

FOREST COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF LAKES, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Hiles North Fire Station
Friday, June 16, 2026

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 9:37 am by President Pam Schroeder who established a quorum.

Board of Directors & Liaisons Present: Pam Schroeder, Mike Henderson, Diane Smith, Mark Smith, Vi Lamers, Lee Lamers, Pat Schultz, Greg Schmitz, Kayla Littleton, Bob Ebben, Jim Zach, Clair Carty, and Kathy Babcock.

Board of Directors & Liaisons Present on ZOOM: None.

Board of Directors & Liaisons Excused: Derek Thorn, Mark Orlovsky, and Greg Schmitz.

Board of Directors & Liaisons Absent: None.

Guests: Margaret Gerhard from Hilbert Lake (Marinette County), Lucas O'Brien (FC Land and Water Conservation Dept), Brooke LaVoi (R & RC), CJ Kraft (Lake Julia), Mary Doden (Butternut-Franklin), Noah Baumann (Lake Shield – I-Lids program).

Secretary's Report: Motion to accept the minutes from May 15, 2026 with one spelling correction was made by Vi Lamers, seconded by Mike Henderson. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Ebben distributed copies of the Register Report, Current Budget and Net Worth.

Bob noted that he transferred some money from our money market account to our checking account.

We are behind on membership dues. We budgeted for \$6500 and have received \$3800. Bob sent out a reminder, so we should see this number increase.

In addition, with previous approval of the board, we have spent more on Kentuck Day items, e.g., keychains, than we had in the budget.

Bob will apply for a license for us to raise money through a 50/50 raffle probably at Kentuck Day and at the Annual Meeting/Dinner.

Mark Smith made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Jim Zach. Motion passed unanimously.

GRANT UPDATES: None.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Forest County Land and Water Conservation: Kayla Littleton explained the difference between the Healthy Lakes & Rivers (rock infiltration, rain gardens, diversions, etc.) and the Cost Share Program (shoreline restoration). She is currently accepting Healthy Lakes & Rivers applications for 2027. Interested parties should contact Kayla.

Lumberjack RC & D: No report at this time.

Roots & Rivers Collaborative (previously known as WRISC): About 20+ people attended the Roots & Rivers Collaborative (R&RC) 1st Annual Conservation Celebration. Lindsay Peterson is currently working on updating their MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) as they switch over from WRISC to R&RC. If your lake association did not sign up to be a partner with WRISC, consider signing up to be a partner with R & RC – it does not cost your organization anything – simply, it indicates that you support the mission of R&RC – building their partnership list helps them with grant applications.

Check out the new R& RC website: roots-rivers.org. Consider signing up to be on their mailing list.

FLOW/AIS: Derek Thorn was not able to attend today's meeting. He sent a written report in his stead (see Addendum attached to these minutes).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Essay Contest (spring)– *Clair Carty* – The *Forest Republican* ran a story on our essay contest and the winners. Pam thanked Clair for all the work she puts into this event to make it a success.

Newsletter (spring)—*Vi Lamers* – Vi reported that the newsletter is at Hahn getting printed this week and will be out soon, but Hahn had to eliminate some articles to make it all fit. We should be getting the newsletter in the mail soon.

Kentuck Day (July 25) – *Greg Schmitz and Mark Smith* – Mark noted that Greg has most of the bags and printed materials; he has the tents. Mike and Mark will set up. Kathy reported that Greg plans on being there. Diane will reach out to us for signing up to work the booth. Kathy will make sure that R & RC (WRISC) plans on sending someone to work the booth, too. Pam has ordered a total of 50 hats (25 women/25 men). Greg has ordered the key chains. Both will have them at the booth. Hats cost approx. \$14-15 and we will sell them for \$20. Pam raised the question: Should she bring the table top bulletin boards? No decision was made.

Fall Forum (August 14) – *Jim Zach* – Jim reported that Carol Warden from UW's Trout Lake Station will report on zooplankton and how it supports the food chain/lake ecosystem; Bob Martini (Wisconsin Green Fire and DNR retiree) will discuss the Clean Water Act in Wisconsin, etc. Kathy will email information about the Fall Forum and the Annual Dinner/Meeting to the membership at-large in order to promote the two events – she will also have flyers to post/distribute at Kentuck Days, etc.

Jim Zack made a motion, seconded by Diane Smith that we create a standing policy to offer to reimburse speakers for their mileage at the government rate. Motion passed unanimously. Jim will offer reimbursement to Carol Warden and Bob Martini at the current governmental rate of \$0.725/mile.

Environmental Day (September 17)—*Lee Lamers & Kayla Littleton* – Kayla reported that the schools (Wabeno, Crandon, and Laona) have confirmed September 17th as the date for this year's Environmental Day. There should be a shock boat there and 8 speakers/stations with perhaps a back-up or two. Lee reported that Brian Van Epreen, the shop teacher at Wabeno, says the station number signs are done. Brian will put stakes on them.

