

West Battle Lake Lakeshore Association

Annual Meeting Minutes

Date: August 15, 2026

Attendees

Michael Smith, Matt Falck, Dan Kolpin, Steve Slatten, Jody Coleman, Kelsey Frank, Mike Anderson, and association members.

Call to Order

Mike Anderson called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees.

Guest Speaker: Senator Jordan Rasmussen

Minnesota State Senate, District 9

Senator Rasmussen provided an overview of the recent legislative session and discussed upcoming priorities, including:

- Fish hatcheries and fisheries management
- Lake access improvements
- Environmental protection is one of the fastest growing topics of concern at the state government this year.

Member Questions & Discussion

Tax Concerns

- Members raised questions regarding property taxes and tax-related issues affecting lakeshore owners.

Aquatic Invasive Species

- Discussion centered on combating invasive species and the role of state involvement.
- Members emphasized the importance of ensuring adequate monitoring infrastructure when upgrading public lake access points.

Data Centers and Natural Resources

- Concerns were raised about the impact of data centers on Minnesota's natural resources.
- Senator Rasmussen stated that he believes costs associated with data center development should be borne by the centers themselves rather than individual residents or businesses.
- He noted that Minnesota has an appropriate framework in place but emphasized that data centers will continue to be necessary for future economic growth and technological advancement.

Wildfires and Forest Management

- Members asked whether wildfire management is primarily a federal or state issue. Jordan confirmed this is federal.
- Discussion included opportunities for improved forest management.
- Senator Rasmussen indicated that increased state involvement may be necessary, particularly given recent wildfire activity in both Minnesota and Canada. However, this issue currently is owned by the federal government, not the state level.

Agricultural Impacts on Environmental Quality

- Discussion focused on the effects of large-scale farming on environmental quality.
 - Senator Rasmussen noted that farming will remain highly competitive globally and that many farmers are focused on efficiency while still prioritizing environmental stewardship.
 - Continued conservation efforts remain important.
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Guest Speaker: Aaron Larsen

Soil and Water Conservation District Manager

Aaron Larsen provided an overview of his role and the work of the Soil and Water Conservation District.

District Overview

- Governed by a board of elected supervisors.
- Minnesota has 86 conservation districts.

- Provides technical guidance and financial resources to landowners.
- Initially focused on agriculture but has expanded support for lakeshore and conservation initiatives.
- Services are primarily voluntary.
- Enforces Minnesota's Buffer Law.
- Funding comes primarily from:
 - Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment funds
 - Grants
- The district does not have taxing authority.

Watershed Management

Discussion included the **Otter Tail River One Watershed, One Plan** initiative, designed to guide watershed managers in protecting and restoring water resources throughout Otter Tail County's eight watersheds.

Property and Shoreline Assistance

- The district can assist landowners with erosion issues and site evaluations.

Riprap Discussion

- Members asked about the impact of riprap on shorelines.
- Aaron noted that Minnesota is reviewing potential policy changes related to riprap and referenced additional information in the provided handout.

Lake Stewardship Recommendations

Aaron encouraged members to practice positive lake stewardship, including:

- Appreciating aquatic vegetation
- Increasing wetland awareness
- Being responsible boaters
- Preventing aquatic hitchhikers
- Preserving trees and shrubs
- Maintaining shoreline buffer zones
- Reconsidering shoreline riprapping where appropriate
- Reducing hard surfaces
- Implementing stormwater management practices
- Minimizing fertilizer use
- Properly disposing of hazardous waste
- Maintaining septic systems
- Monitoring well health
- Working with natural ecosystems

- Protecting habitat for future generations

AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) Study

- Estimated annual Minnesota AIS-related costs: approximately \$460,000 to \$490,000.
 - Otter Tail County contains 1,048 lakes.
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Lake Stewardship Program Update

Presented by Steve Slatten

- Members are encouraged to complete the online Lake Stewardship Program quiz.
- Quiz results will be forwarded to Steve.
- The program provides recommendations for protecting lakeshore property and maintaining water quality.

