



Benzie Conservation District
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Benzie Watersheds Coalition Meeting Agenda
Thursday, May 24, 2018
Benzonia Township Hall, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Present : (22 Persons) Tad Peacock (Benzie Conservation District - BCD), John Ransom (BCD), Wil Swiecki (Platte Lake Improvement Association – PLIA), Jim Westbrook (Little Platte Lake Association LPLA), Jerry Rupley (LPLA), Bruce Gerhart (Crystal Lake and Watershed Association – CLWA), Mel Keranen (Long Lake Benzie Association), Mary Reed (Portage Lake Watershed Forever), Dave Long (Upper Herring Lake Association), Fred Oeflein (Lower Herring Lake Association - LHLA), Bill Henning (Upper Herring Lake Association), Jerry Heiman (PLIA), Tamara Lipsey (DEQ), Emily Cook (Invasive Species Network - ISN), Rebecca Koteskey (ISN), Jane Perrino (BCD), Stacy Daniels (Benzie County River Improvement Company), Jodi Monteith (BCD), Jim Ryan (LHLA), Dennis Wiand (Zero Gravity), Kathy Garmes (Ann Lake Property Owners Association - ALPOA), Kent Taylor (ALPOA), Lizzy Freed (Benzie MAEAP Tech)

Tad opened the meeting at 1:31 pm.

Topics:

1. Member updates (highlights)

Wil Swiecki (PLIA, Platte Lake) – PLIA has continued with biweekly sampling at 9 locations. Contact John Ransom (john@benziecd.org) to get on the Platte database distribution list. Found some phosphorus inputs on the North and Main branch of the Platte River. PLIA is looking to get involved with using surveying drones for lake and watershed issues. PLIA will be involved with Swimmers itch program to remove mergansers in 2018.

Jim Westbrook (LPLA, Little Platte Lake) – plan to treat 5 acres (800 acre lake) of Eurasian water milfoil in 2018. Hired Restorative Lake Science to assess the lake, Clark Aquatic Services will be doing the treatment work.

Mel Keranen (Long Lake Benzie) – Michigan DNR biologist Heather Hettinger will be conducting fisheries survey on Long Lake this year to assess five years of Northern Pike catch limits. Invasive Species Network will be conducting a plant survey this year (\$1280). They have continued water testing with the Benzie Conservation District and the GVSU Annis Lab (phosphorus) and overall things look good. They are planting smallmouth bass and hybrid sunfish again this year. Board meeting will be held 6/2.

Stacy Daniels (Benzie River Improvement Company) – Launched new website Crystalana.com. Gave a paper at the spring Michigan Lakes and Streams Convention titled “Value of a Lake Association”

Kent Taylor (ALPOA, Ann Lake) – ALPOA raised \$5k for a rapid reaction treatment fund. They selected PLM to do the treatments if/when needed. Almira township agreed to 50% cost share on lakes in Almira to conduct aquatic plant surveys.

Mary Reed (Portage Lake, Manistee) – Working to update their watershed management plan. Hoping to submit it by October 2018

Lizzy Freed (MAEAP tech) – Provided overview of the [Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program](#). Please contact her if there are any farmers in the area that may be interested in the MAEAP.

Bruce Gerhart (CLWA, Crystal Lake) – CLWA is also participating in the MI Swimmer's Itch program. Looking to train two volunteers to trap mergansers around the lake. Working with Zero gravity to complete aquatic plant survey in 2018. Not planning to control known EWM populations in 2018. Plan to do treatments next year.

Dennis Wiand (Zero Gravity) – Conducting shoreline surveys through the region (e.g. Glen Lake). Testing the use of drones to look for visual cues for swimmers itch. Working with CLWA to do aquatic plant survey in 2018.

Tamara Lipsey (MI DEQ) – DEQ is conducting status and trends sampling in the Herring, Betsie, and Platte watersheds in 2018 (passed out a list of sampling locations). Survey rotates on a 5 year cycle. Also, conducting targeted E coli sampling in Herring Creek and Cold Creek. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park is applying for funding for Non-point Source project.

