

**Three Lakes Association**  
Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting of April 24, 2012  
9:00 a.m. – 12:03 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Bob Bagley, Dean Branson, Norton Bretz, Todd Collins, Duane Drake, Chuck Drouillard, Tina Fields, Nancy Hanson, Ed Gourley, Gary Knapp, Ann McClelland, Becky Norris, Jack Norris, Sue Reck, Patricia Roush, Fred Sittel, Don Watkins, and Leslie Meyers.

Absent: Cheryl Lynn Fields, Art Hoadley.

A quorum of at least ten voting Board members was established at 9:00 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of March 27, 2012 were reviewed. The following corrections were made:

- 1) Under the Water Quality *E. coli* report, where it said "...at the both the road-crossing..." it should say "...at both the road-crossing..."
- 2) Under the Action Items, Jack Norris gave detailed background on the Bussa matter. Replace the current paragraph with this one: "There is an easement, named Bussa Lane, running north from the east end of Bussa Road, serving eight lakeside properties. The only right to its use resides with the owners of the lakefront lots and only for access to those lots. Some heirs of Leo Bussa are attempting to get around the easement restrictions in order to provide a funneling pathway from the upland 140 acres, where the heirs have stated their intention to build homes for sale – which would be much more attractive with that lake access. There was discussion on the appropriate involvement of TLA and TLPA, and the need to bring public pressure on the Bussa heirs to abide by the rules that have already been established. We will continue to gather information on what specific assistance the lakefront homeowners want from TLA."
- 3) Under the Fish Shelter Project – Todd Collins reported two donations that total \$300, not \$250.

**MOTION** by Sue Reck, second by Patricia Roush, to approve the minutes of March 27, 2012, as corrected. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:**

The sample reports for March 2012 were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. These reports are hereby incorporated into the record by reference and attached to the permanent copy of these minutes as [Att A]. Ed Gourley explained the work he has done thus far on reformatting our numbers into the fund accounting shape we want to adopt. He explained that this is still a work in progress, so there will be further changes. Once the accounting format is established, the data will be entered into the Peachtree accounting system, with the assistance of Lois McClean, who is also helping to develop the appropriate chart of accounts. After the year 2012 format is established, Ed will "re-cut" our year 2011 to match up as much as possible, so that we can have valid comparisons.

We discussed how to account for such things as the *Naturology* games and the *Pristine Waters* books. We also discussed expensing rather than depreciating low-priced equipment.

Ed explained in detail some of the accounting philosophies that he believes will make our financial picture easier to follow, such as beginning each year with a zero balance in the operating fund, building

a balanced budget, and closing out any actual surplus or deficit from our operations at the end of the year. This provides a discernible level of discipline to our accounting. Ed detailed for us his idea of how to properly establish our planned level of annual draw from our investments.

Norton Bretz and Todd Collins had questions on how to exercise the proper discipline with regard to drawing from our reserves. Ed explained that unusual expenses and occasional deficits are okay, that's what reserves are for. Reserves allow us to seize opportunities for excellent projects that our current income would not cover. Our responsibility is to manage that activity, so that we don't follow an unsustainable path. Sue Reck asked if there were any rule of thumb about the proper amount for non-profit organizations to draw annually. Ed said there is not; foundations are required to disburse 5% annually, and that number has simply been adopted by many NPOs.

**MOTION** by Tina Norris Fields, second by Nancy Hanson, to receive the treasurer's sample reports as presented and explained. Motion carried.

**MOTION** by Sue Reck, second by Todd Collins, that the annual GTRCF return be considered investment income attributable to endowment funds and further that a draw equal to 5% of the three-year average balance of the total invested funds plus the GTRCF's Three Lakes Watershed Conservation endowment fund disbursement, be transferred from the Board Designated endowment funds to the TLA operating funds.

A friendly amendment is offered by Chuck Drouillard, so that we don't have conflicting policies on record, to add: "and that previously adopted policies or motions be rescinded or modified to the extent required in keeping with this motion." The maker of the original motion and the seconder, accepted the friendly amendment.

Following discussion, the amended motion carried.

**MOTION** by Ed Gourley, second by Jack Norris, that fixed assets and equipment with a purchase price of \$1,000 or less be immediately expensed. Motion carried.

