



STAR LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2016 NEWSLETTER

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Notes from Carolyn Herron, SLPOA President

Star Lake is fast coming to life after a short and not-so-cold winter, docks and lifts are appearing in their usual places, and are people anchored at the sand bar already with these warm days we've had?! The SLPOA is gearing up, too: We've already completed the first water test, Weed Watchers will be scouting for the earliest weeds that might be curly leaf pondweed, and we'll hold our Annual Meeting back at the lake again, this time at Camp Joy.

SLPOA Board members here for the winter stayed on top of the developments related to the proposed Star Lake Resort and Casino by attending meetings of the Limited Area Star Lake Comprehensive Plan, a consortium of Otter Tail County, White Earth Nation, Star Lake Township, SLPOA, and SRF Consulting Group. This group is studying "changes in transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, housing, etc." They held an Open House meeting March 30, and plan another June 9 at the Dent Community Center. It is so important that all Star Lake residents and those of surrounding communities attend these meetings to express their opinions and concerns about the Casino project. Remember, also, how hugely important it is to keep communicating with your Otter Tail County Commissioners about your concerns. You can email your concerns to: Wayne D. Johnson, District 2 Commissioner: waynej@loretel.net or Rick West, Public Works Division Director: rwest@co.ottertail.mn.us.

We've been fortunate to have a group called Star Lake Concerned Citizens Group (consisting of both SLPOA members and some not) working very hard to identify and investigate the key environmental issues which are felt to be crucial to have addressed as the Casino project moves along. These include effects on fishing, nesting wildlife, wild rice beds, on water quality from storm water runoff/wastewater treatment issues, on increased boat traffic, AIS introduction, etc.. Their goal is to generate enough awareness of environmental concerns to insure that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be called for and completed. Your SLPOA has endorsed the work of this group, who will give a report at the Annual Meeting, and will take down your name and contact information if you want to be kept on top of this important effort.

Lots to learn about and to do, and we still have to save time for fishing, cruising, skiing, family times...I guess these are the things that keep life at the lake in perspective and so fun and interesting!

* * 2016 SLPOA Annual Meeting * *

- When: Saturday, June 11, 2016 9:00 a.m.
- Where: Camp Joy Dining Hall 32521 380th St., Dent
Mr. & Mrs. Shayne Hollenbeck, owners, and our hosts
- Includes: Pancake breakfast served by Camp staff and funded by SLPOA

Agenda Items include:

- ◆ Approve minutes of last Annual Meeting and Treasurer's report. Report on audit of the SLPOA books
- ◆ Vote on proposed changes to SLPOA by-laws (see article below)
- ◆ Election of new Board members
- ◆ Report by Star Lake Concerned Citizens Group on their work to outline the critical environmental issues that need to be addressed regarding the proposed development of the Star Lake Resort and Casino
- ◆ We've invited Commissioner Wayne Johnson, and Otter Tail Economic Development Director Nick Leonard to speak about the Limited Area Star Lake Comprehensive Plan

Bring: Your check for \$25 for SLPOA membership if you've not paid yet.

SLPOA Proposed By-Law Changes

In the 2015 Spring Newsletter and at last year's SLPOA Annual Meeting in June the subject of By-Law Changes was discussed. The Board of Directors further discussed the proposed changes over the off-season and will advise membership of their recommendation at the upcoming annual meeting. In summary, the proposed by-law changes have to do with:

- 1) Reduction in Board Members
- 2) Eliminate the Board Position of 2nd Vice President
- 3) The Annual Meeting Date
- 4) Notice of Meetings
- 5) Director Meeting Quorum
- 6) Electronic Voting & Notifications

Please see page 7 for details and rationale on these proposed by-law changes. Carefully review and consider these changes, and provide any feedback to the directors that you may have. Note: A copy of the current By-Laws may be found on the SLPOA website and in the 2012 Membership Directory. *-continued on page 7*

Treasurer's Report

As of 05/18/2016 the balance in our SLPOA checking account is \$13,139.50.

For 2015-16 the number of paid memberships totaled 158. As of 05/18/2016 paid memberships totals 83.

