

LAKE CARLOS AREA ASSOCIATION

REVIEW OF ANNUAL MEETING

OF

JUNE 27, 2026

Call to Order

The LCAA annual meeting was called to order at Luther Crest at 9:05 a.m. on Saturday, June 27, 2026. The Board of Directors were introduced, including Al Grundei, Stan Pickett, Matt Sveen, Dave Schneiderhan, Mike Jost, John Engelen, Rick Witt, Rychel Larson, and Paul McCarten. The meeting guest speakers included Deputy Cody Notch, of the Douglas County Sheriff's Water Patrol, and Ben Eckhoff, the Lake Carlos State Park Naturalist.

1. **Secretary's Report:** The Secretary's Report reviewed the 2025 meeting summary previously published on the LCAA website. LCAA news is published throughout the year to keep members well-informed about matters concerning our lake.
2. **Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report noted that 2025 wrapped-up with the lake association in good shape. Membership numbers have been consistent over the last several years. End of year bank balances in 2024 and in 2025 were approximately \$24,000.00. There were 180 paid members in 2024 and 236 paid members in 2025.

First Guest Speaker:

Deputy Cody Notch of the Douglas County Sheriff's Water Patrol gave a presentation regarding their activities on our lakes. The Water Patrol monitors boating activity on the lake and works in conjunction with the DNR, which is primarily responsible for boat landings and fishing. The patrol also coordinates placement of the lighted channel buoys. Deputy Notch also discussed boating and Jet Ski regulations including minimum age of operation (13), and that anyone under age 21 must have a Minnesota watercraft operator's permit. He reminded us that all Jet Ski riders must wear life jackets. (Other guidelines are reviewed in the LCAA newsletter.)

Questions included the topic of alcohol consumption by boaters on the lake. It is legal to consume alcohol in a boat but the legal blood alcohol content of .08% applies to boating just like with motor vehicle operation. Deputy Notch was thanked for his presentation.

3. **Lake Survey for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS):** Matt Sveen reported on invasive species and actions taken by LCAA. The annual program adopted by the LCAA Board of Directors includes a “search and destroy” policy to eliminate EIS including Milfoil. Annually a company was hired to complete a summer lake survey and if invasive weeds are found, another company is then brought in to kill the AIS. This year’s survey completed in June found **no invasive species! Our previous efforts have been successful. As a result,** LCAA saved roughly \$10,000 on the destroy expense because we did not need that process. Matt noted that Douglas County helps fund the activity to supplement the LCAA annual expenditure.
4. **Water Level Monitoring:** Al Grundei showed that lake levels in 2026 were about average through the measurement taken on June 27, 2026. Lake levels are recorded throughout the year at the Long Prairie River Dam on the north end of Lake Carlos. The measurement is taken from a fixed level that controls the outflow of water from Lake Carlos into the Long Prairie River. (Al noted that 89 Douglas County lakes eventually flow into Lake Carlos on the way to the Long Prairie River, which is part of the Mississippi River system.)
5. **Lakeshore Steward Program (MN Lakes and Rivers):** John Engelen has headed up the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers program, encouraging lakeshore owners to restore their frontage to a more natural state. By doing so, one of the biggest challenges facing our lakes (run-off) can be greatly reduced.

Residents interested in participating in the Lake Steward Program should contact John, who serves as the primary point of contact. If the lakeshore and its restoration plan qualify, owners will receive an attractive sign recognizing them as official Lake Stewards. Additional information about the program can be found in the Newsletter and on-line. The Lake Carlos website: www.lakecarlos.org

6. **Constant Contact, Facebook, and other Communications:** Rychel “Chicker” Larson coordinates on-line communication activities for LCAA. Communications are updated on a regular basis for all lake residents to stay in-tuned to Lake Carlos. The Lake Carlos website: www.lakecarlos.org and Facebook: www.facebook.com/lakecarlosalexandria are good sources of information.

Other Lake Issues: A brief review of articles in the summer newsletter were discussed including:

- a) **New Signage at Carlos/Darling Channel (additional caution sign):** Al Grundei led the effort to secure signage reminding boaters of the height level differences between the Carlos and the Darling underpass clearance. Darling is 2 feet lower than the Carlos side. This signage will give extra caution to boaters.

- b) **Walleye Stocking** was again completed by LCAA in the spring of 2026 with \$5,000 spent on “fingerlings”. The DNR also stocks Lake Carlos with “fry” in the fall. This joint effort will hopefully improve walleye fishing on Lake Carlos. It was also noted that Trout have been stocked in the Long Prairie River and that effort may improve fishing opportunities on Lake Carlos.
- c) **Channel Navigation Lights** were put in place. That project is a coordinated effort between Lakes Carlos, Darling, and Le Homme Dieu, all working with the Sherriff’s Water Patrol.
- d) **Water Quality Testing:** Lake Carlos is one of the most thoroughly tested lakes in Minnesota. It is part of the Sentinel Lakes Program coordinated by the University of Minnesota, and additional routine monitoring is conducted through cooperation with the MPCA and the DNR. The data collected from Lake Carlos helps scientists understand statewide lake conditions, pollution trends, ecological changes, and the effects of weather patterns and global warming.
- e) **West-Side Boat Access & DNR Cleaning Apparatus:** The DNR anticipates moving forward with its major upgrade on the boat access in 2027. LCAA will keep residents advised regarding that anticipated project.
- f) **Boat and Jet-Ski Operator Regulations** were reviewed in the summer newsletter to help inform residents.
- g) **Safe Pontooning** and in particular a reminder not to allow riders to dangle feet over the front end of a pontoon while in motion.
- h) **LCAA’s effort to remind lakeshore residents to “shade your white lights” was noted.**
- i) **Things to do in Alexandria** (Legacy of the Lakes Museum / Runestone Museum).
- j) **Fourth of July Boat Parade:** The 4th of July Boat Parade took place at the Carlos/Le Homme Dieu bridge. This event is not sanctioned by LCAA. Paraders were reminded not to throw water balloons in the lake to avoid polluting the lake and choking fish, turtles, and aquatic birds.
- k) **Music on the Water (Lake Carlos Marina):** A new summer event is held every Sunday at 5:00 p.m. on our north end.

Second Guest Speaker:

Ben Eckhoff, Lake Carlos State Park Naturalist addressed the meeting. He spoke extensively about fish and animals found in Carlos State Park and programming that is available not only to campers but to everyone on the lake. The free programming can be found on the Lake Carlos State Park website. Daily programming can provide a fun alternative for families and visitors alike.

Ben reminded everyone that though cars require annual state park permits, boats do not. If you are visiting from the lake, you can pull your boat up and park it at the park without permit or other interference. The restrooms are open to the public and fish cleaning stations are also available for public use. Everyone on Lake Carlos is welcome to use Lake Carlos State Park. Ben's talk included discussions about birds and wildlife at the park throughout the year. In the off-season, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are just some of the activities. Lake Carlos State Park is a treasure for all of us on Lake Carlos. Ben was thanked for his presentation.

Questions and comments followed the meeting. Door prizes were drawn and awarded from Carlos Marina; Zorbaz; the Lure, and Carlos Creek Winery & 22 Northmen Brewing Co. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Luther Crest again provided the host location along with pastries, lemonade, and coffee. The camp has worked out great for our annual meetings and Luther Crest was thanked for its courtesy and accommodation. Over 70 people attended the meeting.

Paul McCarten,
LCAA President