

Pretty Lake Conservation Club

Minutes ~ October 6, 2020

6:30 pm. Meeting called to order by PLCC President, Denny Rorick
Followed by Pledge of Allegiance.
Prayer led by Sue Mertz.

Roll Call: Board members present: Denny Rorick, Ken Hensch, Andy Scheidler, Tom Tassler, Natalie McLaughlin, Dan Martin, Beth Pusti, Scott Alexander, Chris Alexander, Sue Mertz, Cary Fries.
Board members with excused absences: Nancy Wetli, Robert Burns, Ken Butler, Greg Wattier.

Guest speakers present: Rod Bernstedt, Jim Mertz, Butch Vaughn.

Minutes Approval: Sue Mertz made a motion to approve the Minutes from the September 8, 2020 Board meeting. Ken Hensch second the motion. All approved.
Minutes will be posted to the PLCC website and at the clubhouse bulletin board.

Treasurers Report: Ken Butler sent the September Banking Transaction report to Sue Mertz who passed copies out to the PLCC Board for review. Present bank balance is \$40,745.88 with \$1700.00 to pay in annual insurance coming due. There were two deposits which included proceeds from the golf scramble, and the walk for the lake events. Beth Pusti motioned to approve the treasurers report with a second from Natalie McLaughlin. Motion passed with all approving.

Rod Bergstedt, Weed Control: To explain our weed control program for the benefit of new board members as well as a review for all board members Rod gave a history of our weed control program. He provided the Board with a report titled "Pretty Lake Aquatic Weed Control Summary 2007-2020. In 2007, Jim Mertz was able to get a grant to do a report on the geological history of the lake and watershed. Many things were laid out in the report as well as recommendations for correcting past and future issues. As funds became more available to act on some of the recommendations PLCC began applying for LARE= (Lake and River Enhancement) grants through the DNR. The LARE Grant weed control program is limited to control of NON-NATIVE plants only. There are no LARE Grants available for Native plants. Last year we treated 10 acres including channels. Beginning in 2013 through 2020 the lake has had \$62,643.23 in enhanced treatments, of which PLCC paid \$14,907.66. In 2013 we began by treating 27.85 acres. In 2020 we treated 9.43 acres and 1.72 acres in channels. The annual LARE Grant application and permit has to be signed in mid-January. We usually receive the contract in March, after which we obtain three bids for lowest and best offer. Aquatic Weed Control has been awarded the weed control contract every year. First, they do a visual survey of the lake, followed by treatment in early spring. In the Fall they collect samples. Rod has our current LARE Grant application prepared which does not commit us to anything. Again, this LARE Grant application and permit is only for Invasive non- native plants.
Sue Mertz made a motion to budget \$2500.00 in our 2021 budget for weed control. PLCC portion of this weed control not to exceed \$2500.00 without further Board discussion. Scott Alexander second the motion. Motion passed by unanimous approval of PLCC Board present.

NATIVE PLANTS: There are always lake residents who ask what can be done about native weeds? Rod Bergstedt told the Board that recently there was a large weed mass in the area of the North shore which our DNR biologist Matt Horsley identified as chara. Chara usually stays on the bottom of the lake and dies out. For some reason this mass came to the surface with sago-pond weed under it. Rod also relayed information from Matt Horsley who told him Starry Stonewort is coming up on other area lakes. It has not been identified on Pretty lake but we need to watch for it, Matt said it is an aggressive invasive and he expects it to be a problem. Funding for treatment of this may become available through the Great Lakes Preservation program to treat invasive plants.

Rod told us the DNR is usually tight in granting permission to treat chara and sago-pond weeds. Again, there are no LARE grants available to the PLCC to treat native plants. Individual property owners who are concerned about native weeds in front of their properties can contact the DNR and apply for a permit to have the plants treated. If they are able to obtain the necessary DNR permit the treatment cost would be the responsibility of the property owner.

Tom Tassler made a Motion that the PLCC is willing to help with contact information and whatever plant identification information we can provide but no financial responsibility if the plants are identified as Native plants. Beth Pusti second the motion, which was then unanimously passed by the Board.

Thank You goes to Rod Bergstedt for your work for Pretty Lake every year in the grant application process and our go to expert for questions/answers.

Butch Vaughn, E-coli problem & resolution in Pretty Lake: Butch told us he can remember 20 years ago when Deal Ditch was being checked for E-coli, so it has been an issue for a long time.

