



Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: Wednesday, August 15th, 2012

The third 2012 meeting of the Polk County Association of Lakes and Rivers (PCALR) was held Wednesday, August 15, 2012 at the Polk County Justice Center in Balsam Lake. Guest speakers included Kathy Bartilson (Wisconsin DNR, Water Quality Supervisor), Buzz Sorge (Wisconsin DNR, DNR Lake Coordinator, Spooner), and Alex Smith (Wisconsin DNR Lake Coordinator, Spooner). The educational topic of the meeting was the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the St. Croix Basin. Full TMDL report:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/wqs/303d/TMDL.html>

Attending:

Kathy Bartilson, WDNR; Buzz Sorge, WDNR; Alex Smith, WDNR; William Johnson IV, County Board Supervisor; Gary Alexander, Wild Goose; Jim and Joan Maxwell, Big Blake; Brett Ptacek, Loveless; Katelin Holm, Polk County LWRD; Tim Ritten, Polk County LWRD; David Zanick, Church Pine, Round, and Big; Gary Ovick, Church Pine, Round, and Big; Cheryl Miller, Lotus; Mary Chorewycz, Bone; Rick Scoglio, Apple River Association; Steve Arduser, Apple Rive Association; Larry and Bev Bresina, Pipe Lakes; Ken Peterson, Big Butternut

Agenda:

Welcome and Introductions

Treasurers Report and Membership

The balance at the beginning of the year was \$999.40 and the current balance is \$1,538.40. PCALR currently has fifteen members which is average/good.

The new membership year began on May 1st. Thank you to everyone who has already renewed their membership.

Guest presentation: Kathy Bartilson

The St. Croix River Basin is a large (7,760 square miles) heart-shaped basin located in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The Basin is rich in water resources, with many tributary watersheds and the highest concentration of clean lakes on the planet. Additionally, the basin has scenic, geologic, and ecologic value along with numerous recreation opportunities and access.

Lake St. Croix is a natural “bathtub” located in the last 22-25 miles of the St. Croix River that collects all the flow from upstream. As such, Lake St. Croix represents what is happening in the entire St. Croix River Basin. Phosphorus is the top threat to the health of the waters in the Basin, followed by other nutrients and sediment. In the early 1990’s the St. Croix Basin Watershed Research Planning Team began discussing how to protect this resource into the future.

Both Wisconsin and Minnesota have rules regarding non-point source pollution and waste water treatment. Even if all the rules were met, water quality would continue to degrade in the Basin. In 2004 the goal was set to return Lake St. Croix to pre-1940’s conditions and in 2006 a nutrient reduction agreement was signed by both states. Lake St. Croix was listed as an impaired water by the EPA in 2008 and implementation of the TMDL began in 2012.

A TMDL is a scientific and regulatory tool to identify all sources of a pollutant and set measures to return an impaired water to a healthy condition. In the 1990’s the amount of phosphorus entering the basin was 460 metric tons/year. The TMDL goal for Lake St. Croix is to lower phosphorus from 50 ug/L to 40 ug/L. This means a reduction of 100 tons/year, bringing the total to 360 metric tons of phosphorus/year. Some contributors of phosphorus can’t be controlled such as background, internal/atmosphere, and tribal loading. This leaves the reduction of 100 tons/year to be achieved through management of point source and non-point sources of pollution.

There is work to be done to achieve this goal in every watershed. The Apple River Watershed is the largest contributor in terms of total P loading in tons/year and the 8th largest contributor in terms of P loading in load/acre/year, or yield.

The TMDL goals are achievable. Point sources have already reduced loading by 60% and a County and Watershed specific implementation plan is being developed which includes non-point source efforts.

There are many ways the goals can be met. For example, most wastewater treatment plants can already meet their standards (permits and compliance schedules). Tools such as mass limits on permits, based on plant size and treatment efficiency, can be put into place. Additionally, small facilities will have the ability to aggregate their limits. Best Management Practices for non-point sources such as agriculture, rural residential/commercial, urban commercial/industrial/residential will also be implemented. Best Management Practices (BMPs) include options such as erosion control, nutrient management, manure handling, farmyard runoff, and stormwater management.

Guest presentation: Buzz Sorge

As a property owner there are numerous practices that you can implement to meet the TMDL goals. Practices include the implementation of shoreline BMPs, restoration of natural buffers, infiltration of rainwater (rain gardens), servicing of septic systems, and the minimization of phosphorus use (choosing P free cleaning/hygiene products).

Runoff from developed lands is 7-10 times greater as compared to undeveloped lands. Additionally, once a soil is destroyed through compaction and vegetation removal it can take up to fifty years to return the soil to its original infiltration capacity.

Although the tools exist to meet the goals, the challenge is create a culture of clean water which involves getting enough people to change their behavior.

As a lake steward find out: what is my lakes watershed? What is my lakes P budget? What are the controllable P sources on the lake and in the watershed? What is needed to control them? As a resident of Polk County: support the County's non-point source runoff control efforts (Land and Water Resource Plan, TMDL implementation plan, staffing and funding).

As a St. Croix River Steward get involved and stay involved—public awareness, public participation, citizen engagement, political and social action.

The 14th Annual Protecting the St. Croix Conference will be held at UW-River Falls in April 2013.

For more information search for “St. Croix Basin” on the MNPCA website.

Adjourn

Minutes submitted by
Katelin Holm, Secretary
Polk County Association of Lakes and Rivers
August 2012