- Jim Ebert, Treasurer

Water Quality

Here we go into our 19th year of lake water monitoring through our Otter Tail Coalition of Lake Associations' (COLA) program with RMB Labs in Detroit Lakes. Recall that we go out once a month for 5 times each summer, draw a water sample, which is analyzed for Total Phosphorus "TP" = food for algae), Chlorophyll-a (Chl-a = algae) and water clarity (how far down we see a white metal Secchi disc).

I already have completed the May test, thanks to Lee Mindemann, who had his fishing boat in the water, and saw down 19 feet, about 4 better than our average of 15. Pretty typical to have clear water these first 2 months.

When our data for 2015 was added into data for the other years, we can call up a trend analysis through rmbel.info to see how the lake is doing over time. TP and Chl-a show no trend either better or worse; good news they're not degrading, but it's always appealing to

try to reduce how much TP we have in the lake to make our algae blooms weaker and less frequent! Good plans for all of us are: Keep septic up to snuff and pumped regularly, keep shoreline dirt, leaves, yard runoff, pet waste, etc. out of the lake, and leave many natural weeds in the lake to hold the Phosphorus into the lake bottom and not available to the algae.

Good news that our Secchi disc clarity reading is officially improving since 1996 'till now! It's even improving just a little more definitely with last year's data added, since we had 2 really deep readings of 25 feet and 18 feet early on in 2015. Yay!

Remember that I'm always open to having helpers and observers go out with me to do these tests, which are roughly the 3rd Monday of every month and the Sunday preceding that. Call me at 520-625-9862 to join in!

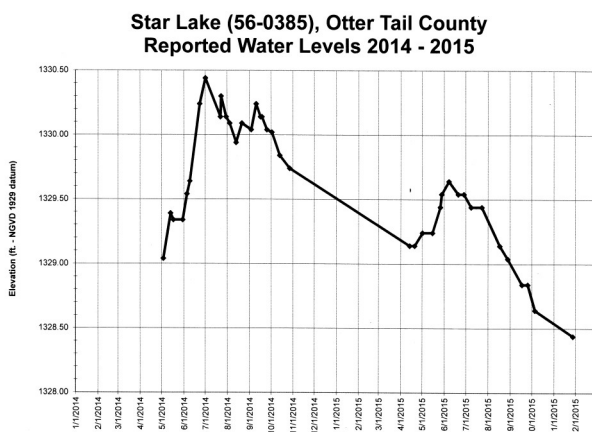
- Carolyn Herron, Water Quality Committee

Lake Water Levels

The following graph for Star Lake water levels 2014-2015 shows the rise in water levels after heavy rains in May of 2015 (7 inches). As of 5/21/16 we have recorded no rain in May of 2016. Star Lake can fluctuate a foot or more during the summer.

As of 5/13/16 Star Lake water level is at 1328.74 ft.

- Jim Ebert



Links to Lake Articles

Below are links to articles posted on the SLPOA website (starlakeassociation.com) concerning lake related information:

1. **MN DNR - Fisheries Management - Lake Survey Report for Star Lake:** This report has information about Star Lake water and fisheries that was gathered last year. [Click here](#) or go to News page on website to view full report.
2. **Legislative Update, Spring 2016, By Jeff Forester, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates:** There are some important bills moving and Minnesota Lakes and Rivers has been very busy. Below are some of the issues. [Click here](#) or go to News page on website to view full article.

- DNR Policy Bill: HF 2866/SF 2793
- Sales Tax Exemption for Lake Associations on herbicide to treat lakes for AIS
- State General Tax On Cabins Reform
- Sales Tax on Vacation Home Rental
- Muskies

Shoreland Management Update

Ottertail County Ordinance changes that can effect Star Lake:

- Ottertail County Commissioners in April of this year approved changes to the Shoreland Management Ordinance, whose major change is the allowable population density of lakeshore developments. The County has relaxed its' limits to become inline with the standards set by the State of Minnesota. This change effectively doubles or triples the allowable density of developments on lakeshore in Ottertail County. This change could negatively impact Star Lake considerably more than the proposed White Earth Nation development. The full ordinance can be seen here: <http://www.co.otter-tail.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/1017>
- Another ordinance that received a major change was the Dock and Riparian Use Ordinance. The County Commissioners approved this ordinance in March of this year. Its' major change was placement of docks and boat lifts near property lines. Now your dock or boat lift can not cross over the property line as it extends out into the water (Riparian Zone) and you must maintain a 5' setback from the property line. The full ordinance can be seen here: <http://www.co.otter-tail.mn.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8862>

The SLPOA will be monitoring the Shoreland Management ordinance closely because of the potential negative impact it can have for Star Lake.

