

JESSIE LAKE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER¹

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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

A meeting was held at the Bowstring Town Hall on February 21 to determine whether property owners in the Jessie Lake watershed were interested in forming an association. This watershed encompasses about 14,500 acres and includes four streams and ten lakes. According to the Itasca County Tax Assessors office there are 120 property owners on Peterson, Spring, Little Spring, and Jessie lakes. A total of 28 individuals attended the meeting, which was chaired by Harold Goetzman. Harold stated the impetus for organizing an association at this time was to ensure that property owners in the watershed participate in the planning and implementation of a recently initiated multi-agency project. This project has the goal of developing and implementing a management plan for the watershed and is being conducted by the Chippewa National Forest, Area Fisheries Office of the Department of Natural Resources, and the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District. An outline of this project and map of the watershed are presented later in this newsletter.

Tom Ryan, President of the Soumi Area Lakes Association, described for the audience the history and activities of their association. The Soumi Association of property owners was formed five years ago because of concerns that Eurasian watermilfoil, or other exotic species, might invade the eight lakes included in the association. Since then, this association has moved on to projects ranging from maintenance of a public swimming beach to establishment of a neighborhood crime watch program. Tom stressed that Itasca County is presently undergoing rapid development of its lakes and that all indications are that this development pressure will continue to increase. Tom also described the activities of the Minnesota and Itasca County Coalition of Lake Associations (ICOLA), which our association could join. These larger organizations are active in lobbying the state legislature on issues such as property taxes that affect lakeshore property owners.

Harold then led the audience in a discussion on what their concerns for the watershed are and what they envision an association accomplishing. Discussions followed on the potential for future land development, water quality, and jet skies. It was believed that a watershed association would have much greater influence on the decisions of management agencies, on issues such as these, than would an individual. When members of some associations have opposed major project developments, which they believed would adversely affect their lake, they have sometimes worked with their county commissioners and zoning committee to reduce the scale or eliminate the projects. The only reservation attendees had about forming an association dealt with the concern that the association could tell them what they could, or could not do, with their property. However, it was

¹Win a VALUABLE PRIZE by naming this newsletter.

made clear that associations do **NOT** have the right to govern or dictate how property owners use their land.

Harold then presented the initial projects for a Jessie Lake Watershed Association (JLWA). Volunteers are needed to obtain water samples and monitor Spring and Pooles creeks for walleye spawning. Water samples will be collected monthly from Jessie Lake and probably bimonthly from Peterson, Spring, and Little Spring lakes and shipped to a laboratory for chemical analysis to estimate water quality. The walleye-spawning project will last for about two weeks in late April or early May. Volunteers are needed to hike the streams after dark and by use of spotlights determine if walleyes are present in the streams. If fish are seen then samples of the streambed will be taken to determine if eggs are present. Over twenty people in attendance indicated they would be willing to help on these projects.

The final project is to hire a beaver trapper to keep the beaver population from recovering from last fall's reduction. Without this work it is believed beavers will quickly rebuild the dams on Spring Creek that were removed last fall and again block walleye spawning runs into the river. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has encouraged us to apply for a "Conservation Partner Grant" to fund this program. If all the money obtained was not required for this project we can apply the additional funds to increase the frequency of water quality sampling.

Harold reported that of the 120 property owners contacted about this meeting all but four of the respondents thought establishing a watershed organization would be advantageous; the four individuals desired more information before making a decision. A vote of the attendees was unanimously in favor of establishing the JLWA. A total of 30 property owners either sent in their membership dues or paid at the meeting with another 20 expressing an interest in joining. A steering committee of Ken Albin, Jim Anderson, Harold Goetzman, Neil Gustafson, Bill Nelson, and Lance Stradtman were appointed to begin the work of officially forming the association.

The final business conducted was selecting a time and place for the next Jessie Lake Watershed Association meeting. After a discussion it was decided to hold the **meeting May 23 at 2:00 P.M. at the Bowstring Town Hall**. This date was picked since it is during Memorial Day weekend when most, if not all, property owners are in the area. Those of you who have friends and relatives visiting over this holiday are encouraged to bring them along to the meeting. We sincerely hope that you can tear yourself away from the lake for a couple of hours to attend. At this meeting a board of directors will be selected to recommend a slate of officers for the association, approve a set of bylaws, a mission statement, and hear a progress report on walleye spawning and the water quality projects.

Steering Committee Meeting

Immediately after the organizational meeting the individuals selected to form a steering committee met briefly. After determining what needed to be done individuals volunteered for the various tasks. Harold Goetzman will open a bank account and deposit the membership dues. Jim Anderson will review the bylaws from other lake associations and develop bylaws that fit our requirements. Jim will also construct a mailing list of property owners and members on his computer. Neil Gustafson will begin the process of applying for the Conservation Partners Grant and Bill Nelson will begin

putting together a newsletter. After making these assignments, it was decided to meet on March 7 to review progress.