Additional Topics

Cattail Management

- Cattail removal can be expensive and is generally the responsibility of the property owner.
- Grants may be available to assist with restoration efforts.

Phosphorus Awareness

- Members were reminded to avoid phosphorus-containing products, which contribute to algae growth.
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DNR Update

Dan Kolpin, Jody Coleman, and Mike Anderson recently met with the association's new DNR representative, **Luke**.

Key takeaways:

- West Battle Lake remains a priority lake for DNR management efforts.
- A fishery survey is anticipated in 2027 or 2028.

- Fry survival rates remain lower than those of yearlings.
 - Musky stocking will continue at approximately 2,500 fish every other year.
 - A 20-inch walleye requires approximately 12 years to reach that size.
 - DNR will stock WBL with Walleyes matching what they have done in the past.
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Lake Quality Update

Presented by Dan Kolpin and Mike Anderson

Aquatic Vegetation Survey

- A vegetation survey proposed last year was initially tabled because of the \$10,000 estimated cost.
- Due to a communication issue, the survey was completed anyway.
- The association successfully negotiated the final cost down to \$5,000.
- Results are available on the association website.

Benefits of the survey:

- Establishes a baseline for future measurements.
- Improves the association's ability to pursue grants and funding opportunities.

Future Surveys

- Members participated in an informal show-of-hands vote.
- A strong majority supported repeating the survey approximately every five years.

Water Monitoring Program

- Member Mary Jo Boettner volunteered to conduct water quality testing this summer.
- Additional volunteers are encouraged.
- Testing includes:
 - Chlorophyll levels
 - Phosphorus levels
 - Water clarity

Results:

- June water clarity: 20 feet
- August water clarity: 17 feet

Overall, West Battle Lake continues to show very strong water quality indicators.

Buoy Program Update

Presented by Dan Kolpin

- Buoys were successfully installed this season.
 - Scott Davis will continue placing and removing buoys at a cost of approximately \$600 annually.
 - A lakeshore member volunteered storage space for the buoys.
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Lake Levels and Access Improvements

Lake Levels

- Lake levels remain largely outside the association's control.
- Members were encouraged to exercise caution and responsibility when launching and removing boats.

Public Access Improvements

- The association is working with the DNR to deepen the west access and extend concrete launch pads.
- This remains a high-priority project.

Winter Fishing Cleanup

- A dumpster will again be placed near the lake this winter for ice fishing waste disposal.
 - The program has been successful and well-received.
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Membership Update

- The association membership list currently contains 582 names.
- To date, 187 members have paid dues, representing approximately 32% participation.

- The board estimates that roughly 100 records contain inaccurate mailing addresses.
 - Efforts will be made to update member information and send dues reminders.
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Walleye Stocking Proposal

The association had originally planned to skip supplemental walleye stocking this year.

However, based on DNR recommendations:

- The association will purchase approximately \$15,000 worth of walleyes.
- Funding will require a \$6,500 transfer from the General Fund.

Member Vote:

A show-of-hands vote was conducted, and the proposal received majority approval.

Board Nominations

Sharon Casey

- Nominated by John Lutgen.
- Approved by majority vote.

Dwight Neset

- Nominated by Tanya Gillespie.
 - Approved by majority vote.
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Communications Reminder

Michael Smith reminded members to stay connected through:

- The WBLLA website
- The WBLLA Facebook page

- Michael will be adding links to neighboring lakes that have website pages such as East Battle Lake and Clitherall Lake

General Member Feedback:

Members expressed strong support for continuing current association efforts and priorities.

Additional Business

Boating and Sandbar Etiquette

- Members were encouraged to review the informational handout covering safe and respectful boating practices.

Facility Rental Approval

Matt Falck requested approval of **\$250** to reimburse Mary for meeting space rental and donuts.

Motion: Matt Falck

Second: Kelsey Frank

Vote: Approved

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following completion of all business.

Kelsey Frank, Board Secretary

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Kelsey Frank
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8/20/2026