



Big Birch Lake Association NEWSLETTER

No. 163

July 2026

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Jay Anderson	763.482.1926
Mark Erdmann	763.386.9254
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The Big Birch Lake Association

Newsletter is an official

publication of the Big Birch Lake

Association, Inc. PO Box 342,

Grey Eagle, MN 563336

Craig Tweedale, President

Robert Kutter,

Secretary/newsletter editor

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Big Birch Lake Association shall be to improve and protect water quality, to advance the propagation and habitat of fish and to protect the welfare of all wildlife in Big Birch Lake and adjacent areas.

President's Letter

There is an old axiom that states, "If there is one thing that remains a constant, that is change". This will be my final president's message. My director term expires in July, and I have chosen to not run for another three-year term. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve on the Big Birch Lake Association (BBLA) in different roles for 9 years.

When I reflect over these past years, I feel that as an association we have accomplished many things such as updating from a paper process to computer systems to help with all the new financial, federal and state reports that need to be filled out. Director's positions have been fine tuned to work more effectively. I witnessed technology such as email and texting to be extremely helpful in helping our board members resolve problems even in the winter months when we are scattered all over the USA.

I was proud to be a director, treasurer and then president of the BBLA. It was especially rewarding to witness directors and volunteers giving up a large percent of their time to get a job done. It wasn't always easy or pretty, but they stuck to it, and always got the job done or the issue resolved.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all the directors and volunteers who poured their time and energy into our association. Your dedication has truly made a difference."

To our members, I would also like to thank all of our members for showing up at the BBLA meeting or other education meetings. Without our membership team, financial contributions and volunteers, we would not be able to have such a "healthy Lake" as noted by the "Lake Doctor" Steve McComas, Aquatic Ecologist. Nor would the association receive, along with Little Birch Lake, the Todd County Soil and Water Conservation Award for outstanding work on protecting the water and surrounding areas of Big and Little Birch Lakes. We were one of six nominees in Todd County and the Todd County Board awarded us this honor. This award allows our lakes to compete against all other Minnesota Counties for the top honor in the state in December.

I believe the BBLA brings people together and creates a unique bond and lasting friendships as they strive to preserve the lake and surrounding area for future generations to enjoy.

I will always be active as a BBLA volunteer in some capacity, so I'm sure I will see many of you around. Until then, take care and enjoy the lake you are preserving.

Farnum guest speaker at annual meeting Aug. 15

Kevin Farnum, an expert on starry stonewort, will be the guest speaker at the BBLA Annual meeting on August 15 at St. Joseph's Church in Grey Eagle. Farnum will begin his presentation at 8:30 a.m. The business meeting will follow.

Obituary of lake resident

Edward Joseph Tomsche, DVM, passed from this earthly world on May 22, 2026, surrounded by his family. He was 95 years old. Ed was a man with an extraordinary work ethic, entrepreneurial spirit, and deep devotion to his family, profession, community and faith in God.

Ed was born on May 19, 1931, in Albany, Minnesota, to Emil and Christine (Broeker) Tomsche. He was the oldest of six children.

Ed married Theresa (West) Tomsche on August 28, 1954. They moved to Melrose where they raised five children. Theresa was the love of his life. Ed would be the first to say that marrying Theresa was the best thing that ever happened to him. Shortly before Ed’s passing, he told family, “Take care of your mother. I will be watching”. Their commitment and love for each other was an inspiration to everyone.

Ed and Theresa were blessed with many extraordinary friends and neighbors in the Melrose area, as well as Big Birch Lake, where they have lived for the last 25 years. Ed and Theresa also cherished spending their winters with their many friends in Sun City West, Arizona, for over 40 years.

Rooted in the rhythms of small-town Minnesota life, Ed followed in the footsteps of his father and pursued a calling in veterinary medicine. Throughout his lengthy career, Ed's dedication to generations of family farmers never wavered. Doc Tomsche was known for his skill and tireless commitment to the area farmers. He was always there when it mattered most.

Ed's ambitions extended far beyond the barn and the clinic. He was a founding partner in an array of ventures that shaped business and agriculture across central Minnesota. He was also a quiet but significant force behind many ventures that might not otherwise have taken root.

