Beaver Dam LAKE DISTRICT

DRAFT MINUTES

TO BE APPROVED AT 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

BEAVER DAM LAKE DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2025
BEAVER DAM HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
500 GOULD STREET
BEAVER DAM, WI 53916

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order:

Chairman Foley called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM

Introductions & Roll Call:

Attendance: 69 members 14 guests

All commissioners were present. The Chairman recognized as guests, Jared Smith our Parliamentarian, Prof Genskow & UW WRM Nelson School graduate students, Mark Baldock WDNR fisheries biologist for our area and Arthur Watkinson WDNR Lakes biologist for 11 southern counties.

BDL - 1925 to 2025 & WRM Objectives

Chairman Foley began the program with a presentation with a historical timeline of Beaver Dam Lake (BDL) from 1925 to 2025. He acknowledged that much of the old-time information and photos were from presentations by Roger Knoll a well-known and respected historian of the Lake and Beaver Dam.

Agricultural changes were noted. Plowing spring and fall vs no-till and cover crops can have a major impact. The Dodge County Ag community is very active in improving practices. The Healthy Soil-Healthy Water program is one of the most active in the state. Residential practices have moved the opposite direction. Old shoreline photos showed typical cabins with natural vegetation with deep soil holding root structures common. Today large homes with lawns to water's edge predominate. Programs are

offered and residents encouraged to plant native species as buffers for water runoff and soil protection.

Boating changes were also compared. From mostly row boats to power boats taking over with small (by today's standards) motors to now seeing fishing, skiing and pontoon boats with horsepower in the hundreds. For a lake that averages less than 5 feet deep and a maximum barely over 7 feet, the subsurface turbulence can cause serious damage to vegetation and resuspension of high phosphorous sediment.

In the early 1900's (BDL) was famous as a northern pike lake. Today it is overrun with carp and buffalo fish. The lake is categorized as an impaired water body and in decline. Initiatives to slow the decline were discussed. Rough fish control efforts including barriers to spawning habitat, lake monitoring programs, shoreline repairs and the importance of volunteers were covered with more detail to follow.

WRM Program & Progress

The stage was then turned over to the WRM students who covered aspects of their last few months on the lake and work yet to be completed. These are graduate students completing a major project towards their degree at the UW Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. Discussion topics were:

Fieldwork: Water sampling and analysis was done monthly (May thru Aug, with Sept to be done) at three locations corresponding to historical sampling sites. Weather data along with DO, PH, Conductivity, and Clarity were sampled and samples sent for analysis of Orthophosphate, Total Phosphorous, and Chlorophyll-A. Trends from 1970's to present on Secchi readings (clarity) were shown, indicating this parameter of water quality has steadily declined over that timeline. A chart of summertime Chlorophyll-A (an indicator of algae) was shown.

Shoreline Assessment: Three priority shorelines were discussed. Students were trained by DNR on proper assessment protocols and using computerized mapping tools, 312 parcels were documented for littoral, shoreline and 35 ft inland conditions (such as vegetative cover, aquatic

plants and shoreline condition). Photographic data of each parcel were logged which will be useful to compare to any future changes.

Community outreach: Surveys were sent to shoreline property owners and several off-lake watershed residents. The survey covered lake issues, possible solutions, organizations and demographics. Results will be reviewed.

Yet to do: Modeling: possible sites for conservation opportunities on the watershed scale. Phosphorous predictions based on lake conditions, and an Erosion vulnerability of agricultural lands.

Their final report is expected to be complete with a presentation in Beaver Dam in early 2026. Contact information was provided.

Treasurer's Report & Annual Audit

Treasurer, Mike Zimmer stated that the annual audit was completed with no issues. He thanked our auditor who completed the effort pro bono. He then reviewed how we ended 2024, and where we are and expect to be for 2025. Specific projects were covered and not all are likely to be fully completed and that is considered in the proposed 2026 budget.