### ***Executive Director's Report:***

The report for March 2012 is included in the officers' meeting minutes, which was distributed electronically prior to the meeting. This report is hereby incorporated into the record by reference. Leslie attended the 17<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of a volunteer river, streams, and watersheds group; met our new DEQ representative; and got to see how some other groups are working together. This is a group with whom we have never met before. Dean thanked Leslie for attending. We don't know why the GTRCF monies are not available for the internship program this year. Memorials received in the name of Bob Hildorf, as of Thursday, April 19, totaled \$840. Leah Varga will be here on May 24. There are about 55 extra copies of the newsletter; Leslie plans to use them at the June educational event. There is one really bad mistake in the newsletter – the milfoil picture is the wrong one. Explanations are on the Facebook page, and the correct picture will go in the next edition of the newsletter. Jack Norris sent a note to Leslie that he asked her to read aloud. In it he related having discovered the same error in a DNRE reference handbook – the text made the differences clear between the native and invasive species, but the authors had used identical pictures of the native milfoil to illustrate both. The error has been pointed out and is corrected in the new version. He wanted her to know she was not the only person to have misidentified this plant; the experts had beat her to it.

Bob Bagley asked whether the Golf Outing was featured on both the TLA Website and Facebook page. Leslie will make sure it is.

Leslie will be meeting with Todd and his sister on Thursday, April 26, 2012 to explore Web ideas. She is still working on securing a regular meeting place for our Board. Some additional ideas were offered by various Board members.

Included in the meeting packet were the following documents for the Board to receive and file:

Officers' Meeting Notes – 4/19/2012

ERCOL-WPIT minutes – 3/21/2012

These documents are hereby incorporated into the record by reference and attached to the permanent copy of these minutes as [Att B], and [Att C], respectively.

There was discussion on getting a reliable procedure in place for the issuance of soil erosion permits. There is, at present, some confusion on the steps to take, and the matter of sequence concerning when the DEQ is involved in that process. Leslie is using her people skills to bring parties together to get that problem solved. The DEQ has not issued a final decision on the property on Intermediate Lake that sparked the current discussion.

The ERCOL-WPIT meeting is on May 9, 2012.

### ***Fish Shelter Project:***

\* Bob Bagley – there will be a working meeting on May 10, 2012, at 9 a.m. of representatives from all five lakes plus volunteers – to see how to build the shelters. They may actually make a drop, depending on the availability of a barge. Bob explained to our new treasurer that this is a five-year project, whose total cost is still unknown. We are actively seeking donations from interested sources. There was discussion about a pontoon boat being offered to the project as a donation, whether to accept the donation, who should assume the costs and liabilities of ownership, etc. No action was taken. The DEQ permit for this project is expected sometime in May.

### ***Water Quality Committee:***

\* Becky Norris – has received a response to her appeal, to report on aquatic vegetation, from Lee Scott in Torch Lake Township, who reports a long linear growth running north and south about 400 feet out from his shoreline in shallow water. Terry Malone contacted her about a young man seeking a summer internship; Becky referred him to Leslie. Becky visited with Dave Reck about the planned aquatic plant survey – he thought some TLPA members would volunteer to help. Becky will attend the MLSA meeting this weekend, in particular the class on aquatic plants identification and mapping.

Patricia and Norton both raised the point that even the local water-sport and dock people do not know the differences between native and invasive species of milfoil. This is an opportunity to teach people those differences.

Dean asked Leslie and Becky to bring a report back to the Board on the MLSA meeting.

### ***Education Outreach:***

\* Patricia Roush – the SmartBoard for the Bellaire School has not yet been installed. Patricia has spoken with Emily Shaw, of Inland Seas; she is the new *schoolship* administrator. The Dow Foundation has offered matching funds to Inland Seas, with the result that Inland Seas will now match the number of school-class trips we are sending. Patricia has emailed the teachers asking for feedback on whether more trips would be beneficial. Feedback indicates that

1) sending sixth graders and ninth graders will generally be redundant for the ninth graders;

- 2) some of the teaching stations are below the students' existing knowledge level;
- 3) a similar teaching experience on our own chain of lakes would be preferred.

Discussion revealed that since we have already committed to sponsoring four school trips per year to Inland Seas, which now will have matching funds available, we can keep up that commitment for half what it has cost us in the past, and we can now develop a similar project for our own waterways.

Gary Knapp suggested convening a collaboration investigation meeting on this idea. Nancy Hanson, Becky Norris, and Patricia Roush will be his committee.

The flyers have been made for the joint educational events: June 19 "Go Fish," and August 14 "Antrim Underground." Both events will be at the Alden Depot, from 5 – 7 p.m. Volunteers will be sought to provide hors d'oeuvres.