BBLA Financial Report for May 2026

				May 31, 26
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Checking/Savings				
	1065	Gene Waldorf Legacy Fund - Cert		51,298.73
	1006	Checking -Stearns Bank		2,617.97
	1060	Certificate of Deposit		140,204.57
	1005	Checking-CMCU		20,437.15
	1010	Share Account-CMCU		35.90
	1020	Money Markey-CMCU		45,890.82
Total Checking/Savings				260,485.14
Other Current Assets				
	1080	Initiative Foundation Fund		65,681.41
	1499	Undeposited Funds		1,515.00
Total Other Current Assets				67,196.41
Total Current Assets				327,681.55
TOTAL ASSETS				327,681.55
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Long Term Liabilities				
	2550	Reserve		
		2551 Aquatic-Invasive Species		100,000.00
		2552 Future Buffer Strips		14,495.72
Total 2550 Reserve				114,495.72
Total Long Term Liabilities				114,495.72
Total Liabilities				114,495.72
Equity				
	3990	Unrestricted Net Assets		169,747.32
		Net Income		43,438.51
Total Equity				213,185.83
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY				327,681.55

Ed is survived by his beloved wife of 71 years, Theresa; his children, Daniel (Karen Sand), David (Molly), Steven (Brenda), Mary, and Michael (Amy); twelve grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren; and sisters, Dorthy Schaefer (Ben) from Fairfax, Virginia, Agnes Cushing from The Villages, Florida, and Mary Lou Christenson (Whitey) from Paynesville.

Ed was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers, Thomas Tomsche from Albany and Robert Tomsche from Sauk Centre.

Ed Tomsche lived a full and purposeful life — one measured not just in the animals he healed or the businesses he built, but in the rich friendships he had and in the family Ed and Theresa created together. Ed was our fearless leader. He will be deeply missed and long remembered by his wife, his family and his friends.

Ed’s family want to thank everyone at St. Cloud CentraCare Hospice for their extraordinary kindness and professionalism. The family also wants to thank those that participated in Ed's care in the last few years. You are all angels.



Kevin Farnum, guest speaker at BBLA Annual Meeting, Aug. 15, at 8:30 a.m. at St. Joseph’s Church, Grey Eagle. Coffee, rolls at 8 a.m.



How the Big Birch Lake Association began

"I like fishing for walleye. We gotta get more walleye in Big Birch."
--Ed Wiehoff

Kutter's Kolumn

Do you know how and when the Big Birch Lake Association began? I knew when it began, 1969, and who some of the founding organizers were, and some of the early general purposes for the organization, but I did not know how an idea, hatched by some men meeting at the Eastside Bait Shop in Melrose became the foundation of what has become the modern and model lake association until I interviewed Vern Klasen. (However, the BBLA was not the first lake association. More on that later.)

Elmer Hollenkamp and Klasen owned Eastside Bait. Working with Roger Ilgen of Grey Eagle, they had a hatchery for sucker minnows. Over a conversation with Ed Wiehoff, a part time bartender at Curly's Bar, Wiehoff said, "I like fishing for walleye. We gotta get more walleye in Big Birch."

They decided to check with the DNR because it stripped walleye eggs. The DNR got back to them and said it would do one better and give them fry to rear in ponds, but it could not give an individual fry, but if they had an organization, the DNR could donate fry for rearing in its ponds. That way by fall, they could have fingerlings to put in the lake.

So Wiehoff hurried to gather his neighbor, Vic McConnell, and others from the lake, Elmer Mainz, Elmer Gangl, who owned a bar in St. Rosa, and Klasen to form the Big Birch Lake Association. With an official organization, and several area rearing ponds in the Grey Eagle and St. Rosa area, they were off to putting fingerlings in the lake.

These men helping the DNR, using DNR seines (nets) removed fry from the local rearing ponds. Weeds were abundant, so the DNR said they would not deal with the weeds. Millard Tew, the DNR game warden and neighbor to the bait shop, heard about this and said, "Well that's a shame. Why don't we do that on Sunday, and I will help."



Vern Klasen is a founding BBLA Board member and only surviving member of the original board. Vern and Marlene live on the south side of the lower bay.

So on a Sunday, they made several trips from ponds with minnows and walleye fingerlings. When the DNR got wind of Tew's involvement, he was called in to St. Paul to account for his involvement.

