

Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2025

Meeting called to order by Commission Chair Bill Lochte at 1:01pm at the Eagle River City Hall.

Bill Lochte asked for a roll call and introductions. Commission members in attendance - Francine Gough, Cloverland Township; Carole Linn, Washington Township; Bill Lochte, Lincoln Township; and Dan Dumas, City of Eagle River.

Also in attendance:

Dave Mueller, Commission Treasurer, the Commission/ERCLA AIS Coordinator and Otter Lake Captain; Marc Groth, Commission Secretary, ERCLA Shoreline Restoration Chair, and the Duck Lake Captain; Bill Marshall, Lincoln Township Supervisor; Steve Skora, Catfish Lake Co-captain; George Katich, Yellow Birch Lake Captain; Al Wirt, Vilas County Land and Water Conservation Department; Scott Peterson, ERCLA Vice President of Finance; Jason Baumgardner, Watersmeet and Eagle River ERCLA member, and Josephine Hinderman, Vilas County News Review.

All in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Verification of posting by Secretary Marc Groth; approval to follow the agenda in any order, and verification of a quorum was confirmed by Bill Lochte along with the rest of the Commission representatives.

Approval of the October 17, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion by Carole Linn to approve the October 17 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Dan Dumas. All voting ayes. Motion approved.

Carole Linn stated the October Meeting Minutes, and the resolutions cited in the minutes will be posted on the ULERCLC website.

ULERCLC Commission Business:

The 2024 Treasurer report by Dave Mueller. The beginning cash balance as of January 1, 2024, was \$27,144.13.

The Commission received the following monetary payments in 2024:

- The City of Eagle River and the three townships – \$11,146.43
- ERCLA - \$11,087.40. ERCLA submitted their payment up front to offset the 2024 EWM treatment costs.
- The DNR payment received on 12/30/24 of 1820.46. (The DNR held back \$12,961.35 until the Onterra final report for the 2020 grant is received.) Onterra expects to submit the final report by the end of April 2025. The DNR biologist is expected to review the Onterra final report prior to its submission.
- Checking Account interest payments \$117.73.

2024 Expenditures –

- Onterra - \$22,741.25
- Website expenses - \$414.08
- Dash LLC - \$25,860.00. This is a partial payment. DASH has agreed to wait for the remainder of their payment of \$12,000.00 once we receive the remainder of the DNR grant request payment of \$12,961.35.

The Commission checking account is \$2300.52 as of 12/31/24.

Bill Lochte stated for the record that the Commission is indebted to Dave Mueller for his dedication and tenacious work with the DNR to keep the Commission solvent. The Commission also expresses their appreciation to the ERCLA Board for their \$11,087.40 up-front payment to offset the EWM treatment costs.

Approval of the 2024 Treasurers Report. Motion made by Carole Linn. Motion seconded by Francine Gough. All voting ayes. Motion approved.

WDNR hand-harvesting grant application update

The Commission was awarded a 3-year grant starting March 15, 2025 to December 31, 2027 for \$150,000.00. The total 3-year EWM project costs are \$230,790.00. The DNR grant covers 65% of the costs. The rest is covered by the City of Eagle River, the three townships and ERCLA. Our grant was the highest ranked large-scale grant approved by the DNR due to several ongoing programs we implement annually.

The DNR has defined requirements to continue to receive the grant payments over the next three years. They are: specific formats for our maps and data. A cost containment procedure for any service over \$5,000.00. Continue Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) and Pink Bucket programs. Continue holding the EWM project results meetings in November along with an annual report. Send the DNR an invitation to the annual report meeting. All monitoring must follow DNR requirements. The 2026 plant intercept data must meet their requirements. Enter the EWM monitoring and CBCW data into the SWIMS program.

A calendar will be created with the overall schedule of events and deliverables and will be presented at the next Commission Meeting.

2025 EWM Management and LRP Strategy

An overall Aquatic Plant Management Plan is due which will be headed up by Marc Groth. Marc will be working closely with Onterra to complete the grants and the plan. The schedule to request funding from the DNR for the plan is the following: 1) A DNR grant pre-application is due by September 15, 2025. 2) The grant application is due by November 15, 2025. The money requested will fund Onterra to assist in the process. The plan will be executed in 2026 which includes a required plant intercept study in 2026 which is a detailed analysis of the entire aquatic plant community in the chain. It also includes a required survey of all our stakeholders on and off the chain. One of the questions that will be asked of the stakeholders is what their feelings are regarding using herbicides to control EWM on the chain. Dave recommends that ERCLA owns the management plan, and the Commission is an interested party. All agreed. Bill has asked for a calendar of events leading up the completion of the aquatic plant management plan and a specific meeting to go over the plan.

A 2025 education program will be rolled out to better educate the stakeholders regarding the EWM program and to better prepare them to answer the 2026 survey.

Website Discussion

Carole Linn stated that our website agreement with Go Daddy expires in October 2025. If we continue to stay with Go Daddy, it will cost \$387.63 per year. We received another proposal at \$180.00 per year.

The other issue is that our site is in HTML code which is harder to use. Carole recommends we move to WordPress because it is more user friendly going forward. The cost to transfer to WordPress is a one-time cost of \$1000.00. It will also cost \$15.00/month for hosting and email capability. Carole asked for a motion to move to the new hosting platform at \$180.00 per year beginning in October 2025 for a minimum of a three-year contract and a redesign of the website on a WordPress platform at a cost of \$1000.00. Motion by Dan Dumas. Motion seconded by Francine Gough. All voting ayes. Motion approved.

Letter and Communications

There were no letters or communications received since the last meeting.

Public Forum

Scott Peterson asked if there are restrictions if ERCLA wanted to use more of their funds to hire another hand pulling contractor. Dave responded that there are no restrictions per our present management plan but there is permitting involved. Dave will investigate finding another hand pulling contractor including timing and costs.

Bill Marshall asked for clarification regarding the new website funding. The response is the cost would be divided equally four ways between the city of Eagle River and the three townships.

The next meeting date will be on April 30 at 9:00 AM at the Eagle River City Hall.

Motion to adjourn by Carole Linn at 2:10 PM. Motion seconded by Dan Dumas. All voting ayes. Motion to adjourn approved.