At the March 7 meeting Harold reported he had begun the process of opening a bank account at Norwest Bank in Grand Rapids. Jim handed out copies of the mailing list of potential members and the bylaws he developed; the bylaws were reviewed and a few minor changes suggested. The bylaws establish an eight-person board of directors with election of officers to occur at an annual meeting to be held on Labor Day weekend. Therefore two additional people need to be nominated, or volunteer, at the May 23 meeting to serve on the Board of Directors. The members of this board will then recommend a slate of officers for election by the members at the annual meeting.

Neil reported that we have now been encouraged to apply for funds from a second potential source. A considerable amount of time was spent discussing the details of the grant proposals and how we should go about hiring a beaver trapper. Bill provided draft copies of a newsletter for comment and review. It was decided to hold a contest to name the newsletter. It was then decided to hold another meeting on April 4 to finalize plans for monitoring walleye spawning and collecting the water samples.

At the April 4th meeting the revised bylaws developed by Jim Anderson were reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee members. A discussion was held on having the JLWA file for incorporation and tax status. It was decided to postpone any decision on these items until additional information was obtained. We then reviewed the grant proposals that Neil Gustafson had prepared and submitted to the Department of Natural Resources for funding. The JLWA applied for \$4,155 to fund restoration of walleye spawning habitat (primarily beaver trapping) and increase the frequency of water quality sampling through December 1999. Harold Goetzman volunteered to contact the Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District about establishing water quality sampling stations on the tributary streams and scheduling training sessions for the individuals who volunteered to collect water samples.

How was Jessie Lake named?

I always assumed that Jessie Lake had been named for the daughter or wife of some early homesteader or logger. However, when I realized the name of the Lutheran Church, and the long ago settlement on the east side of the lake were spelled Jesse I began to wonder about the difference. My confusion only increased when I realized the township and the Baptist Church are spelled the same as the lake --- Jessie. None of the local people I talked to whose parents or grandparents settled here could explain why both the masculine and feminine ways of spelling Jesse were used. I began to wonder if these places were named after two different people or whether somewhere along the line somebody couldn't spell any better than I can and the error became fixed.

One day while in the Itasca County Heritage Center I recalled this burning question and tried to find out the answer. A book on the geographic names of places in Minnesota was no help. All it stated was what I originally assumed --- named after an early pioneer. I then checked in "Pines, Mines, and Lakes" which is a history of Itasca County. This book stated that Jessie Lake was most likely named after the daughter of Mr. Taylor, the man who surveyed this area in the 1870's and 80's. However, there was also a Jesse Harry who worked in the woods as a timber cruiser who might have left his

name on the lake. So I was unable to find a positive answer to my original question. However, rather than spelling errors it seems most likely the two versions are because the lake, township, and Baptist Church were named after the surveyor's daughter and the Lutheran Church and settlement after the timber cruiser. If you have another explanation, I would like to hear it.

NEWSLETTER

Present plans are to publish a newsletter twice a year, sending out a spring and fall issue. Simply calling it a newsletter has absolutely no pizzazz whatsoever but I didn't have sufficient imagination to dream up anything better. Therefore, the Steering Committee decided to run a "Name The Newsletter Contest" with the winner receiving an extremely **VALUABLE PRIZE**. To enter this contest just dream up a name and suggest it at the meeting on May 23. We will then vote to select the most popular name.

This issue is dominated by information dealing with the formation of the JLWA since so many people were unable to attend the organizational meeting. However, future issues will concentrate more on the progress of the multi-agency study with JLWA business providing a minimal amount. In order for this newsletter to provide a service to the members I need to know what kinds of information you would like to see it contain. Please call or write me, Bill Nelson, about what you want this newsletter to include. I would also appreciate you telling me about any big fish stories, wildlife sightings, issues, or comments you might have. Better yet, write your own articles for inclusion in this newsletter.

Next Meeting

Please remember to attend the next meeting of the JLWA scheduled for 2:00 P.M. at the Bowstring Town Hall on Saturday May 23, 1998. To ensure the JLWA is a success and achieves its potential we need your active participation. Among the topics to be discussed at this meeting are a review of the bylaws for your comments and approval, review of the grant proposals which were submitted, and a status report on the multi-agency project. In addition, we need volunteers or nominations for at least two more people to serve on a Board of Directors. And do not forget to think up a name for this newsletter. Who knows? That valuable prize could be yours.

If you should have any questions, concerns, comments, or wish to volunteer your services for any project please contact any of these individuals.

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If you have not already become a member and wish to join please return.

MEMBERSHIP FORM (dues \$10.00)

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Winter Address (if different) _____

Comments: _____

Mail to: Harold Goetzman

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