

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2016-2017

The 2015-2016 President's Report concluded with a list of items that RLIA needed to continue to work on in the coming year. I'd like to recap for you those items and the results of each. As a spoiler alert, however, I'd happy to say that we accomplished over 75% of what we set out to do.

COMPLETE THE 2017 LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

We established an advisory committee of dedicated individuals that represented various disciplines of the communities, watershed and Rock Lake users. They are:

Nathan Pyles - Committee Chair
Patricia Cicero - County Representative and Meeting Facilitator
Ashley Berg - Fishing
Wes Dawson - Rock Lake Improvement Association
Melissa Fehrman - Motorized Recreation
Kevin Lehner - Non-Motorized Recreation
Steve Oostdik - Town of Lake Mills
Dave Schroeder - Agriculture
Cecilia Smoniewski - Shoreline Resident
Nic Tippery - Environmental
Susan Trier (Alternate) - Shoreline Resident
Bob Volenec - Joint Rock Lake Committee
Steve Wilke - City of Lake Mills
Lynn Zastrow (Alternate) - Motorized Recreation

Beginning in September 2016 this group met for 2 hours every month. The objective was to have an up-to-date report with an assessment of watershed conditions, lake water quality, lake biological communities and habitat quality. Topics covered were water quality, aquatic plants, fish and wildlife, shoreline habitat, pollution prevention, sediment reduction and recreation.

They have proposed over 35 recommendations; sent out over 2,500 surveys (the results of which are being tabulated now); reviewed water quality sampling results, fish and plant surveys, shoreline surveys, salt and sand spreading applications and areas of non-point source pollution. In addition they have conducted one public meeting to obtain input from the communities, watershed residents and interested lake users. They will be holding an additional meeting in September or October.

Following the results of the survey and the public meeting they will send their final recommendations to the RLIA Board. The Board will then prepare a report and finalize the 2017 Lake Management Report, which will be the foundation for the protection, preservation and improvement of Rock Lake for the next decade. The report is due December 2017.

I want to thank the advisory committee for their work as well those that contributed to the study.

CONTINUE THE MILJALA SHORES DITCH PROJECT:

Unfortunately we made no progress again this year on securing all land owners' permission to access their lands to carry out the recommendations from the UW study. Without their permission we are unable to obtain a DNR grant to fund the project which is estimated to cost around \$200,000. The DNR will not fund a partial project.

Since the reduction of sediment and phosphorous is one of the highest priority for RLIA, we will continue to find ways to mitigate the negative impact on the quality of our lake. One has only to go 4 - 5 houses in either direction of Miljala Channel to see the build up of sediment, the muddy bottom, the change in

plant growth and algae to know that there is an adverse impact on the water quality and the danger to the bullrushes in Korth Bay.

We know that the Yahara Watershed has made strides in improving their water quality by carrying out many of the same recommendations that we have identified.

INSTALL STORM DRAIN MARKERS:

Working with a Boy Scout Andrew Martinez on his Eagle project, we installed 66 drain markers on all of the city drains that go into the lake.

PROMOTE PROPER LEAF DISPOSAL:

Jim Colegrove worked with the City of Lake Mills and MyFairLakes to design a plan to reduce the number of leaves going into the lake. The campaign was designed to promote putting leaves in the proper location for pick up. Decaying leaves release unwanted nutrients into the lake that are rich in dissolved phosphorous. Too much phosphorous can lead to toxic algae bloom, lower oxygen levels and lower water clarity. (1lbs. of phosphorous = 500lbs. of algae)

While we are on the subject of dissolved oxygen, it is a good time to mention that the RLIA, with Jefferson County Land and Water, purchased a new temperature and dissolved oxygen meter this year. This will ensure proper readings for the monthly samples that are taken to monitor the health of our lake.

ENCOURAGE “HEALTHY LAKE” GRANTS:

In cooperation with the Jefferson County Master Gardeners and dedicated homeowners Susan Trier and her committee planned a Shoreline and Rain Garden Walk so others could learn how to protect water clarity, water quality and provide support to our local wildlife and pollination. Two of our Board members displayed their beautiful gardens and another is installing a rain garden. Our board is “practicing what we preach”. We hope others will look into obtaining a healthy lakes grant to install rain gardens and/or add native plants to their shoreline.

I wish to thank not only the volunteers that helped make this tour a success (over 50 individuals took the tour) also the Master Gardeners and the homeowners: Fronks, Lake Mills Elementary, O’Connors, Pyles, Pezzis and Smoniewskis.

In conjunction with the tour we sold 280 native plants that will help beautify the area and in some cases reduce erosion.

IMPROVE FISH HABITAT:

Lee Gatzke and his Habitat Committee worked with Jefferson County, the DNR and the City of Lake Mills to improve fish habitat in Rock Lake by installing “Fish Sticks” at the north end of the lake this coming winter when the ice is thick enough to hold an end loader or tractor.

Fish Sticks is a DNR program started nearly six years ago to help lake and other waterways improve fish and amphibian habitat. It is a group of trees (three to five) from eight to sixteen inches in diameter at the base and roughly twenty to twenty-five feet tall that are put into the water in the wintertime. They are cabled together and anchored to live trees on the shoreline and in the water.

