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# Bell Fraser Lake Association AGM Minutes

Date: June 29, 2025

Time: 10:30 am - 11:30am

Location: 86 Horace Cross.

Called to order 10:40 - adjourned 12:25 pm.

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## Attendance

**Members Present:** Emily Duncan, Amy Whiting, Hope MacLean, Julie Cote, Tanya Hill, Ruth Salmon, Ron Hill, Monique Lariviere, Jim Prozeller, Gary Cole, Andrew Fairbairn, Harry Musson, Doug Forster, Bruno Roy, Justin Unsworth, Louise de la Gorgendière, Lucy Cole, Dawn Cooper, Lynn Barwin, Cedric Jamet.

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## Preamble

### 2024 Review & Association's Role (Presented by Julie)

- Acknowledged that all present understand the association's function and no further explanation is required.
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## Approval of 2024 Minutes

- Minutes were **approved**.
  - **Motion:** Moved by Hope, seconded by Andrew.
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## Environmental Updates

### Beaver Deceiver (Presented by Hope of the Beaver Committee)

- **Purpose:** To support wildlife and coexist with beavers, reducing volunteer hours for beaver management. Installed by Bruno and David Frere.
- **Functionality:** Designed to allow beavers to dam while maintaining water flow. Debris collects on the outside without impacting flow.
- **Concern about trees and shoreline damage:** Ron, Gary, and Lucy raised concerns about property damage and large numbers of trees being taken from lakefront properties. Ron reiterated homeowners' right to trap beavers on their property. Hope suggested wrapping trees with wire to deter beavers as an alternative. This was deemed to be unmanageable due to the sheer numbers of trees that would require

wrapping. The right of home and landowners to trap beavers on private property was acknowledged.

- **Ongoing Maintenance & Monitoring:** Julie highlighted the need for ongoing monitoring of the deceiver by the beaver committee, citing the removal of a large snapping turtle from the grate.
- **Volunteer Need:** Hope and Louise are unable to consistently monitor the deceiver due to mobility concerns, necessitating more volunteers for the beaver committee. The idea of paying individuals for monitoring and clearing was raised and was deemed a liability and dismissed.
- **Equipment:** Louise requested the association purchase hip waders for borrowing to facilitate monitoring and clearing. Julie has a pair to lend people. The association has an existing pair of hip waders that needs to be located.
- **Volunteer for Monitoring:** Bruno volunteered to monitor the deceiver and will inform Hope of any issues, who will then organize work parties.
  - **Action Item: Hope's contact information will be shared with members so they can inform her of any deceiver related issues, and a call for volunteers will be issued.**
- **Cost:** The deceiver cost \$700, which could inform future installations in the swamp if needed.

#### **Environmental Testing (Presented by Julie)**

- **Fraser Lake:** Gary volunteered to monitor and gather samples for testing in Fraser Lake.
- **Bell Lake:** Given that only two Bell Lake residents were present at the AGM and both are unable to take on monitoring and water testing at Bell Lake sites due to mobility issues, water testing at Bell Lake may not continue happening.
- **Volunteer Outreach:** Tanya emphasized the need for calls for volunteers to go out to the broader community. Ruthie suggested an email to Bell Lake residents stating that Bell Lake testing may not occur due to lack of engagement.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** The desire for continuity and knowledge transfer from David (if willing) during the first year of his absence was discussed. If he is unavailable, he has provided detailed documentation of his monitoring process.
- **BOD5 Testing:** Last year it was agreed that BOD5 testing is required to monitor oxygen levels in the lake.
  - **Action Item: Gary will facilitate BOD5 testing this year.**
- **Professional Services:** The idea of hiring professional companies for testing and a full lake health assessment was raised and vetoed due to cost. Ron maintained that a full lake assessment would be beneficial given the rapid changes and increased weed growth from year to year as it was made clear in the last assessment conducted

during the blue-green algae bloom that the ecology of the two lakes was sensitive and at risk.

- **Environmental Committee Volunteers:** Jim P. and Gary volunteered for the environmental committee.
  - **Formal Committee:** Hope moved for a formal environmental committee and offered to chair a broader environmental committee that encompasses not only the beavers, but all issues relating to the environment/Lake ecology. This was dismissed by those in attendance noting the association's overall mandate is environmental maintenance so a subcommittee is not required.
  - **Discussion on Digitizing Records:** The importance of digitizing records and archives was raised so that members could have easy access to documents such as water quality, reports about lake health, and context about past decisions. Many documents have already been digitized and loaded onto the website.
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## **Treasurer's Report (Presented by Doug)**