Annual Meeting (Saturday, October 24) – Bob reported that we have paid for the space. Pam reported that she is reaching out to the Big Easel for catering prices and REGI (Raptor Education Group) to see if they can be our presenter this year.

By-Laws Review – *Pam Schroeder* – No report at this time.

Website – *Greg Schmitz* – Send Greg photos and articles for posting.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Six-County Lakes and Rivers Meeting is scheduled for July 17th. The venue has been changed from Nicolet College to the Rhinelander Middle School (915 Acacia Lane). FCAL's July board meeting will be held directly after the Six County Meeting. You should register for the event in advance by going to the FCAL website: fc-al-wis.org. Tickets are free but required.

Snap Shot Day is happening statewide Saturday August 8th this year from 8:30 am-12:30 pm. FLOW AIS will be hosting their local Snapshot Day location in Forest County at City Beach in Crandon this year. The event is open to all in the surrounding area.

50/50 Raffle – See above Treasurer's Report

Wake Boats – Kathy distributed information about wake boat litigation across Wisconsin that she received from Last Wilderness Alliance (see addendum).

Kathy Babcock made a motion, seconded by Jim Zach that FCAL sponsor a Wake Boat Forum where both sides of the issue are represented and members of Forest County town boards as well as members of FCAL are invited. Discussion ensued about the concern of fear-mongering from the audience, the structure of the forum, and the location of the event. Motion passed unanimously.

Kathy will spearhead the organization of the event. She will reach out to Jason Bertand, principal of Crandon H.S. to see if we can use/rent the auditorium for the event. She will also request support from the sheriff's department. No date has been set at this time, but we are looking at sometime in September.

Kathy distributed information about wake boat litigation across Wisconsin that she received from Last Wilderness Alliance (see addendum).

I-LIDS – Mary Doden presented on the I-LIDS that Butternut and Franklin Lakes use. This is an automated detection system used to detect weeds on boats and trailers. It provides video images and audio messages. She offered to share the Surface Water Grant and Lumberjack Grant work she did with any lake association interested in applying for grants to help cover the cost of the equipment/service. Noah Baumann for Lake Shield presented on the equipment and services his company offers.

NEXT MEETING – This will be held immediately following the Six-County Lakes meeting on Friday, July 17 – see fc-al-wis.org for details and to register.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn at 11:58 am was made by Vi Lamers, seconded by Kathy Babcock. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Babcock

ADDENDUM

Wake Boat Update – from a note to Kathy Babcock from Richard Phillips –

Last Wilderness Alliance (LWA), June 17, 2026

There are now three lawsuits in Wisconsin, all brought by the Weld Riley law firm... the same firm as has been issuing the threats. I feel they are all "Hail Mary's" intended simply to intimidate, without much chance of success.

The Town of Scott case (Burnett Co) -- *This suit was filed May 16, 2026 and is now submitted to the judge under "motions for summary judgment". The town has asked the judge to rule the case should be dismissed. The plaintiff wake surfers have filed their own motion asking the court to rule on certain issues of law that would not wholly resolve the case. The Last Wilderness Alliance (I sit on the board of the LWA) filed an amicus brief, urging the court to rule on the substance, flagging to the court the vast number of towns with similar ordinances. I feel a ruling is likely before August... but it may longer*

The Village of Elkhart Lake (Sheboygan Co) -- *Wake surfers challenged the ordinance in Federal Court on April 20, 2026. The village's insurance co atty has filed a motion to dismiss. Briefing on this should be complete by mid-July and the matter will then be submitted to the Federal judge for a ruling, which we would expect by Sept... perhaps sooner. Elkhart lake is a 292-acre lake with 16 wake surf boats.*

The Towns of Manitowish Waters and Boulder Junction (Vilas) *This case was filed June 8 in Vilas County Ct. The wake surfers seek to have the ordinance invalidated.*

In all three cases, the wake surfers seek damages based on the value of their boats should the court rule the ordinance is proper. It seems crystal clear to all of us on our side that existing Federal and Wisconsin precedent is quite solid that no damages are owed under any circumstance... but it is this threat, huge damages, that wake surfers are using to intimidate towns.

You may remember that a year ago, wake surfers sued MW seeking the court to issue an injunction against enforcing the ordinance. The Vilas Co court ruled in favor of the town, and the wake surfers did not appeal.

So, as you see, there are now three cases pending. These have slowed some towns, awaiting a result in the suits. But many towns have continued to progress ordinances.

If you want to proceed with your program soon, I am happy to assist. You will get lots of questions about the suits and I can answer.

As an alternative, you may wish to hold off until Sept, when we should have some guidance from at least one and perhaps both of the pending court rulings. I am quite confident these suits will have a good outcome for us.... but until we have a ruling, the other side will argue we should pause. The comeback on this is that there is no problem in proceeding with all the preparatory work-- submitting the ordinance to the DNR for review and getting the preliminaries out of the way, so as to be ready to enact the ordinance promptly on getting a court ruling.