RLIA also worked with the DNR, Jefferson County and the Natural Trust in an effort to expand a wild life refuge.

RLIA also continues to support the Clean Boats/Clean Water program

PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL EVENTS:

As in past years, RLIA participate in the Fall Festival, and Knickerbocker Days. We did not participate in Town and Country Days this year given all the attention we placed on completing the work necessary to conclude the lake management plan.

We did, however, host an Environmental Clean-up day which was a huge success. We had over 50 volunteers from the community, boy scouts, girl scouts, school pupils and church groups (St. Paul Lutheran sent over 35 volunteers!) We cleaned Bartel's Beach, the Mill Pond, Tyranenna Park, Ferry Park, Miljala Shores and Korth Park. We removed enough garlic mustard and debris to fill two dumpsters including a pipe, a dead possum and Mike Nesemann waded out to pull in a television cabinet. Thanks to all the volunteers for their work on what was a cold and rather damp day.

Recently, thanks to Patricia Cicero's power point presentation, we met with the Jefferson Realtors to discuss what buyers of lake property need to be aware of in terms of zoning, pier and water regulations and DNR requirements. We were well received and answered a number of good questions from the group.

We were at two Farmers' Market events to publicize the garden tour and sell native plants.

PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL EVENTS:

As I've mentioned we partnered with a number of organizations this year; WI DNR, Wisconsin Lakes, Jefferson County Land and Water, Natural Trust, Jefferson Master Gardeners, Rock River Coalition, Wisconsin Extension, Jefferson Realtor Association, Lake Mills schools, Lake Mills Library, City and Town of Lake Mills. The risk of naming groups or volunteers is that one invariably forgets someone. It is not intentional and I apologize if I've missed your group or organization.

KEEP MEMBERS INFORMED OF PROJECTS, EVENTS, LEGISLATION:

As you can probably tell from the number of emails you have received this year, we installed a new email tool, Vertical Response, that allows us to communicate with all members for whom we have email addresses. This has greatly helped us get timely information out to you. If you want to receive emails, or if you don't, please let us know.

Susan, Stan and Tim have been busy updating our web and Facebook pages with information and events. In addition there have been a number of flyers and newspaper articles to alert you to event and provide information.

We hope this have been useful. We welcome your input and ideas.

We also sent out over 50 new homeowners packets. This packet contains helpful information on RLIA, the Clean Boats/Clean Waters program, Rock Lake regulation, zoning regulations and contact information.

SEEK WAYS TO FUND MAJOR PROJECTS:

Other than the DNR grant, over \$9,000, to fund the lake management plan we did not seek any grant money or hold any additional fund raisers.

Gail Juszcak has graciously donated the reproduction rights of the image "Lillies on the Lake". Eli Wedel photographed the image and Wallflower Markets is printing it to make prints and note cards for our promotional material this year. Thanks Gail, Eli Wedel and Wallflower Markets.

Our treasurer, Jim Colegrove, signed us up on the "AmazonSmile" program. Each purchase you make through Amazon where you designate us as your charitable organization Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to RLIA. You will find more information on this on our website.

PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE FOR SHORE LAND RESTORATION:

As previously mentioned we held the garden tour and sold native plants. This will be a priority moving forward since it is a recommendation of the advisory committee and will undoubtedly make it into the final report/plan.

INVOLVE OUR YOUTH:

While our young people did participate in the environmental clean up and marking the storm drains in the city, we were not successful in having them join our committees. While there was some initial interest from the schools it was not successful. We hope to find ways to engage our young people in events, committees and educational opportunities in the future, since they are our future.

TAP INTO THE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF VOLUNTEERS MORE:

Here I believe we had some great success. People were very generous with their time. I have listed the advisory committee and organizations. I would now like to thank individuals that helped us this year:

Johana Chworowsky
Larry Clark
Paul Garrison
Megan Gauger
Pam Geib
Rob Goetz
Susan Graham
Sally Jones
Jim Kehler
Claire Kirschhoffer
Bill Krieger
Margy Kruger
Matt Miller
Mike and Sue Neleman
Darrell Pope
Janet Pyles
Cecilia Smoniewski
Bob and Sue Volenec
Pearl Wallace
Vickie and Morris Wickliffe

and of course we can not say enough for all that Patricia Cicero does for our organization.

Also I want to thank you, the membership, for your support both financially as well as providing us with your feedback and ideas. We saw a modest increase this past year from 147 members to 150 but that is encouraging.

Lastly I'd like to thank the Board for their tireless service;

Tim Campbell
Jim Colegrove
Lee Gatzke
Alex Mulligan
Nathan Pyles
Stan Smoniewski
Lianna Spencer
Susan Trier

In addition, I'd like to thank their families for sharing their family member with us. We know it takes away time from your family time.

2017 -2018:

This next year should be an exciting time. We will have new board members and a new lake management plan to guide our future work and activities. Our committees, direction and events will be guided in a significant way by this plan. Naturally we will have our on-going obligations and events that have been a part of the organization for many years.

Thank you for another good year,

Wes Dawson
President, RLIA