- **Increased expenses this year and going forward:** Historically, volunteers covered costs like lake water testing, postage, etc. out of pocket, but this has changed so the association has increased expenses going forward.
- **Invoicing Software:** Invoicing software was previously free, but now costs \$20/month, otherwise it requires significant manual effort leading to more hours spent invoicing and collecting money. **Doug requested approval to pay the monthly fee to make invoicing more efficient. Approved unanimously.**
- **Expenses Noted:**
  - Bank charges
  - Beaver deceiver cost.
  - **Website Cost:** The website is very expensive and not well used.
    - **Action Item: Ron will discuss ways to reduce this cost with Eva.**
  - **Water Testing Cost:** Water testing costs \$841 and it will likely increase with additional BOD5 test and inflation.
- **Financial Deficit:** With 39 paying members and a \$25 annual fee, the association is not able to cover its expenses, having brought in less than \$1000 while spending over \$2000.
- **Proposed Fee Increase:** Doug proposed increasing fees to \$50 and retroactively invoicing non paying members for the past two years, meaning Bell Lake residents would be billed \$75 to help cover costs.
  - **Fee Increase Discussion:** Hope discouraged raising fees. Louise suggested \$35 rather than \$50. It was argued that \$35 would not cover annual costs,

necessitating a \$50 fee. Ruth offered to help write a letter explaining the necessity for a fee increase.

- **Parc La Peche Outreach:** There was discussion surrounding whether or not residents of Parc La Peche residents with deeded access should be included in the outreach campaign to increase membership. The idea of *not* canvassing or invoicing Parc La Peche residents was noted as a decision made in the past in order to avoid increasing traffic at the Bell Lake access. Lynn Barwin, a Parc La Peche resident, stated that users of the access would likely be willing to pay fees, and offered to collect fees and raise awareness in her area. Resolution on whether this should happen was unclear.
- **Deeded Access:** The idea of creating a clear list of who has and does not have access was discussed to make invoicing and monitoring easier. It was noted that the issue is less about policing and more about ensuring lake users contribute.
- **Alternative Fee Strategy:** Dawn suggested bringing in more people to lower individual costs and proposed sending a "gentle invoice reminder." Lynn suggested a sliding scale, believing non-payment is due to oversight rather than unwillingness.
- **Contingency fund:** Discussion ensued about whether a surplus/contingency fund is necessary, or if the association should simply spend its surplus without increasing fees. If a problem or important issue arose in the future, the association could canvas and ask for money. It was noted that the whole reason we have a surplus is because people donated money to help with the algae bloom. It was also noted that there was still not enough money to fund a solution.
- **Less Water Quality Testing:** the idea of saving money by testing water quality less than every year was raised. Given the significant and rapid changes residents are seeing in the lake from one year to the next, this idea was dismissed.
- **The Future of the Association:** Based on the lack of engagement, the idea of disbanding the association and becoming the Fraser Lake Association was briefly discussed.
- **Vote on Fee Increase:**
  - **For:** 20
  - **Opposed:** 3
- **Deferred Fee Increase:** It was proposed that we defer the fee increase for one year to focus on outreach and increasing engagement, and also given the recent printing of 200 flyers stating a \$25 fee.

- **Resolution:** It was unanimously agreed to postpone raising fees for one year. The issue will be revisited next summer after assessing whether increased engagement was sufficient to address increased costs and the anticipated deficit.
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## Outreach (Presented by Julie)

- **Volunteer Efforts:** Dawn Cooper, Gary & Lucy Cole, Harry Musson, and Peter & Kathie Eady created a trifold pamphlet to raise awareness and increase engagement in the Association. Volunteers have been visiting houses, which has resulted in two new payments.
  - **Flyer Costs:** 200 flyers were printed at significant cost (\$427). Tanya offered to print flyers for free through her work.
  - **Strategy:** Increasing membership requires physical contact and face-to-face conversations. Many properties have changed hands, necessitating welcoming new residents.
  - **Call for Volunteers:** Julie requested more volunteers for outreach. Dawn and Gary volunteered to go door to door with pamphlets.
  - **Low Representation and Involvement:** Only 14 of approximately 90 households were represented at the AGM.
  - **Key Message:** The lakes are in danger, and this serious concern must be central to outreach efforts to mobilize people. Concerns about lake health are high, and action is needed.
    - **Action Item:** A letter to accompany the pamphlet is needed. Ruthie has offered to help write this.
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## Elections

- **Positions Up for Election:** President, Treasurer, Secretary, Volunteer (Lake Ecology).
- **Lake Ecology:** Gary Cole and Jim Prozeller volunteered.
- **Treasurer:** Emily Duncan will take on the role of treasurer, with Tanya assisting with Wave software and Doug available to support.
- **President:** No volunteers initially. Hope subsequently volunteered to forego her role as Vice President and serve as President instead.
- **Vice-President:** Louise will serve as the Vice-President with the caveat that she will only serve for one term of two years and will not agree to take on the role of President afterward.

- **Secretary:** No volunteers. The position will be announced to the membership as vacant.
  - It is noted that given the small pool of volunteers, the executive committee is easily burnt out.
  - Lynn proposed sending out job descriptions for board responsibilities with calls for volunteers might help to increase engagement as people might be more apt to sign up if they know what they are signing up for.
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## **Other Business (Lake)**

- **Archives:** Emily expressed a desire to digitize the archives.
- **Website:** many of our records are digitized and published on the website. The website contains the answers to most questions directed to BFLA executive volunteers.
- **Auto-Reply:** Amy will add an auto-reply to the BFLA website reminding people to check the website for information.

**Adjournment:** 12:25 PM