

Big Sandy Lake Association Meeting
Big Sandy Lodge - 10/13/2018

Called to Order at 8:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Bruce Johnson, John Sturner, Stu Mortrude, Jim Carlson, Ann Rorem, Christopher Krolak, Jeff Backowski, Russ Thompson, Jack Johnson, Janet Hill

Others Present: Bob Greifzu and Bill Reed (Liaisons), Ron Smith, Bill Pratt, Jon Cline, residents Mark and Margaret Helm

- A. **Review and Approve September Meeting Minutes:** John S. moved, Stu M. seconded

- B. **Review and Approve September Treasurer's Report:** Postponed to next meeting; treasurer absent.

Membership Report was given by Bruce Johnson: 5 new members. Total membership 591.

C. President's Report

- a. Barbi Martz will be asked to speak after the new year so she can give a full 12-month real estate report for 2018.
- b. Bruce will ask Corps of Engineers to report at the November board meeting. Lake level is currently higher than usual this time of year.

D. Old Business

- a. **Shirts and Logo**
Ben submitted a written report that he spoke with Phalen Reed, our design person, and she is working on a modified version of our present logo, with and without the Star Lake designation, to include a variation of the logo with and without a silhouette of the lake behind it. Logo variations that we can review should be available for the November Board meeting.
- b. **Update on Septic Systems Meeting:** Ann Rorem reported on the spring shoreline event planned for May 4, 2019. Golf course has been reserved. Vendors are being contacted. Free water tests may be offered, with help from Janet Smude. Sara Heger will be the presenter, on "Chemicals of Emerging Concern."

E. New Business

- a. **DNR Open House:** Anglers and other lake users are invited to provide input on experimental walleye regulations in the Big Sandy Lake system near McGregor. The Aitkin DNR fisheries staff will hold an open house on

Tuesday, Oct. 30, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the DNR area office at 1200 Minnesota Ave. S., Aitkin. The public is welcome to attend to ask questions and provide comments or observations regarding the Big Sandy walleye fishery. Those unable to attend are welcome to submit comments by email to aitkin.fisheries@state.mn.us. More information about the Aitkin area fisheries office and their work can be found at www.mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries/aitkin/index.html.

F. Director's Reports

- a. The November issue of the BSLA newsletter will be mailed in mid-November.
- b. Janet Hill discussed the latest updates on Enbridge's Line 3: The new pipeline route passes through the northernmost portion of the Sandy Lake Watershed. Enbridge will begin using this route for Line 3 and future pipeline replacements. Although a major spill at this specific location is unlikely, given the odds, these pipelines will slowly leak oil and dilbit toxins into our watershed as they age. Pipelines eventually develop pinhole leaks, which leak large quantities of oil undetected by-monitoring equipment. Janet Smude, Aitkin County Soil & Water, confirms that leaks at the new pipeline location will eventually end up in Big Sandy Lake. She adds that the soils in that area aren't as saturated as they are further south, which gives cleanup crews more time to clean up spills before reaching Big Sandy. However, Enbridge doesn't clean up leakage from pinhole leaks.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce has asked state utility regulators to vacate their decision to grant Enbridge a permit for a controversial oil pipeline across northern Minnesota. The Commerce Department, in a regulatory filing, claims that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's ruling is "affected by legal error and is unsupported by the evidence." It's uncommon for the PUC to reverse its decisions after receiving reconsideration petitions; often, these petitions serve as a precursor to challenging a PUC decision before the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Friends of the Headwaters, the Sierra Club, Honor the Earth, Youth Climate Intervenors, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe also filed petitions for reconsideration with the PUC.

Although the threat isn't as imminent to Big Sandy Lake as it was with the original "preferred route," a threat remains. The only way to protect our lake from oil and dilbit toxins is to have NO pipeline corridor within our watershed. In keeping with the BSLA mission to protect Big Sandy Lake, Hill proposed that the BSLA donate \$1,000 to the all-volunteer and effective group Friends of the Headwaters to help them with the legal costs they are incurring on our behalf. So moved by Jim Carlson, seconded by Russ Thompson. All voted in favor except for John Sturner; motion passed.

- c. Christopher Krolak reported on AIS: No veligers were found on AIS detectors in lake in summer 2018. Bay Lake by Garrison has zebra mussels and the Blandin paper mill reservoir in Grand Rapids, upriver from Big Sandy, now has them. Bob Griefzu add that docks and boat lifts are now the main transferers of zebra mussels.
- d. Stu Mortrude reported on area real estate sales: There are two new owners on Long Point Place. Jeff B will deliver a BSLA welcome packet to one, Janet H will deliver the other.

G. Guest/Other Speakers

- a. Jon Cline, Aitkin County sheriff's deputy, spoke about recent burglaries. In the four townships around Big Sandy, there were 64 events last year (burglaries and thefts). This year so far there have been only 29 events (16 thefts, about 11 burglaries), down over half of what we had last year. There were 13 burglaries last year in Shamrock Township, 5 so far this year. For Turner Township, 2 last year, none this year. So around Big Sandy, the numbers of burglaries and thefts (which are categorized as thefts that don't involve break-ins) are dropping. Neighborhood watches are working. These crimes are normally connected to drugs or kids out messing around.

18 deputies are currently deputized at the Aitkin sheriff's office, 10-11 of these are road deputies, and there is 1 full-time water officer, Dan Asmus.

To report suspicious, non-emergency behavior, get as much information as you can (times, locations, vehicle info, suspect description, suspicious behavior), call the sheriff's office at 218.927.7400. If there's something obviously going on, such as a theft in progress, call 911. If you have something stolen, it's important to report it to the sheriff's office at the office number above. In cases where items are recovered, you will have a better chance of getting your items back, and the reports also help the sheriff's office know where problem areas exist.

- b. Ron Smith reported that Savage Communications (SCI) has begun to hooking up customers to fiber cable (fast internet) along Bridge Road. Contact SCI to apply. The company is now working on Ponderosa Point as well.

Residents need to trim brush alongside the roads. There are lots of tipped trees from saturated ground. Landowners are responsible for removing downed trees on their land.

Cleanup Day was a success. Township is considering having just one cleanup per year, as costs of dumpsters keep rising year to year. The BSLA prefers that there be two cleanup days per year, to cut down on

roadside trash and to ensure that traffic on cleanup day doesn't overwhelm dumpster capacity. Each cleanup costs about \$5,000-\$6,000.

The McGregor fire department bill for Shamrock is just short of \$100,000 annually. The fire department's annual budget is \$200,000. Negotiations are underway to determine whether this is fair.

Boat trailers are being parked with wheels on blacktopped township roads. This is a hazard and they must be removed.

- c. Bill Pratt, county commissioner, reported on government building in Aitkin, which will be done by August of 2019, with more renovations continuing after that in the old county courthouse.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jim C and seconded by Stu M at 10:30.

H. Next Board meeting is on Saturday November 8, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. at the Lodge.