The earliest efforts to stock the lake began in March 1919 according to the Grey Eagle Gazette. The stocking included trout, crappie, bass, and northern with both fingerlings and fry. Even with effort to stock the lake, it was closed to fishing in 1924 due to overfishing.

The Big Birch Lake Conservation Club met at McCleary's cabin on Sandy Beach in August of 1936. The club, thought to be the first on the lake, sought ways to maintain and improve the roads along the beach.

In 1941, the Melrose Game and Fish Club released 500 black bass, 13,000 crappies, and 6,000 sunfish in BBL. Retrieved from shallow waters in the eastern part of the state, the sizes of the fish were between 2 and 4 inches. A Grey Eagle Sportsmen's Club was involved in removing carp from the lake in the 1960s.

The Big Birch Lake Association was formed in 1969 to look after the welfare of the lake. Dues were \$5.00 a year. Ed Wiehoff was president and Elmer Mainz was secretary/treasurer. Mainz was VP of Pulp, sulphite paper mill workers.

The first year the BBLA raised and released 800 pounds of walleye fingerlings. Later in 1969, it received a permit to install a permanent dam between Big and Little Birch Lakes. Paul Neibling, a retired engineer and lake resident, designed the dam and Worms Construction of New Munich did the work.

The organization also built rearing ponds east of the Rock Tavern that drained into Callahan Creek. By the fall of 1969, had put 80,000 pounds of walleye fingerlings into the lake from local rearing ponds.

When you see Vern, thank him for helping to start the Big Birch Lake Association.

Vern and Marlene surely know heaven seem closer in a house beside the water.

Membership will elect new board members at annual meeting

Board member elections at the Annual BBLA Meeting on August 15 will result in some changes in the makeup of the board. Deb Johnson has served for 12 years and thus reached the term limit. President Craig Tweeddale is retiring after 9 years on the board and Gary Rothstein resigned from the board in April. Also, Blake Johnson is not seeking another three-year term after serving for one term.

The board, serving as the nominating committee, has put forth the following candidates for election: Ned Domm and Jeremy Freudenrich. (Note, due to by-law changes at the last annual meeting candidates are not subject to an area designation.)

Since Rothstein resigned before his term was complete, the board will appoint John Grutsch to fill his term.

Association members have an opportunity to nominate candidates from the floor provided they comply with the association by-laws which state: "Nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting provided that notice of the intent thereof has been given to the president or vice president or any member of the nominating committee at least 10 days before the annual membership meeting."

Dispose of plastics properly

Board member, Grant Niehaus reminds lake resident there is an increasing amount of loose plastic items (plastic grocery bags, Zip Lock bags, plastic bags from packaging, styrofoam, etc.) blown around in the ditches, caught in the trees, and various wetlands. Even after picking up the ditches this past spring, he picked up an additional 10 plastic bags along the ditch that I cleaned a week before.

Niehaus reminds people to put loose plastic and foam (non-recyclable items) in a garbage bags prior to placing plastic in their garbage cans? This will significantly help reduce the amount of trash that ends up in our ditches and will make it easier for those who volunteer to clean ditches.

New volunteers conduct loon survey

Craig Tweeddale and his wife, Mary Lou, along with Mark German are officially taking over the loon survey duties from Bob Gerner and Bob Gagne who have conducted the survey for the past 3 years.

Tweeddale and German hope to get out every two weeks and plan on giving both the Facebook page editor and Grant Niehaus updates accordingly.

The BBLA Board thanks Gerner and Gagne for their volunteer work for the past three years.

Things you can do to help make the lake healthy

By Grant Niehaus

Walleye Stocking Donations: We are fundraising to stock 650lbs (\$13,000.00) of walleye fingerlings this fall. This will be in conjunction with the stocking the DNR will be doing this fall as well.. If you are able to donate, please either mail a check to the BBLA, (See address on newsletter and earmark check for fish stocking) or donate online via the BBLA website, under the fish stocking category.

Buffer Strips: We secured a 3 year contract with our existing landowners to keep their buffers in place. We are actively working with landowners to add additional buffers in the future.

Loons: In the last few weeks, the loon chicks have hatched. Please give them and the adult loons extra space when out on the water.

