarding aquatic invasive species and proposed weed harvesting lanes/maps
 - Herbicide lanes → roughly 20 feet
 - Harvesting lanes → roughly 100 feet
- Pre-grant application deadline is September 15th.
- Herbicide costs for 200 acres would be roughly \$249,450 (roughly \$1,000/acre) – the more herbicide applied; the cost associated decreases. The 50 acres of ProcellaCOR this year was \$70,000.
- There are about 1,200 properties within the Lake District.

Review & Consider Approval of Borrowing from Board of Commissioners Public Lands/Review & Consider Approval of 2024 Proposed Budget & Tax Levy

- Jaimes goes over the *proposed* budget. The district generates money three different ways: the tax levy, donations, grants, and the state lending vehicle (Board of Commissioners Public Lands). The tax levy currently brings in roughly \$34,000/year. This year LPPRD received about \$6,000 in donations. There is a place holder of \$400,000 on the proposed budget. The DNR's approach is conservative regarding herbicide treatment – the 50 acres of ProcellaCOR this year was the largest amount done in Wisconsin to date.
- LPPRD is considered a lower end budget/tax district compared to other lakes in the state; however, we have not needed the budget to be more in the past. But, with the lakes current condition and changing nature the Lake District needs to generate more money to combat the current problems/challenges (AIS) for the foreseeable future. LPPRD cannot depend on \$34,000 to run the district anymore.
- The DNR likes ProcellaCOR because of its effectiveness and the selectivity of the product – meaning it does not kill native weeds.
- Commissioners of Public Lands Loan
 - They have been around for 150 years.
 - They help with funding for municipalities and other government entities.
 - They offer a 5.75% interest rate of 10- or 20-year term for loans starting at \$100,000. The collateral for that is the lake districts abilities to levy a tax.
 - The payment would be once a year around March.
 - LPPRD would not need to make the first payment until 2025.
 - At \$34,000, LPPRD could take out a \$100,000 loan and our current tax levy would be able to cover the payment. A \$200,000 loan would double the tax levy from 0.25 cents to about 0.52 cents – once again, LPPRD is one of the lowest levies compared to other districts. A \$400,000 loan would bring the tax levy from 0.25 cents to about 0.70 cents. We have looked at using the tax levy as the vehicle for funding in the past (i.e., from 0.25 to the max allowed of 2.50 – which would drastically increase taxes). The loan allows for less of an impact on property owners and we are aware that LPPRD is not the only one to tax – we know other towns are going under reassessments with tax increases.
 - The interest rate is fixed at 5.75% for either 10- or 20-year term.
 - There are no fees.
 - There are no pre-pay penalties – can pay it back early with no fees.

- Based on equalized value (the district has \$143 million of equalized value) → this amount changes – two years ago the equalized value was \$121 million
- Interest on the loan goes to local schools, local libraries, and stays local
- Most grants are reimbursement grants, so most projects will require upfront costs. Need the money on hand first.
- New weed harvester, conveyer, and transporter cost about \$720,000 with a 3-year lead time – it has been suggested that Lake Puckaway use two weed harvesters (south side and north side). Weed harvesters qualify for grants, but again, those are reimbursement grants and would be paid out after the harvester is purchased by LPPRD.
- District members suggest spraying ProcellaCOR around piers, which would be beneficial to the whole lake as the spread of the chemical seems to be working. LPPRD is going to check with Ted/DNR to see if this would be feasible.
- Greg states he is against borrowing and is for a special charge as opposed to tax levy and borrowing. Greg states he is going to resign from the LPPRD Board effective today (9/2/2023). Other district members voice their concerns with borrowing.
- Jaimes asks for guidance from our district members and take a vote. The two proposals would be borrowing authority up to \$200,000 or borrowing authority up to \$400,000. The levy piece would change based on the borrowing amount voted upon.
 - \$200,000 loan would require an annual payment of \$27,454.94.
 - \$400,000 loan would require an annual payment of \$51,930.09.
 - Current levy collects \$34,000.
 - Need to agree on a method to generate more revenue.
 - For example, at the current tax levy a home with an assessed value of \$200,000, pays about \$54 to the lake district in taxes. With an increased tax levy to roughly 0.75 would increase the taxes of that \$200,000 home to about \$150 to the lake district (all numbers being approximate and not actual).
- Phil Anastasi makes a motion to grant LPPRD the option to borrow up to \$200,000 from the Board of Commissioners Public Lands. Seconded by Sam Mehic. Discussion.
 - Kara Kramer makes a motion to amend Phil’s motion to grant LPPRD the option to borrow up to \$400,000 from the Board of Commissioners Public Lands. Seconded by Sally Fitzgerald. Discussion.
 - Jason Ferge makes a motion to amend Kara’s motion to have the loan proceeds go to AIS control. Seconded by Monica Gunderson. Discussion.
 - Willy calls for a vote in regard to LPPRD borrowing up to \$400,000 from the Board of Commissioners Public Lands for AIS control. Written vote.
 - TOTAL VOTES CAST → 105
 - TOTAL YES → 93
 - TOTAL NO → 12
 - # of Yes with No Name → 7
 - # of No with No Name → 4
 - FINAL VERIFIED YES → 86
 - FINAL VERIFIED NO → 8
 - Motion passed.

Weed Harvester

- Purchasing used weed harvester and conveyer from Buffalo Lake for \$50,000. A few weeks ago, LPPRD put a \$5,000 down payment to hold the harvester/conveyer till our annual meeting.
- Dustin makes a motion to purchase the Buffalo Lake weed harvester/conveyer. Seconded by John Kramer.
- Willy calls for a vote for purchasing the Buffalo Lake weed harvester/conveyer. Voice vote. One opposed. Motion passed.

Election of Commissioner

- Willy calls for nominations for one commissioner.
- Dustin nominates John Harter for the commissioner role. Seconded by Randy Schmidt.
- Paul Gettelman moves to close nominations. Seconded by Dustin.
- Willy calls for any other nominations three times.
- John Harter fills the commissioner role.

Public Comment

- District member asks about an audit. Jaimes states himself, Paul Gettelman, and Maddy Wergin made up the audit committee. Paul and Maddy were able to see all transaction amounts/accounts as well as a separate ledger that focused on high dollar transactions. Maddy and Paul were able to ask questions and other information.
- Dave Ferge makes a motion to destroy the voting ballots. Seconded by Donna Hartsing. Ray Thomson amends the above motion and makes a motion to table destroying the ballots until further information/research is known regarding the legality of destroying ballots. Seconded by Nancy Koll (spelling). Hand vote. Motion passed.

Commissioner's Elect Officers for 2023-2024

- Five-minute recess for the Board to vote for officers.
- All the officers will stay the same besides Maddy moving into the secretary role.
 - Willy Stalker → Chairman
 - Jaimes Johnson → Treasurer
 - Maddy Wergin → Secretary

Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.