

VELA General Meeting
June 2, 2012
10:00AM Os coda Township Conference Room
MINUTES

President Ron Mathison called meeting to order @10:03AM. He introduced the following: Board members – Janice Wilber, Carole and Joe Plunkey, Larry Evans, Paul Rekowski. Absent: Greg Cole, Leonard Brockhahn, Tom James. Lake Monitor – Dan Stock. Operator of Dam – Paul Merdzinski, Drain Commissioner – Gary Adams.

Ron explained reason for lowering of lake level – to facilitate operation of holding pens for steelhead fingerling's below the dam. Paul M and Gary Adams confirm reason. Bob Kelly (previous dam operator) concurred. Ron requested an improvement in communication process with DNR and volunteers operating the program – important to have prior notification to lowering level and he will send out on email list and place on the web site. Effort will be made to minimize impact on lake level. A member pointed out that lower than normal lake levels in the Spring have unintended consequences, like enhancing weed growth. Bob indicated there are wells on site to fill the ponds that could be used in lieu of lowering water levels in the lake. Paul Rekowski recommended use of these wells in years when the lake level is on the low side. Gary committed to try and build up the lake level in the future in anticipation of the steelhead water needs and to get the DNR to lower the tube into Van Etten Creek.

Ron reports in Treasurer's absence - funds are currently around \$17,000.00. He indicated monies may be used to remove logs in the lake or for more weed control, if needed.

Carole reports that May newsletter went to all lake residents, including non-members. She stated current assets in endowment fund are \$11,683.01, with \$821.20 spendable. Donations no longer are tax deductible in Michigan, however, they are deductible on your federal taxes. As chair for PR/VEL, Carole indicates they are currently processing application for 501 c. 3 status with the IRS (federal). The River Keeper Program is seeking more volunteers to monitor rivers and streams in the watershed. Macro-invertebrate monitoring continues with Arnie Leriche replacing Gene Stagner who moved to South Carolina. Quarterly meetings continue with the next meeting on July 26, 2012 @ 10:00AM in Greenbush Township Hall on Campbell Street. This meeting will have a presentation from all parties involved with the fish ladder proposal for Van Etten dam. This will be an informational meeting and while the panel will answer questions, it is **not intended to evolve into** a confrontational meeting where accusations are being hurled at the panel as in previous meetings. Soil erosion projects are still a focus for the group, following last years road/stream completed tasks. Member, Tom Staley, indicated trying to kayak down from County Line Rd. he found the river was impassable due to logjams. He is concerned that if they bust loose, they could cause a mess in the lake. Carole pointed out that a certain amount of woody debris is OK and actually desirable in the river. But if indeed it is necessary to remove logjams for navigation, that could be a legitimate use of funds.

Ron reports current membership @ 300.

Dan stated water clarity currently @ 6 feet (10 year average is 6.6 feet). Chlorophyll for 2011 was 6.6 ppb (10 year median 5.4 ppb). Awaiting Spring Phosphorus and Chlorophyll sample results due to a delay with the departure of the previous analyst at CMU, but it is believed that will be resolved soon..

VELA picnic (August 4, 2012 @ 3:00PM) seeking volunteers – Contact Janice.

Larry indicated those areas of the lake (12 different) receiving weed treatment - totaled 48 acres. 24 of these acres were on the Eastern Shelf, South of the island. 4 acres in the Northwest bay were treated with copper sulfate due to the algae. Monitoring will continue throughout the season and appropriate action will ensue.

Ron reported the reason for flood insurance for people living on the lake has always been present, mortgage lenders are just responding to the deluge of flood issues throughout the country, not necessarily ours. He also indicated that if your property is **not** above 593 ft., it is necessary to have flood insurance. If your mortgage company is insisting on flood insurance, you will need a legal surveyor to certify your buildings on your property are above this 593 ft. level.

Paul indicated he received an email from Steve Sendek from the DNR requesting VELA support at the PR/VEL July meeting regarding the fish ladder issue. Carole indicated the USFS and USFW will be represented at the meeting and the USFS representative may be Paul Thompson. Ron indicated that the previous District Ranger (Andrina) was opposed to the fish ladder. Paul suggested writing your federal and state representatives to request movement forward on the fish ladder. He said he would write a letter himself to his congressman supporting the fish ladder and could post the same on the VELA web site for an example letter.

Tom Staley requested a report of the lake level be posted on the web site. Mary Warzecha requested a map indicating sites of interest around the lake. - Ron to investigate.

Joe Plunkey
Secretary