Limited Area Star Lake Comprehensive Plan

First and foremost this group is not a White Earth Nation development planning group. It is a group put together by the consulting group (SRF) that Ottertail County has used over the last several years to conduct traffic studies and planned road improvements throughout the County. Its' formation was precipitated by the White Earth Nation Resort/Casino Development and prior studies that indicated road improvement was needed in the Star Lake area, primarily Ottertail County Highway 41.

As we work through this process, we try to estimate other development on or near the lake that could happen between now and 2040. The primary focus is on roadways and traffic safety but the planning team is also addressing utilities and other infrastructure needs that are present or maybe be needed by the year 2040.

We have held 3 planning team meetings to date and hosted a very well attended neighborhood meeting on March 30th. The purpose of that meeting was to gather feedback from the community as the planning process begins. **There will be an Open House on June 9th from 4:00-7:00pm at the Dent Community Center** where the team will host stations on the varying aspects of this plan and discuss where we are to this point and again gather feedback from the community.

Improved electrical service is already in the works with a new substation being located on the south side of the slough on 41 across the road and south of the WEN property. This will serve about 500 LREC customers in and around Star Lake and is being primarily paid for by the White Earth Nation. This project will not increase the utility rates of the LREC customers around the Lake.

Both intersections of County 41 (County 35 and State 108) will see improvements. What those will be is yet to be determined. As well as road improvements on several ancillary roadways. The improvements required because of increased immediate traffic, to our understanding, will be paid for by the WEN, normal, scheduled improvements will be handled as any highway project for the county would.

SLPOA actions in regards to Resort/Casino Project

The SLPOA first officially heard of the development at the same time as everyone else including Ottertail County. Here is a brief timeline of the activities the board and some of its members have done since finding out about the development:

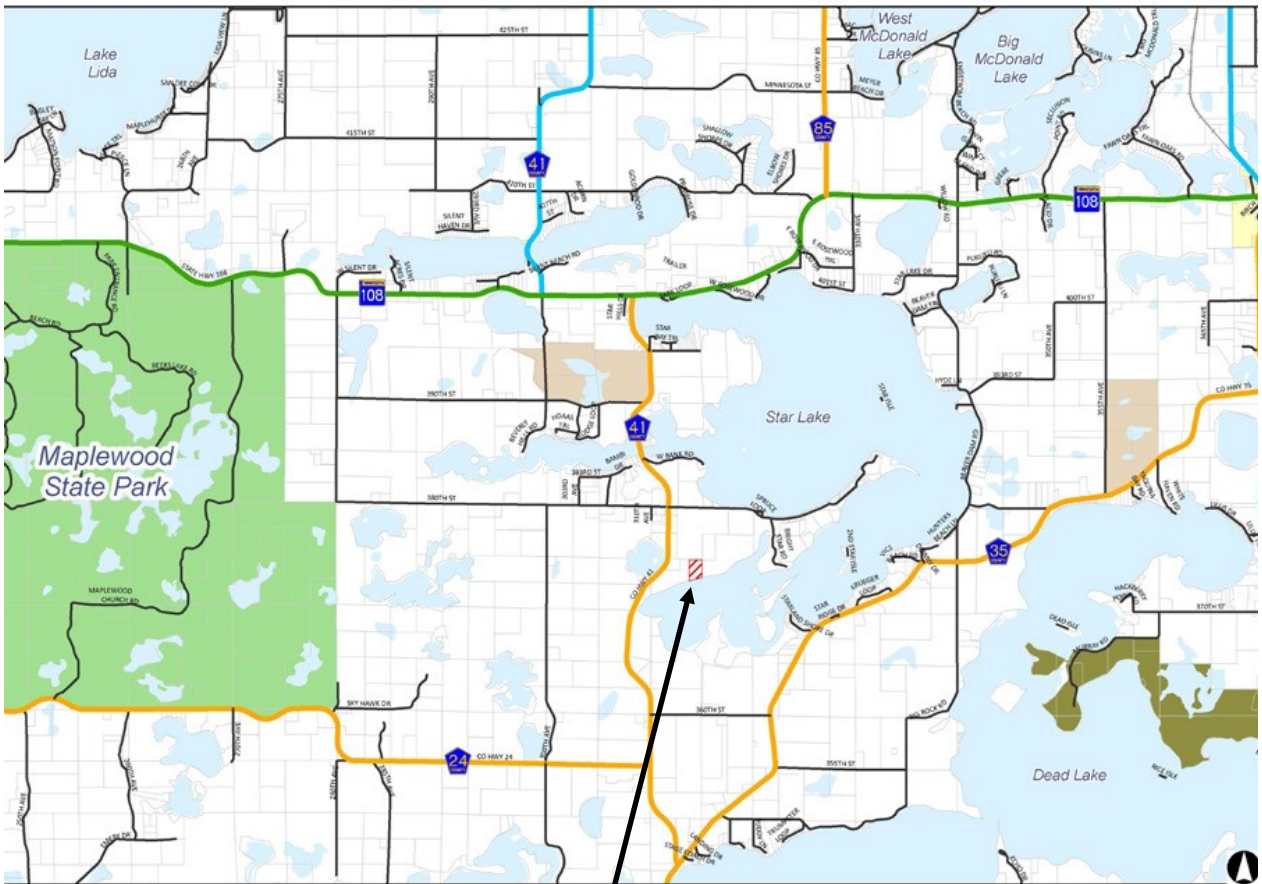
- ◆ SLPOA Board president wrote an article expressing concern over proposed development that appeared in fall newsletter.
- ◆ SLPOA Board president asked to go to initial meeting with County and Tribe, was turned down by County.
- ◆ Individually meet with DNR, County and independent attorney to determine options.
- ◆ Held public board meeting in October and gathered input from membership.
- ◆ Based on input and board discussion, adopted the position statement at our Nov 12th board meeting in regards to the White Earth Nation Development "The SLPOA would like to establish a cooperative relationship with White Earth Nation, Dept. of Interior, State of Minnesota, Otter Tail County and Star Lake Township to ensure the orderly and proper development of Star Lake and to make sure the concerns of the Star Lake Property Owners Association Board of Directors, and all property owners are represented and included in the project as it proceeds."
- ◆ The board appointed a liaison between the SLPOA, the County and the White Earth Nation.
- ◆ Started communications between these 3 organizations for open dialogue as this project develops. To date mainly have clarified that the White Earth Nation is not purchasing the Galaxy, or Camp Joy, that they are not going to use 380th in a significant way, that they do have an offer on the table for purchasing the old Rock Pile (but not an agreement) and most recently convincing the White Earth Nation to voluntarily conduct an MPCA EAW on their proposed develop of the fee land
- ◆ Created a survey for all property owners (not just members) on the development; summary results were made public at the Jan 2916 Board meeting.
- ◆ Hired an attorney (after 2 others turned us down) to write an opinion based on the questions created by the survey. See next page for more info on the questions and responses.
- ◆ Got a seat on the Limited Star Lake Comprehensive Planning Team which is the group that held the public input meeting on March 30th. The focus of this team is to make sure the infrastructure is in place to support a development of this size, i.e. roads, utilities, communications, water supply, water treatment etc. (see article on previous page).
- ◆ Met with LREC in regards to the new substation going in on the old Peterson farm south of the slough on west side of 41. This sub station will improve the electrical supply for 500 lake residents without increasing electric bills.
- ◆ Met with DNR fisheries manager and discussed fishing rights and was assured that the White Earth Nation can't do what has happened on Mille Lacs after he verified that with St. Paul.
- ◆ Attended all county commissioners meeting discussing this proposed development as well as met with County Engineer and Shoreland Management.
- ◆ Provided SRF the summary of our survey to be incorporated into the plan we develop as the LSLCPT.
- ◆ Endorsed private group organizing to help protect the environment as this development moves forward.

Attorney Opinion Letter

The SLPOA hired an attorney for an opinion regarding the questions below that we received from the online survey last winter regarding the Resort/Casino project.

1. Can The White Earth Nation legally build the casino on trust land? and is there anything we can do to stop it?
2. If the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) comes back with negative results, and the county approves, is there an appeal process?
3. What process would the White Earth Nation have to go through for fee to trust transition of land?
4. Can The White Earth Nation consolidate all newly acquired parcels of land into one large parcel? If so, what changes?
5. What happens if they choose to change or add roadways? Who pays for it?
6. If the development negatively impacts the environment, could the developer be held liable?
7. What is the definition of a casino? Pertaining to connecting to other structures.