In 2017 CARDNO was hired to make an environmental study of the lake with recommendations for enhancement and maintenance. This report stated that 95% of the e-coli in deal ditch was human. After many years of not getting the answers we need Butch Vaughn took on this issue two years ago. He is determined to resolve the problem and believes the team he has formed is also making this a priority. Butch put together a team of experts, including LaGrange Soil and Water, the County Surveyors, the County Commissioners, The Sewer & Water District and the LaGrange County Board of Health. In 2018-19 this group started studying the lake and surrounding properties. Property septic systems, and waterways along Deal Ditch as well as taking water samples monthly along the ditch in several locations in an effort to pinpoint possible sources. Testing 60 feet upstream from the lake in Deal Ditch has shown 70% human, 30% animal which fluctuates with environmental seasons, and temperature changes. In very warm summer weather, the e-coli numbers can double every 20 minutes. In the cold winter months, there is no issue. Accurate readings can only be collected April through October. To this date, no faulty septic systems have been found in tested drains. Dye testing still needs to be done at four homes. Butch reports that in dryer periods of the year along Deal Ditch there are isolated pockets of standing water that is stagnant, each had high e-coli levels. IDEM = (Indiana Department of Environmental Management) and the Army Corp of Engineers are making an effort to clean the ditch. Work began this summer on removing the pocket areas of water, cleaning the ditch of debris and years of overgrowth. The Covis-19 virus this year changed all scheduled testing, and has been draining the County budget to the point that right now the testing is discontinued until the virus is under control. Clean up along Deal Ditch continues and although it may not solve the problem, it will certainly have a positive effect on helping to stop the growth. Butch is confident this group understands and acknowledges the problem as an environmental health problem and will see it through.

We really appreciate the dedication Butch has shown in getting all the right people and groups together. Butch will continue to update us as new information comes available.

Jim Mertz- Outlet / Dam: As a result of the 2017 Cardno Report recommendations for lake enhancement. The PLCC applied for several grants for projects we chose as priority. Three of the project grants were approved with those projects being completed as of the spring of 2020. One of the recommended projects by Cardno was the outlet clean up at the dam. This project included dredging for increased waterflow, cleaning up the waterway by adding glacier stones on both sides of the outlet. Over the years a sandbar of silt has built up in front of the outlet and this needs to be graded. The cost estimate from Cardno for this project was \$21,700.00. The grant was denied. Jim Mertz recently called Doug Nusbaum the LARE Restoration Biologist for the DNR. Jim Mertz, Denny Rorick, and Doug Nusbaum met to discuss moving forward on this important project to the maintenance of the lake. Doug Nusbaum felt after reviewing the grant with Jim and Denny that they can significantly bring the cost of this project down. Doug thought we could save on design and permitting. Jim and Denny also think we can reduce the expense measurably. We can reapply for a LARE grant or other possible grants to help pay to get this project done. The DNR built our dam and monitor the working order of the dam. Our lake does not flood like other lakes do because we have the outlet and we do need to take care of it. The dam level has not changed. We have never increased depth or height of the lake. It is the same as when the DNR built the dam. Jim & Denny will get another bid and check for funding possibilities. A report will be given to the Board at a later time to make a decision on moving forward with this important lake maintenance project.

Fall clean-up of outlet: Every fall/winter a group get together and do general maintenance of the outlet. This includes clearing leaves and debris to get the water flowing through the dam. Monitored by the DNR we cannot open the dam until after December 1. Ken Hensch will chair this clean up event December 5 this year at 1:00 pm. We will need at least 6 people to rake and push the leaves through the open dam. With 6 or more people to help out it does not take long. Please bring boots and rakes. Any helping hands are welcome and appreciated.

Review of 2021 Events & Assignments: Denny Rorick passed out the list of 2021 calendar events as well as PLCC Board assignments.

Review of Zone Directors & Assignments. Should Zone Directors be asked to attend Board Meetings? Zone Director assignments are filled for 2021. There are two additional directors that are not on the PLCC Board. Zone directors are the eyes and ears of our lake community, if at any time they have something to add for their Zone, they are always welcome to attend Board meetings.

Membership Report: Scott and Chris Alexander are starting to get the hang of their new role as Membership chairpersons. Zone 2 & Zone 6 are the lowest in participation, however all Zone participation has increased over the last year. Zone 6 includes the trailer court, and Zone 2 is on the North shore.

Paid Memberships as of October 2, 2020 are as follows:

ZONE	total counted cottages	paid cottages	unpaid cottages	% cottages	
1	25	21	4		84.00%
2	27	14	13		51.85%
3	25	18	7		72.00%

4	23	21	2	91.30%
5	30	24	6	
80.00%				
6	31	18	13	58.06%
7	33	26	7	
78.79%				
8	33	29	4	
87.88%				

In total there were 189 paid memberships in 2020, with dues dollars totaling \$4,725.00.

Walk for the Lake: Sue Mertz reported this event hosted by the Craig Bobay family brought in \$1202.00 profit for the PLCC. She said the retro shirts were a big hit and some extra shirts have been ordered. She said the Bobay family are willing to repeat this event next year. We appreciate all of their work making this event happen for the good of our lake community.

