

Called to order by president, Mike Acton, at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Mike Acton, Rich Russell, Jim Simons, Mary Reed, George PUNCHES, Lee LaFleur, Anna Veverica, Laura Heintzelman, Tim Morley, Larry Bullock, Beverly Cowles, Alice Hendricks, Frank English, Dan Behring, Greg Goudy, DeeDee Miller, Kathy Ervin, Grant Poole

1. Welcome: Mike Acton welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for coming.

2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the January 26th meeting were approved.

3. Committee Reports

Monitoring & Inventory Committee

(Herb Lenon, Chair. Members: Dave VanEerden, Frank Beaver, Jim Hunter, and Jim Simons).

Herb Lenon reported that all 27 of the streams that drain into Portage Lake have been surveyed and shared a large map and an album of pictures showing their location.

The committee met in February to review the 2008 sampling results and to discuss the timeline included in the Watershed Plan and historical data for the lake. The most comprehensive study of the area was completed in 1991 and reported in 1993.

Herb provided a brief review of terms and concepts related to *limnology* (the study of fresh water) and applied those to Portage Lake. He said that a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) study from 1999 reported Portage Lake as being marginally *eutrophic* which led to concerns about the lake because *eutrophication* leads to lower water transparency, a higher aquatic plant growth, and the possibility for internal phosphorus loading, which lowers the level of dissolved oxygen. Herb feels that a new study of the lake would provide them more current and complete data is now necessary.

The Monitoring and Inventory Committee has been working with the Invasive Species Committee to create a plan to accomplish the extensive monitoring that has been recommended. After making a presentation to the Township officials and receiving their support, bids were sent out to lake management companies who would aid in the monitoring plan. Lakeshore Environment Inc. was selected. The details of the created plan were reviewed. Items included in the plan are a summary of the historical data, the physical factors of the lake, a detailed survey of the aquatic macrophytes, the surveys needed to determine the water quality, the follow-up surveys required after any herbicide treatments, and the direction of the herbicide applicator by the contracted lake management company.

Invasive Species Committee

This committee, chaired by Mary Reed, met frequently since the January Watershed meeting.

Lakeshore Environment Inc. was selected as the company to aid in monitoring the lake from the four companies that were sent bids. This company was chosen because of its dedication to the environment, the quality of the water monitoring and the fact that it had the lowest bid. The Township Board agreed with the committee's recommendation and signed the contract with Lakeshore Environment Inc.

The committee has scheduled a survey for late May, which will determine the final cost of the contract.

Three resolutions were prepared and presented at a Township meeting, and the Township Board approved the resolution to fund the project through a **Special Assessment District**. The next step will be the two required public hearings.

The committee has also been addressing the issue of Phragmites found around Portage Lake. The lakefront by Farr Center was treated last fall, and on April 17th PLA members cut the plants that were treated and the remains were burned. On May 19th there will be a community information forum held to educate the public on the importance of the control and management of Phragmites and Eurasian watermilfoil. The condition of Portage Lake can be improved with treatment and the committee would like the support of the public for the treatment of the invasive species in the area.

Mike Acton thanked both the Monitoring and Inventory Committee and the Invasive Species Committee for their hard work over the winter.

Community Outreach and Education

Co-chairs Kathy Ervin and Dee Dee Miller were very impressed with the progress of the other committees and any input on ways they can help is encouraged. Their committee feels that a public area where updated information on Portage Lake and the Watershed Council can be viewed is a good idea. The committee feels that the website is easier and more cost-efficient than mailing printed newsletters to homeowners. The PLA has done a good job including the Watershed information and updates in their newsletter. This summer the committee would like to have a get-together to involve both seasonal and permanent residents in the events of the Watershed Council.

4. Draft Bylaws Discussion

One of the goals of the Watershed Plan was to create bylaws for the organization and that has finally been accomplished. (Dee Dee Miller and Laura Heintzelman felt that once money is available a professional director should be hired to formalize the Watershed Council operation and help the group move forward in providing the area with lasting change.) It was agreed that there is currently no money for an executive director, but that it is a good idea for the future.

There were two concerns about the draft of the bylaws:

Some felt that requiring members to attend all meetings would alienate the seasonal residents who wished to join the organization. It was agreed that the requirement should stay in the bylaws and conference calls can be arranged for members who cannot be present at meetings.

Another concern was voiced about the fact that the bylaws did not mention the cost of an audit. The issue was discussed and the Manistee County Community Foundation is responsible for that fee as mentioned in Article II and in the Duties and Responsibilities section for the Treasurer.

Dan Behring made a motion to accept the bylaws as written. Alice Hendricks seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Greg Goudy (DEQ) stated that he was very impressed with the accomplishments of the Watershed Council thus far and has recommended to Lansing that funding be made available to the group. The RFP is expected to go out in August or September for projects that address pollutants entering the lake such as buffers, overlay zones and water-retention basins for the storm water systems. Laura Heintzleman, Grant Poole, Dan Behring and Jim Simmons agreed to compile a list of potential projects and start on the proposal.

5. Watershed Executive Committee

Mike Acton voiced the need to form a nominating committee to elect new officials. Kathy Ervin felt the elections should be held in August in compliance with the newly approved bylaws. Dee Dee Miller, Kathy Ervin and Frank English volunteered serve as a Nominating Committee and will interview interested members and form the slate of officers for the election.

6. Other

MDEQ Website After talking with the MDEQ, Dan Behring found that Portage Lake Watershed Forever Council had been eliminated for consideration for some sources of funding because they weren't included on the official list of watershed organizations. He addressed the problem and PLWFC is now on the list on the MDEQ website.

Disinfection Stations at Boat Launches

Fish Survey The MDNR fish survey will start on May 18th and nets will be in place on Portage Lake through the middle of the week. Mark Tonello will have the information from the study soon. Currently the MDNR has put a hold on employees attending meetings due to budget cutbacks.

Funding The homeowners' packets were met with good public support and are still generating donations for the Watershed. This year alone, over \$600 has come in. Also, the Watershed fund will be mentioned at an event at the Little River Casino and Resort on June 13th, and envelopes will be available for donations to the organization.

7. Next Meeting

The next Watershed meeting will be near the end of June. Mike Acton will contact members with possible dates.

8. Public Comment

Rich Russell from Bear Lake attended the meeting. He reported that they are in the beginning stages of forming a watershed plan. He was extremely impressed with the progress made by the Portage Lake Watershed Forever group and hoped the Bear Lake effort will emulate our success. He thanked Mike Acton for the information and contacts he shared with them

Meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.