

Van Etten Lake Association (VELA)
Fall General MEETING
Sept 7, 2024 10:00am – Parks Library

Draft

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order at 10:00 am. Board members present: Diane, Helen, Janet, John B., Tim, Mike, Charles, Ed. There were 18 stakeholders present.
 - Pledge
- II. Approval of Minutes from the Annual Meeting - July 6, 2024
- III. Board President's Comments - Diane Banks welcomed new board members and had all present board members introduce themselves and give a brief overview of where they live, past/present employment, etc.
Diane Banks thanked past board members for their service to VELA.
- IV. LakePro - Leonard Brockhahn reported in the absence of LakePro
The condition of the lake this year is much improved (clarity, algae, weeds) largely due to starting the process of treatment earlier. The first application of the most problematic areas was done on June 6th, instead of doing a survey in the spring and having to wait for the results to lay out a treatment plan. Because this worked so well this year, the plan moving forward is to use the Fall survey results to plan for the following year's application. The four areas of zero tolerance for weeds are: The North Bay, Camp Nissokone, The State Park swimming area and the Ratliff Park swimming area. Last week, the final survey of the lake was done and it showed great improvement from last year. The weed committee will meet in October to plan for next year and stick to a similar format from this year, with a goal of getting the first application done before Memorial Day.
Dan Banks is currently working on creating a "Lake Operations Manual" of how to take care of the lake. (Dam operation, weed control, resources, etc). This will be helpful with the transition of future board members, roles and duties.
Leonard spoke about the SAD dollars used this year. There is a \$70,000 budget for the year. This year's total spent was \$52,512.
A small test area is being monitored in the lake by Dan Banks and Ed Lanivich using muck pellets to reduce the 7-8 ft of muck in a 120'x120' area in the North

Bay. These results will be shared in late Fall with a possible intent to purchase muck pellets to treat problem areas in the lake.

Bill Palmer spoke up as a reminder from the treasurer at the township to make sure that all SAD expenses are turned in to the treasurer BEFORE September 15th, or they WILL NOT get paid this year. Leonard will make sure they receive the invoices.

V. Dam Update - Greg Cole

Nov. 1 is the first week of the lake draw-down. He suggests that everyone take their whole dock out to prevent damage and in the Spring watch for logs and tie up your watercraft. They removed a lot of brush and debris around the dam to paint and repair the concrete in the spring. They are going to add signage from the health department for risks of the PFAS foam and plan to add something to stop boats from tying onto the dam or getting too close. Greg also asked if in the future the VELA Board, if needed, could move more quickly on a response than in the past. Diane stated, yes. She will communicate with the board via email/Zoom if need be, on something that requires immediate attention. Charles asked Greg if there is any way to get the lake up to normal levels by Memorial Day weekend as he noticed many boaters experiencing problems launching in lower levels.

VI. RAB update - Mark Henry

The Air Force has not made much of a dent with the problem, they are only capturing part of the contamination ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the plume). They continue to install remedial wells in the Clarks Marsh and Operations areas.

VELA has agreed to move forward in providing a letter of support for RAB and will share a draft letter with Mark to review it before it may be submitted to appropriate officials (as Congress are the only ones to really pressure the Air Force). Maybe develop a letter that will include individual lake owner signatures to show the volume of people affected stating the threats, ie. pet health, sand/soil contamination.

The Air Force has pushed out expanding and treating from 2025 to 2028.

Mark encouraged members to attend the RAB meetings to stay informed and put pressure on the Air Force to step up and do the right thing to get the contamination cleaned up. The next meeting is set for Nov. 20th at the United Methodist Church in Oscoda from 5-8 p.m.

Janet asked if there are any epidemiological studies being done. VELA lake water contains 10-15x the acceptable amount of PFAS as drinking water and the water leaving the pipes from base and dumping into the AuSable River has 100x the level of acceptable drinking water levels.

Bill Palmer added that this also affects the township budget, as the township was told by the Air Force that if they want to remove contaminated infrastructure, pipes, etc, that it is now their property, and the cost lies on them for removal of some contaminated pipes. The cost is approximately \$4-6 million.

VII. Reports:

- Weed Committee - Leonard Brockhahn (See IV for combined LakePro and weed committee report)
- Treasurer - Tim O'Harran reported on current balances in the VELA account. Janet shared what the conditions are for spending monies from the Endowment Fund. There is around \$11,500 available to spend on things such as improving water quality, fish, and wildlife. The board will discuss possible ways to spend this money. Moving forward, the amount available annually will be more like \$1,000. Bill Palmer suggested that if VELA is looking for something to spend money on to support the lake, the playground equipment at Ratliff Park is over 30 years old and suggested perhaps we could donate monies to replace it.
- Membership - Diane Banks- Membership is up from last year. We are at 258. Diane spoke about creating a welcome packet for new property owners. She would disseminate these packets to the local Real Estate companies and the local Chamber of Commerce, along with a few title companies she has spoken with. The packet would have information on lake stewardship, application for VELA membership, septic safety, boating etiquette, etc.
- Picnic - Diane Banks - 87 people attended the picnic. It was a great success.
- Lake Monitor Report - Dan Stock was on vacation. Diane shared that Dan Stock is stepping down from being the Lake Monitor and stated that Adam Romatz will be taking his place. He has been shadowing Dan Stock for some time and is ready and eager to take this over.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings:

- VELA 2025 PICNIC
- August 2, 2025 (tentative)
- Annual Meeting: Saturday, July 5, 2025
- General Meeting: Saturday: Saturday, September 6, 2024