Golf Outing Report: Sue Mertz reported everyone who participated had a good time at the golf outing. All but \$25.00 in prize money was donated back to the club. Profit for the club from this event was \$1444.00. Thank you to Ron Kantorak for organizing and hosting this event for the PLCC.

South Milford Lions Club Porkburger fundraiser: Sue Mertz also reported this fundraiser scheduled for Saturday, October 24 from 11 am-1 pm will be a free will donation to benefit the LaGrange Food Pantry. Andy Scheidler made a motion that the PLCC donate condiment packages for this event. Dan Martin, second the motion which passed unanimously.

Update on emails, newsletters, facebook, & Prettylake.org website: Andy Scheidler will continue to send out emails to residents when necessary on calendar updates or event changes. He will add a LINK to be able to see current newsletters when appropriate. The facebook account is run by Bill Morr and not under the control of the PLCC. We need to talk to Bill Morr about the facebook account and possibly including in with the rest of the media platforms under the PLCC.

Andy has created a google account for the Pretty Lake Conservation Club, prettylake1940@gmail.com. Any email sent between Board members should include this in the email list. Andy will be able to put the membership spreadsheet on the google site as well as the Minutes of the PLCC after they are approved. Everyone on the Board should be getting gmail accounts to be able to share and store information in one place. Andy will give us further updates on this as it progresses.

Update on North Shore: Denny Rorick gave each board member a handout which included explanations pertaining to the North shore problem areas. In part this is necessary to try to understand reasons behind membership and participation being lower on the North shore. There are two separate areas in which lake front land is restricted and the deeds to those properties are clear.

1.) Pretty Lake Resort: Cottages from 9120E 430S Cameron Hoyer to 9380E 430S Ruth Sprunger. The frontage of this subdivision is public land owned by the County as it was dedicated for public use. The general public is entitled to use this land and it is not owned by any of the owners of the lots in the Pretty Lake Resort Subdivision.

2.) Idlehour Addition: Cottages from 4495S 895E Tim Holcomb to 8990E 430S Helen Clark, and

Hartzells 1st Addition to Idlehour: which is 9000E 430S Lisa Prough to 9110E 430S Ken Butler. The frontage to the lake is an area called Columbia Park. The property is not owned by any of the landowners in these two additions but belongs to the heirs of Lee Hartzell with an easement and right of way for the use of the property owners and their guests. The public has no right to use this area and it was never dedicated to the County. The owners of the property in these two additions would need to agree unanimously in order to make changes to the use of this area. Columbia Park was restricted to use by all of these property owners as a private park for all their use as a park. If it is not used as a park it goes back to the heirs of the Hartzell's. The County has no direct control over this issue. The only people that can make a change are the property owners as a whole.

In 2018 the PLCC Board voted to notify the LaGrange County Commissioners that we oppose any alteration to the public ownership as originally dedicated of the North Shore lake front. However, this is not a PLCC problem and we will not take sides.

Round Table Discussion:

Sue Mertz: Ken Butler seems to be doing well and we wish him the very best.

Dan Martin: A few things Dan would like us to think about over the winter.

- 1.) He would like to propose setting aside money to provide PLCC family members some type of education scholarship toward Conservation.
- 2.) Have the woods on the PLCC property been evaluated by experts for forestry management? He would like to see it used as an educational tool maybe include the scouts and arborists in making trails and identifying trees and natural plants species.
- 3.) As part of weed control to think about offering non phosphorus fertilizers and at the very least make sure all residents know they are encouraged.

Cary Fries: Asked if anyone knows why the hickory trees seem to dying around the lake. He and Andy Scheidler both said they have hickories dying from the top down.

Natalie: We do have permission to clean up around the sign on 500S.

There is an autographed picture of Ray Nitschke who was a linebacker for the Green Bay packers for 15 years from 1958-1972 that was part of our rummage sale items. He was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1978 and led the Packers to 5 NFL championships and victories in 2 Super Bowls. The picture is autographed January 12,1979. We will look into its value further and possibly sell it with profits going to the conservation club.

Denny Rorick: We need to get together a committee to lead a maintenance program for the Rain garden. This was an important lake improvement that we will always have to maintain. Katie Bowman has been weeding it but needs help and we need to plan for this. Dan Martin said he will chair the committee and ask for volunteers for rain garden maintenance.

Denny Rorick: Jo Bergstedt wants to retire as our Greeting Committee Chairperson which welcomes new neighbors. He said he will talk to his wife and Vicki Linder but if anyone is interested please let him know.

Motion to Adjourn made by Sue Mertz, Second by Ken Hensch. All approved.