Budget for 2026

Chairman Foley present a series of photographs with volunteers providing critical sampling and data collection required for science based decision making. These volunteers were trained by DNR Water Quality Specialists to follow the standard protocol for sampling methods. The combination of volunteer and local agency support allowed the District to avoid significant purchased services. This information served as a bridge for the past year with the same multi functional support projected for the coming year.

Mike Zimmer presented the proposed budget details which were mailed to all District members with our annual meeting notice. Following a few questions on specific budget items, a motion to accept the budget was

made by Dale Maas, seconded by elector John Bordak, attending member and by voice vote unanimously approved. The special charge for 2026 will be $51.08 for each property.

Election of Commissioner

Chairman Foley explained the election procedures. One commissioner position was open this year for a three-year term. Mike Zimmer's term is up. At a previous meeting he was nominated and agreed to serve another term if elected. The floor was opened for additional nominations and after 3 attempts there were no new nominations. A member from the floor made a motion that Mike be elected by unanimous consent, a second was had and a voice vote with none opposed passed.

DNR Review & Plans

Arthur Watkinson, WDNR lakes biologist for southern WI presented on Beaver Dam Lake water quality trends. He gave a brief biography noting his passion for hunting and fishing. Three keys to the health of the lake are clarity, vegetation, and zooplankton and as District members recognize, property values are directly linked to water quality. Beaver Dam Lake is impaired, beginning with 100 plus years of nutrient laden sediment due to runoff and erosion. Phosphorous, the limiting nutrient for algae growth is trending downward. This is likely due to improved agricultural practices in the watershed but is still unacceptably high. When light can't reach the bottom due to algae and poor water quality, plants can't grow, fish suffer and can't survive.

In June an aquatic plant survey was done in Trestle Bay. There is very little plant life in the bay except near shore. With the carp removal program for the bay, plantings of desirable vegetation will be tried, along with habitat improvement for pan fish. The goal with fewer carp is sustainable cleaner water.

Finally, a discussion on practices that landowners implement. Photos detailed Healthy Soil Healthy Water Agriculture practices and drone

planting cover crops. Also a program with up to $1,000 is available for riparian owners to plant native shoreline plants.

Mark Baldock, WDNR fisheries biologist for our region, reviewed the DNR plan for Beaver Dan Lake. He began with a comparison of Buffalo and Carp, the rough fish of BDL. Both are omnivorous, with carp rooting up the lakebed while feeding and re-suspending silt with it's legacy phosphorous while buffalo's preferred food is zooplankton which happens to feed on algae. Both do serious damage but in different ways. The carp life cycle was displayed from eggs to adults. Carp have been removed from BDL utilizing commercial fishermen up until 2018 when the DNR stopped that program. He went through a number of slides showing the netting process. Very hard work.

He reviewed the current DNR plan which focuses on removing carp from three major spawning bays; Trestle, Rakes, and Bayside. The Trestle phase started in 2024. The existing carp barrier was repaired, the bay surveyed for vegetation, fish estimated by electrofishing and a rough fish removal contract placed. Roughly 160,000 pounds of rough fish were netted (30,000 # of buffalo were returned). Netting will continue for three years until the carp are below the 100 pounds per acre goal. Bluegill are being stocked as they are proven to eat carp eggs. Habitat improvements are also planned.

Next will be Rakes Bay. We may be able to start this year to determine summer populations and in spring trap carp in the bay when spawning, remove as many as possible and follow a plan similar to the Trestle plan.

Finally, the third bay at Bayside will proceed based on what is learned at the other two. The DNR believes that closing these three locations off to carp spawning and increasing pan fish numbers will reduce rough fish to an acceptable level. The panfish limit for BDL is planned to be reduced from the current 25 fish to 10 panfish in total for the 2027 regulations. Mark ended with a summary.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am.

A couple brief questions were answered before we were required to leave the auditorium. Mark and Arthur stayed to answer questions in the cafeteria.

Respectfully submitted

*Gene Mazewsk*i, Secretary