To review the Attorney opinion letter go to the Casino Info page on our SLPOA website, or [click here](#).



Location of Proposed Resort/Casino Development: East of Cty Hwy 41 and South of 380th St

Proposed By-Law Changes (continued)

Please carefully review and consider these changes, and provide any feedback to the directors that you may have.

PROPOSED CHANGES:

1. Reduction in Board Members. Article I, Section 1 of the current By-Laws states: “The business of the corporation shall be managed by a board consisting of nine directors, or such other number as the voting members shall from time to time determine by amendment of these By-Laws. The members of the board shall be elected at the annual meeting of the corporation and shall be elected by a majority of the membership present and voting, a quorum being present.”
 - a. *Proposed change: “The business of the corporation shall be managed by a board consisting of ~~nine~~ seven directors, or such other number as the voting members shall from time to time determine by amendment of these By-Laws. The members of the board shall be elected at the annual meeting of the corporation and shall be elected by a majority of the membership present and voting, a quorum being present.”*
 - b. Rationale:
 - i. Given the majority of “seasonal” property owners, and the difficulty in recent years to find 9 SLPOA members willing to serve on the board, perhaps the membership needs to recognize that trend, and reduce the number of directors to Seven (7).
2. Eliminate the board position of 2nd Vice President. Article II, Section 1 states: “Officers of the corporation shall consist of a president, first vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. No officer shall hold two offices.”
 - a. *Proposed change: “Officers of the corporation shall consist of a president, ~~first~~ vice-president, ~~second vice-president~~, secretary, and treasurer. No officer shall hold two offices.”*
 - b. *Proposed change: “In the absence of the president and vice-president, the treasurer shall preside at all director’s meetings and meetings of the membership.”*
 - c. Rationale:
 - i. With a reduction in the number of directors it would seem logical to reduce the officers.
 - ii. With the elimination of the 2nd Vice-President, the succession of leadership shall pass to the treasurer.
3. The Annual Meeting Date. Article IV, Section 1 of the current By-Laws states: “that the annual meeting shall be held in June of each year.”
 - a. *Proposed change: “that the annual meeting be held in ~~June~~ between Memorial Day and Labor Day of each year.”*
 - b. Rationale –
 - i. Given the # of “seasonal” members of the board and committees, arriving back to the lake in April/May, getting cabins opened, boats & lifts installed, conducting the 1st Board Meeting of the season, and publishing the Spring Newsletter; the requirement for a June meeting creates undue stress on all involved.
4. Notice of Meetings. Article IV Section 2 currently states: “... written notice of the time and place of the annual meeting be mailed to members at their last known address at least 10 days prior to the meeting.”
 - a. *Proposed change: “written notice of the time and place of the annual meeting be ~~mailed~~ **communicated** to members at their last known address at least 10 days prior to the meeting.”*
5. Director Meeting Quorum. Article V, Section 2 states: “Five members of the Board of Directors shall constitute the necessary quorum for the transaction of business.”
 - a. *Proposed Change: “~~Five~~ **Four** members of the Board of Directors, **two of which must be officers**, shall constitute the necessary quorum for the transaction of business.”*
 - b. Rationale: With the quorum reduction to four, it would seem prudent that at least two officers be present.

THIS IS NEW

6. Electronic Voting & Notifications. The following would be an addition to Article V (Directors’ Meetings) as Section 3 Electronic Participation.
 - a. Directors may attend regular or special meetings of the Board of Directors via conference call, skype, or other such interactive means. This would include the right to vote on matters currently before the board.
 - i. The secretary would so note the recorded votes,
 - ii. Email would NOT apply in this case, as it is not an interactive medium,
 - b. Email notifications will be accepted as a form of “written notifications” as it relates to Board of Director meetings. The secretary would be required to print the email message and attach to the meeting minutes.

Star Lake Property Owners' Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 155

Dent, MN 56528-0155



MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

SLPOA Annual Meeting on Star Lake!

Saturday, June 11, 2016
Check-in begins at 9:00 a.m.

Camp Joy Dining Hall
32521 380th St., Dent / Star Lake

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!