

Clitherall Lake Association
Annual Membership Meeting Minutes
July 11, 2026
Approved

President Scott Early called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

Contest:

Scott announced the 2 winners of the coffee cup photo contest. Darwyn Smith won with a winter lake scene, and Dick Bierman won with a summer lake picture.

Board Introduction:

Scott introduced the current board members: Tom Frank, Alan Storry, Eric Pierskalla, Bret Sorensen, Steve Adams, Jeff Stabnow, Beth Franklin, Mike Lipke, Chris Dietz, Jeff Lindholm, who was not present, and Ron Nelson, who is completing the term of Harley Anderson. Scott stated that Harley retired from the board earlier this year and expressed his appreciation for Harley's years of service to the board.

Scott announced that Ron Nelson, Jeff Lindholm, and Mike Lipke are on the ballot for another term.

Treasurer's Report:

Alan Storry thanked the association members for their financial support. He said that Treasurer's Reports are created 6 times a year, April through September, and are published on the CLA website. He encouraged members to view them and to contact the board with any questions or concerns.

He then gave a summary of last year's financials. About \$16,000 in membership dues and donations were received. Earned interest and fundraising brought the revenue for the year to approximately \$23,000. Expenditures for the year also totaled around \$23,000. Major expenditures included \$15,000 for fish stocking, \$2000 for AIS research funding, \$700 for hazard buoy placement and removal, and membership dues for the organizations that the CLA belongs to.

Fisheries Report:

Tom Frank reviewed the fish stocking done by the lake association over the past few years as well as the plan to again stock \$15,000 worth of walleye fingerlings this year. He said that lake surveys done by the DNR showed an increase in the walleye count from 2-3 fish per test net in the 2020 survey to 5 fish in 2024, and that the next survey will be performed in 2027.

A member asked whether the association has studied the lake habitat to see if it could be improved for walleyes. Tom said that those types of studies and projects are generally done by the DNR, and the main factors affecting walleyes in Clitherall Lake are predator fish and a limited amount of good spawning areas for walleye.

Someone wanted to know if all the fish are stocked in one location, and Tom informed him that half of the fingerlings are put in at the public access, and the other half at Bonnie Beach Resort.

Another question asked was whether any discussions with the DNR about slot limits have occurred. Tom replied that he has not heard of any. Past board member Dave Franklin said that approximately 12 years ago the DNR did a study with the decision that a slot limit would not be beneficial.

Loon Count:

Tom also performed the loon count for the year. He reported that on 3 different trips around the lake he counted between 11 and 13 loons. There are 3 successful nesting pairs, one pair with 2 chicks, and the others with a single chick.

Guest Speaker:

Scott introduced the guest speaker, Peter Guck, Riparian Conservation Specialist for the East Otter Tail County Soil and Water Conservation District. Peter described the purpose and funding of the Shoreline Program that the district operates. Copies of the newly updated Lake Stewardship Guidebook were available at the meeting, purchased by the lake association. This book is a collaborative project of the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA), East and West Otter Tail SWCDs and Otter Tail County Land & Resource Management. Peter referenced portions of it during his talk.

He said that Otter Tail County has been losing between 1 and 2 percent of natural shoreline every decade, which equates to 7 miles of shoreline. Much of this development impacts the shoreline buffer zone causing degradation of water quality due to runoff, erosion, and increased warming of the water.

The Shoreline Program operated by the SWCD offers technical and financial assistance to landowners to identify and address shoreline issues. They will come out to assess and evaluate the property and design natural buffer solutions free of charge. They can also perform the work, and 75% of the cost could be covered by the SWCD via funding from the Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment passed in 2010. Peter said that this funding is channeled to applicants based on how the lake is classified, with more impaired lakes receiving funds first.

Scott told the group that a section of his property had just been completed through this program and added that the property owner is required to maintain the area for 10 years as part of the financial cost-share agreement.

Scott then encouraged members to take the Lake Steward Quiz on the Minnesota Lakes & Rivers website. The CLA is part of their Lake Steward program and will award a Lake Steward sign to qualifying landowners.

Boat Parade:

Scott said that 26 boats started the parade on July 4, but only 5 completed the entire route. 2 boats won prizes for best decorated, however at the time of the meeting their names were not yet known.

Swimmer's Itch:

Scott asked the membership about the prevalence of swimmer's itch in the lake, many members said that it was still a problem for them. Some discussion occurred on the subject. Scott said that there has not been any information yet from the zebra mussel – swimmer's itch study that the CLA donated funds to MAISRC for last fall.

Election:

Scott Early announced the results of the voting. All 3 people on the ballot were elected to the board. Scott also announced that we will be electing a new board president at the directors meeting following this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15.

Submitted by Eric Pierskalla