Emerald Ash Borer: It was confirmed that the emerald ash borer (EAB) was found just North of Grey Eagle on Highway 28. There was also unconfirmed reports of dying ash trees by the State Forest Campground and the south end of the lake. For those who want to protect their ash trees, please reach out to a local arborist/treatment company for injections, or smaller trees can be treated via the drench method using treatment that contains Imidacloprid (sold online or a nurseries/hardware stores). It is noted that ash trees must be treated before they show infestation signs of EAB (dying limbs, leaves turning yellow early, yellowing of bark, etc...) If more than 20% of the tree canopy is dead due to EAB infestation, the likelihood of the treatment being successful diminishes, and the tree will most likely die. Depending on the treatment, reapplication typically happens on a yearly or every other year basis. If you have a dead ash tree you plan on cutting down, please refrain from transporting this wood to avoid spreading EAB to other areas that may not have it currently.

Yard/Lake Waste/Fertilizer: Although we recommend to not apply fertilizer to your yard, (if you must), please use phosphorous free fertilizer (middle number is 0). Also, please refrain from putting grass clippings, leaves, and aquatic vegetation in areas near the lake, or wetlands that drain into the lake. This will help prevent additional phosphorous from entering the lake which will help reduce the weed and algae growth in the lake.

MEMBERSHIP AS OF JULY 2026

Althaus, Kurt & Lori	Freeman, Dave & Sue	Kutter, Wayne & Sherry	Russell, Jim & Mindy
Anderson, Chadyienne	Frerichs Frank, Jane	Lafayette Resort	Rutherford, Peter & Lourel
Anderson, Jean	Freudenrich, Jeremy & Holly	Larson, Brendan & Debi	Sadlowsky, Mike & Vicki
Anderson, Stephen & Lisa	Fröhling, Ronald & Lisa	Lesetmoe, Orlin & Aprile Barton	Sand, Daniel & Mary
Anderson, Todd & Debbie	Fuchs, Brian & Lori	Lilligren, Kirk & Cathy	Savage, William & Sharon
Athmann, Rosie	Gagne, Bob & Christine	Linn, Mike	Schanhaar, Tom & Deb
Atkinson, Dan & Jan	Gallagher, Pat & Caryn	Linz, Curtis & Mary	Schiemann, Chuck & Ellie
Atwood, Duane & Jody	Gangl, Dale	Loehr, Jim & Renee	Schlangen, Brad & Angie
Auger, John & Karen	Gasow, Ralph & Lori	Logan, Guy & Suzanne	Schlough, Thomas & Joyce
Austing, Dick & Jane	Gerads, Dale & Mary Lou	Mack, Murray & Sue	Schmid, Judith
Baywatch Villas Association	Gerdling, Dewayne & Alvina	Marshall, Karin	Schmid, Ted & Julie
Becker, Isaac & Nancy St. Pierre	Gerner, Robert & Charlene	Matchinsky, Roselyn	Schmidt, Thomas & Joann
Beckermann, Fran & Linda	Giles, Henry	Mauseth, Timothy & Andrea	Schnettler, John & Jan
Beehler, Robyn & Roxanne Olsen	Gordon, Brian & Kirsten	McConnell, David & Ann	Schnettler, Mike & Deb
Beekhuizen, Steven & Julie	Gruenke Lake Cabin LLC	McQueen, Kathy	Schraver, John & Lezlie
Benning, Ken & Mary Pat	Grutsch, John & Jan	Mehr, Mike & Lori	Schwantes, Mike & Amy
Benolken, Sue	Hatton, Rene & LuAnn	Mehr, Ralph & Mary Ann	Schwartz, Steve & Joann
Berg, Dwaine & Louise	Heinen, Nancy	Meyer, Barry & Denise	Schwieters, Charles & Beatrice
Berg, Ken & Bev	Heinze, Jay & Beth	Meyer, Glenn & Dianne	Seitzer, Jim & Belinda
Bergmann, Ken & Marilyn	Helget, Ron & Becky	Meyer, Virg & Joyce	Sexton Family Cabin
Berry, Brian & Cheri	Hendrickson, David & Colette	Miley, Rod & Nancy	Shafer, Tom & Bonnie
Bertram, Steve & Pam	Hennemann, Kitty	Mische, Hans & Julie	Sieben, Kevin & Beth
Beuning, James & Judine	Hildie & Earl Family	Moening, Lee & Judy	Sieben, Russell & Mary
Blommel Family	Hinman, John & Kathy	Mohr, Marilyn	Silbernagel, John & Marie
Blommel, Leroy & Marilynn	Hinnenkamp, Ben & Pam	Mohs, Dean & Sandy	Sinclair, James & Carolyn
Bohlig, Bob & June	Hinnenkamp, Hollis & Mary Jo	Molitor, Chick & Karen	Sinclair, Ken & Jan