### ***Membership Development Update:***

\* Todd Collins – as of the end of March, we have 411 current and life members, which is tracking close to historical levels, but slightly behind the last couple years. Membership kick-off meeting for Zone Directors is planned for May 24, 2012 at 10 a.m. at his cottage. This Thursday is the working meeting on improving our Web presence. Todd's sister is bringing her professional skills to assist us; she has been responsible for the internal communications for IBM, as well as the Torch Lake Yacht Club website. The final renewal reminder mailing for the year will be in June. Dean asked about the property-owners' associations connections, to get their members interested in being part of TLA. There was much discussion on how to get on the various associations' meeting agendas to make our pitch.

### ***Action Items:***

\* Dean Branson – there is an RFP to MSU, which is being channeled through Tip of the Mitt, which cuts the MSU standard overhead fee to 20%. The investigators will be Brett Fessel, Anthony Kendall, and Paul Richards. There are digitized historical photos of the Rapid River, which allow side-by-side comparison of the river over time. There is strong incentive for TLA to document historical information for Grass River. There was much discussion regarding what changes have occurred in Grass River, its navigation history, whether and when the channel may have been dredged, etc.

We have new information about the water that leaves Torch Lake; a significant portion of it goes into the neighboring wetlands rather than down Torch River.

The RFP to MSU will be an agenda item next month for consideration and vote.

\* Leslie Meyers – gave a report on the TLA phone situation. It costs us \$56.81 per month for a phone with no outgoing calls, and virtually no incoming calls. She is investigating the available options. So far her research has determined that Magic Jack is "hit and miss." Research continues.

\* Tina Fields – showed the brochure exemplar and sought Board input. Feedback included: 1) add the names of the three lakes to the front panel under the logo; and 2) add the Facebook icon to the Facebook entries. Further comments are invited from Board members; they are asked to submit those comments to her by this Friday.

\* Norton – reported that Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is seeking a new board member, as Norton's term limit expires this summer.

\* Sue – reports that there will be a hazardous materials pickup on May 5, 2012; e-waste disposal may be in August.

\* Dean – reported on passage of Milton Township’s septic ordinance. Maybe Torch Lake Township should be where the next presentation is made.

\* Dean & Jack – reported on their meeting with Ron Ring. Milton Township is making a change to the zoning ordinance that they believe would preclude funneling. The Bussa heirs have already plowed under some land that is in the wetlands inventory. Jack will be personally active in trying to get the attention of the soil erosion officer and the DNR, on this matter, rather than sit and wait. The Bussas have bought a 66’ wide strip of land leading from Bussa Road north to the edge of the upland, but not to the lake. Ron Ring told them there is a soil erosion permit posted in a location, such that the permit cannot be read without trespass, so there is no way to know what that permit covers. There was discussion about making sure both TLPA and ESLA have information on the situation; watching to see what effect the change in the zoning ordinance may have; but bearing in mind the urgent need to remain vigilant.

Holt property – the DEQ will come to inspect the site. If they issue a notice of violation, the violators will have to remove the road. Jack notes that this is becoming “the way things happen”; permits get issued that let bad things happen in wetlands, and then the DEQ has to deal with them after the fact. The need for a written process was reiterated. The DEQ has made recent changes to the rules, concerning minor and major projects. But, right now, the process is muddled and people are not sure what steps to take and in what order. Jack commented that this is the third time he is aware of where Steve Voice, acting as a consultant, has worked to circumvent the rules protecting wetlands. Jack plans a personal discussion with Heidi Shaffer, our soil erosion officer. He asked whether he should represent TLA in his discussion, or only himself personally. Gary Knapp supported having Jack represent TLA. Dean reported that a new DEQ officer would be in place by May 1, 2012.

\* Don Watkins – reported that there will be a forum on May 21, 2012, in Milton Township, on the proposed new rental ordinance.

\* Fred – spoke on the need for adequate signage about aquatic “hitch-hikers.” The DEQ may have such a sign. It should say specifically “wash your boat.” There is concern that too much signage may distract from the intended message. We need to agree on the appropriate sign language and approach the location holders. Leslie said we might have better info to share after the MLSA meeting.

### **Adjournment and Next Meeting:**

Dean Branson adjourned our meeting at 12:03 p.m.

Officers’ Meeting – May 17, 2012 ?

Board Meeting – May 22, 2012

Respectfully submitted,



Tina Norris Fields  
Secretary