Dave Long (Upper Herring Lake) – Found EWM in Upper Herring Lake in 2017 near the boat launch. Working with the BCD to survey and possibly treat EWM in 2018. Cutting back on nutrient sampling this summer but may continue e coli testing. Didn't see a large microcystis bloom in 2017 like in 2016 but will be sampling again in 2018.

Jim Ryan (Lower Herring Lake) – This will be the 8th year of phragmites treatments. Hired PLM to conduct EWM treatments and will be treating the whole lake in 2018. High water due to the outlet getting blocked has been a major issue. In the process of getting a DEQ/Army Corps of Engineers permit to keep outlet open. UHLA is filing to become a 501c3.

2. Old Business

- a) **Invasive species update (Emily Cook)** – ISN has a season crew again this year. Currently working on a lot of Garlic Mustard but will be moving on to Knotweed, baby's breath, and phragmites. Planning on biocontrol treatments for Purple Loosestrife in Honor in 2018. Rebecca has been working with townships on local ordinances regarding invasive species.
- b) **Herring Lakes WS Management Plan update** - Greg Goudy is working on final revisions as we speak. Then the plan goes to EPA for approval.
- c) **MLSA convention at Crystal Mt** – well attended this year particularly by local watershed reps. Focus was on developing lake associations.

3. New Business/Projects

- a) **Membership tracking software? (Fred O)** – How do lake associations track memberships, collect dues, websites, emails etc.? *you can find Coalition members website by clicking on the partners images on the BWSC website - <https://www.benziecd.org/benzie-watersheds-coalition.html>
Kathy, ALPOA – excel spreadsheets, mailmerge for emails, mostly everything is on their website (newsletters, etc.)
Dave Long, UHLA – Facebook page is their web presence
Jerry Heiman, PLIA – 250 members. They use wildapricot for website membership dues, admin. Cost about \$300-400 annually(?)
Mel, Long Lake BC – send out hard copy of newsletter with attachment to renew membership dues. Suggest going to township to track new riparians, Benzie county parcel map (<http://rs1.liaa.org/benzieco/>) also has (mostly) up to date information.
Jim R (LHLA) – use sailmail for phragmites permissions. ONXhunt has searchable property information for \$25/month membership.
- b) **Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program recap (John Ransom)** – 15 volunteers this spring including 5-6 NMC students. Planning to host a macroinvertebrate ID workshop at the BCD on 6/27.
- c) **Aquatic Invasive Species update (Jane Perrino)** - Schedule a visit with the boat washing station! Asked about which townships have boat washing ordinances. Signage? Contact sheriff –bass tournaments, small lake boat washing?
- d) **BCD Millage Renewal, Tad** – Millage vote will be on August 7th. Asking for a renewal with an increase from 0.1 mill to 0.125 mills. Approx. \$150k per year. Increase would likely support AISPP.
- e) **DEQ/MDARD permits meeting recap Wil S.** – PLIA discovered an increase in phosphorus in the Platte River between Veteran’s park and Pioneer Rd starting in 2013. During this same time period the DEQ permitted PCA (Paper Corp of America) to make subsoil injections of paper waste product on a field in Homestead township section 13. The PLIA and BCD wrote a letter to the Governor to request information on permitted activities within Benzie County. This led to a meeting with representatives from the DEQ, PLIA, BCD, and MDARD regarding accessibility to permit information. Meeting resulted in PCA halting subsurface application in the field in section 13 and (after a few follow up conversations) the PLIA and BCD learned that Township Supervisors receive all permit applications in their townships. The PLIA and BCD are now working with the townships to get permit information in Benzie County.
- f) **Cold Creek Basin grant update** – Should be hearing back any time (early summer)
- g) **DEQ/USACE permit application Letter of Support, Jim Ryan-** Jim asked coalition member to sign a letter of support for their DEQ/USACE permit (see member updates)

Upcoming events:

a. River clean-ups

Platte River is May 31, 2018

Betsie River is June 9

b. BCD Event Schedule available

c. Ideas for water tours? – Little Platte Lake – July 13th, Pearl Lake Aug 18th

Adjourn

**Next Meeting Date:
Tuesday, October 23rd**