Bomstad, Gary & Susan	Hoffman, Dan & Janell	Moser, Jean	Smith, Patrick & Susette
Bonacci, Dereck	Holthaus, Perry	Moser, Scott & Helen	Spanier, Eric & Jana
Bondhus, Adam	Hotzler, Mark & Jane	Mueller, Jerry	Spence, Jim & Christine
Borgerding, Clarence	Howe, Michael	Nathe, Julie	Stalboerger, Lorraine
Braegelmann, Pat & Sandy	Howieson, Kyle & Stacy	Nathe, Mark & Ann	Starfield, Glenn
Brixius, Bernie & Lisa	Hughes, Bob & Sally	Nathe, Mike & Laura	Steinbring, John & Sandy
Broman, Brad & Charlene	Hughes, Dan & Liz	Neville, Steve	Stomberg, Chuck & Nancy
Brunner, Paul & Lauri	Hughes, John & Susan	Niehaus, Bob & Deb	Strack, Bob & Laurie
Bruyere, James Jr	Hughes, Parry & Kathy	Niehaus, Carol	Studniski, Adam & Jolene
Bueckers, Ervin	Hughes, Tim & Kristine	Niehaus, Grant & Nicole	Taylor, Dennis & Trish
Bullock, Lou & Debbie	Humbert, Rick & Lois	Niehaus, Jeanne	Tembrock, Henry
Bussmann, Scott & Andrea	Humbert, Ryan & Stacy	Niehaus, John & Mary	Thelen, Hunter & Hailey
Butte, Rick	Ingold, Linnea	Orth, David & Linda	Thelen, Steve & Amy
Campbell, Mel & Sherry	Iverson, Ron & Jennifer	Osendorf, Phil & Gail	Thielen, Marvin & Judy
Carpenter, Todd & Laura	Jacobs, Dave & Diane	Ostendorf, Mark & Lisa	Thompson, Rod & Sally
Cavello, Butch & Amy	Janak, Roger & Julie	Ostrem, Justin & Amy	Timmermann, John
Cebuhar, Mary	Jansen, Jeff & Teri	Pavlivek, John & Kathryn	Tomsche, David & Molly
Chirhart, Penny	Jepperson, Craig & Mary	Pelo, Rod & Phyllis	Tomsche, Dr. Ed & Theresa
Chmielewski, Daniel & Barb	Joe Eiben Family	Peterson, Dr Thomas & Virginia	Trierweiler, Corey & Julie
Claussen, Kim	Johnson, Adrian & Kay	Phillips, Rosemary	Tschida, Amy
Comfort, Jeff & Julie	Johnson, Craig & Debra	Piersak, Jeff & Kim	Tweedale, Craig & Mary Lou
Costello, Kevin & Ann	Johnson, Daniel & Julie	Piersak, Thomas & Jeffrey	Uphoff, Jim & Lee
Costello, Scott	Kadri, Abdu & Janice	Pladson, Dr & Mrs Terence	Van Beck, Chad & Brenda
Damrow, Paul & June	Kalgren, Rick & Ann	Plombon, Roger & Gloria	Van Sloun, Shane & Ruth
Davis, Scott & Marjo	Kappes, Mike & Jannie	Poganski, Rock & Marcia	VanDrehle, Donald & Helen
Denne, Marv & Mary Beth	Kelly, Brandon & Becky	Provinzino, Chuck & Jannine	Vener, John
Dickhaus, Bob & Kris	Kemper, Jeff & Linda	Pundsack, Craig & Lisa	Vener, Mike & Kim
Dinndorf, Don & Vi	Kerfeld, Cheryl	Rahn, Dave & Lisa	Viere, Kevin & Ann
Dobesh, Jeff & Jill	Kerfeld, Glenn	Ramler, Chris & Amy	Voigt, Kenneth & Joan Zirbes-Voigt
Dubiel, Marvin & Pam	Klaphake, Florian & Doreen	Rasmussen, Steve & Sandy	Vowles, William & Dawn
Duevel, Jerome & Kim	Klasen, Kyle	Refsland, Curt & Mary	Waldvogel, Dennis
Duncomb, Bruce & Vicki	Klasen, Vern & Marlene	Richardson, David & Anna	Walters, George & Sue
Elfering Cabin LLC	Kloos, Mike & Becky	Rieger, Joel & Pamela	Ward, Rick & Missy
Enneking, Gene & Cheryl	Kluempke, Kirk	Rieland, Chuck & Lucy	Weinman, Roger & Constance
Erdmann, Mark & Summer	Koch, Bob & Connie	Rieland, Mary	Weitzel, Michele
Erickson, Russell	Kohorst, Don & Loni, Bob & Joan	Rieland, Matt & Shari	Welle, Larry & Rose
Everding, Matt & Missy Kotzer	Konsor, Stephen & Karen	Rieland, Roger & Pamela	Westbrock, Bruce & Linda
Eveslage, Greg & Karen	Kotsmith, Randy & Karen	Rieland, Shirley	Zaborski, Tom & Julia
Eveslage, Steve & Sarah	Kotsmith, Sharon	Roe, John & Janet	Zackoski, Michael & Kimberly
Falk, Jeremy & Jennifer	Krig, Gary & Peg	Roehrl, Joe & Margaret	Zaczkowski, Marie
First, Pete & Nicole	Kuehne, Ron & Midge	Rolfes, Chuck	Zenzen, Art & Marilyn
Fischer, Pete & Barbara	Kuhlmann, Mary	Rolfes, Mike & Susan	Zimmerman, Lowell & Kris
Flanders, Josh & Stacy	Kunkel, Phil & Rose	Rothstein, Gary & Ruth	
Flaws, Michael & Marilyn	Kutter, Lee & Gay	Roy, Robert & Barbara	
Fox, Thomas & Laurie	Kutter, Robert & Nancy	Rudolph, Jerry & Deb	

SPONSORSHIP AS OF MAY 2026



PLATINUM

Central MN Realty-Brandon Kelly	Grey Eagle
Eagle Dock & Lift LLC	Grey Eagle
Melrose Electric Inc	Melrose
Warrior Boats Inc	Melrose



GOLD

Leedstone	Melrose
Spiritz Liquor	Melrose
Freeport State Bank	Melrose
Rahns Oil & Propane	Melrose
Magnifi Financial - GE	Grey Eagle



SILVER

Double R Saloon Inc	Grey Eagle
Neville Hardware	Grey Eagle
Hinman Lawn Service	Grey Eagle
American Family Insurance - Kyle Hoium	Melrose
Meadowlark Country Club	Melrose
Kraemer Lumber Co Inc	Melrose
Kemper Excavating	Melrose
Lake Country Storage LLC	Melrose
Minnesota National Bank	Sauk Centre



BRONZE

Hennen Floor Covering Inc	Freeport
St. Rosa Lumber Inc	Freeport
All Stars Sports Bar & Grill	Freeport
Prime Source Printing	Freeport
Hennen Lumber Co Inc	Freeport
Update Buiding Supplies, LLC	Grey Eagle
Grey Eagle Electric Inc	Grey Eagle
Nancy's Bait & Tackle	Grey Eagle
Bueckers Recycling Services Inc	Melrose
Engelmeyer Land Services LLC	Melrose
Munson Feed Co Inc	Melrose
Mayers Excavating Inc	Melrose
Grey Eagle Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	Melrose
Dan Schmidt Printing Inc	Melrose
Hoffman Tree Service	Sauk Centre

BBLA Annual Meeting Minutes August 16, 2025

The annual meeting of the Big Birch Lake Association was called to order by President Craig Tweedale at 8:30 a.m.

President Tweedale thanked Missy Kotzer for preparing the financial reports and Mike Manthe for setting up the parish hall at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Grey Eagle, and Marilyn and Leroy Blommel for setting up the kitchen for coffee and rolls.

Tweedale introduced board members. Mike Sadlowsky was absent. Tweedale asked for volunteers to chair the Aquatic Invasive Species Committee as Deb Johnson's term would end at the next annual meeting. Tweedale asked for volunteers to be grant writers, and he thanked all volunteers who have served the organization in the past year.

Tweedale explained why the association board voted to sell the association building located on State Street in Grey Eagle for \$48000. The money will be put in an account and labeled the Gene and Bernie Waldorf Legacy Fund and used for lake improvement projects.

The budget for AIS will be cut for 2026.

Mark Erdmann moved to approve the minutes of the 2024 and Jay Anderson seconded the motion. The motion was adopted by acclamation of the members.

Treasurer Keven Costello gave the financial report in the form of a handout. He discussed association funds invested in the Initiative Foundation and how they can be used for lake improvement. Costello asked for a volunteer to be treasurer.

Matt Everding moved to approve the treasurer's report and Gary Rothstein seconded the motion. The motion was adopted by acclamation of the membership.

Grant Niehaus moved to keep dues at \$50. Jeanne Niehaus seconded the motion. The motion was adopted by acclamation of the membership.

The association bylaws written in 1985, have been revised three times.

The board moved to change the bylaws to allow anyone to be nominated to run for a seat on the board regardless of where they resided on the lake.

Questions were raised about too many directors from an area that could dominate board policy. Tweedale said the change would make it easier to find potential board members.

The motion was adopted by the membership with two no votes.

Board members reelected for another three-year term were Steve Thelen, Brandon Kelly, Kevin Costello, and Jay Anderson. Matt Everding moved to approve the election of officers. The motion was adopted by acclamation of members.

Tweedale thanked Hans Mische for serving one term on the board.

Tweedale gave a list of things volunteer do including putting out loon platforms, maintaining wood duck houses, maintaining channel signs, and serving as weed inspectors.

Tweedale Introduced representatives of the Sauk River Watershed District. The district can help with concerns about what is not permitted on lakeshore and it offers grants for lakeshore projects.

Committee Reports were given by Deb Johnson, Aquatic Invasive Species chair.

Other reporters were offered by G. Niehaus, J. Niehaus, S. Thelen and G. Rothstein.

Topics covered were clean-up day, ditch cleanup, lot cleanup, best practices for lawns, fishing, fish stocking, loon count, ash borer, oak wilt, tree planting, water quality, buffer strips, high phosphorus area near Hoffman Bay, water measurement and AED devices.

The business meeting was ajourned and Robert Kutter presented A History of Big Birch Lake.

Women attend annual brunch

By Jeanne Niehaus

Fifty-five women BBLA members gathered at the Rock Tavern on the morning of June 6th for the annual ladies brunch.

The morning of fun conversation and food was hosted by Ann Castello, Deb Niehaus, Vicki Sadlowski and Elaine Hoechen.

The hosts offered gifts for the drawing, along with Hannah Gilk's Flourhus Bread Co. Sourdough cookies and Scones.

A delicious brunch was served on the Rock Tavern patio and bar area, Check for next year's date in the April BBLA newsletter.



BIG BIRCH LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC.
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GREY EAGLE, MN 56336

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PERMIT NO. 15

60 golfers enjoy annaul BBLA event at Meadowlark

By Jeanne Niehaus

A great morning of golf was shared by sixty member golfers at Meadowlark Golf course in Melrose, at the June 19th event. An additional seven members joined the group for lunch.

The Bohlig family took home the first place prize again this year. Longest drive for men and women went to Jon Stueve and Kendall Stueve, member friends. Closest to the Pin was captured by Barb Chimeleski. Longest Putt was won by Jeff Dobesh.

Everyone left the event with a prize. Thank you for those donations goes to Meadowlark Golf Course- gift certificates, Moening family - TaylorMade golf items, Central Minnesota Insurance - gift certificates, Guy Waymore - concert tickets, Ron Warnert Racing - Jacket, Mary Lou Tweedale - greeting card set, Michael Howe and Jeanne Niehaus - woodwork and driftwood centerpieces.

Mark your calendar for next year's event to be held June 18, 2027.

