**Letter from the Chairman**

 A lot of things have been happening since the Fall Annual Meeting. One of the memberships biggest concerns was access to data and information. I spend many hours last fall updating the website. There now is a tremendous amount information on the website. I would encourage everyone to take some time to read the studies and view the power points provided. I believe it will give you an in-depth understanding of all the work that has been done over the years, the challenges a shallow lake presents and the unpredictable impact mother nature has on our lake.

The board approved the purchase of a dump truck that will meet our needs for $10,500, that is $10,000-$15,000 less than approved at the Annual Meeting. We contracted with Spooner Machine to refurbish the old elevator for $7,000. The purchase of a new elevator, as voted on last fall, has been put on hold until we hear back on our grant request. In addition, we are having our old cutter updated to make it better suited for our needs. The elevator work has been completed and the cutter work is supposed to be ready well before our cutting operations begin.

**Jim Lang** will again be heading up our weed cutting operation. We are looking for members interested in helping with this operation. These are paid positions. If you are interested helping out, contact Jim at 651-295-0672.

We are currently looking into hosting the summer fishing contest. Board member, **Rick Peterson**, is looking into this initiative. If you have an interest in getting involved contact Rick.

The board had our winter meeting early this year, on October 25th. We did this for several reasons. First, we wanted to meet with the DNR and the St. Croix Tribe as soon as possible so we could coordinate our interest relative to the current condition and the future of Clam Lake. The second reason was to accommodate the many people that close down their lake cabins for the winter. The full board met at the DNR’s office in Spooner with several people from the DNR, St. Croix Tribe, and a representative from Burnett County. After reviewing the ordinances that govern PRD’s, I discovered that PRD’s must include at least one member from the county. I contacted Dave Ferris from Burnett County and he agreed to join our board or designate someone from his group.

**In my opinion, this is where things stand now:**

 The St. Croix Tribe primary interest is the Wild Rice. They have the legal right to protect the Wild Rice production based on treaties that govern ceded territories. “Although the Chippewa tribes **ceded** their land in the northern one-third of Wisconsin to the United States government in the Treaties of 1837 and 1842, they reserved their off-reservation rights to hunt, fish, and gather within the **Ceded Territory**.” Clam Lake was once one of the biggest wild rice producing lakes in the state. They want to return the lake to a high producing lake again. In order to do this the Carp population must be controlled. The two most effective ways to control Carp is to increase the Bluegill population and harvest adult Carp. Currently the juvenile Carp population is very high. The Tribe will continue to monitor them. They are currently too small to harvest.

The DNR interest is managing both the water quality and fish populations. They wanted to impress upon us how challenging shallow lake system management can be. When you add the fact that it is also part of a flowage, it increases that challenge. There are several shallow lakes similar to ours in southern Wisconsin. (Some information on those lakes can be found on the website under “Other Links”) The DNR believes the best way to improve the lake for recreation is to harvest the weeds and increase the Bluegill population.

The Clam Lake PRD is interested in finding a balance, having both a solid fishery and a lake that is good for recreation. Currently it is a solid fishery but the weed growth has made it almost unusable for recreation. At this point, no one really knows how to make that happen.

**Things to consider:**

**Mother Nature will have a major impact on lake conditions this year.**

**Clear Lake**

* + Clear water means the aquatic vegetation will thrive.
	+ We didn’t have a lot of Curly Leaf Pond Weed last year because of the quick warm up. With a normal Spring, they will be back. The CLPW typically grows up in the Spring and then dies off once the water temperature gets to 65+ degrees.
	+ The bottom of our lake is mucky and not solid, the plants don’t have a story root base. This makes them susceptible to being uprooted and floating to the surface. On a shallow lake, winds over 10-15 miles an hour as well as boat motors and weed harvesting can cause this uprooting.
	+ Clear lakes will promote several fish species to thrive like Largemouth Bass, Northern and Bluegill.

**Turbid Lake**

* + A turbid lake will reduce the aquatic vegetation, reduce the Largemouth Bass population, as well as the Northern and Bluegill population
	+ A turbid lake will increase the Carp, Channel Catfish and Yellow Perch populations.
	+ Algae blooms (bright green paint-like coloration) will be present due to the Algae being stirred up and released from the bottom.
	+ If the Carp population continues to rebound, the lake will turn more turbid.
* The St. Croix Tribe will not allow this to happen because it will decimate the Wild Rice production.

**Steps to be taken:**

* Pray for typically Spring weather. (Give us a better predictor of the lake’s condition)
* Get harvesting permits early. (We are currently filling out the permit.)
* Get all harvesting equipment ready early. (All equipment, except the older cutter, is in our possession, and that one should be delivered by the start of the harvesting season.
	+ We are looking for people to help out with the harvesting operation.
	+ Contact Jim Lang if interested.
* Develop a new Aquatic Plant Management Plan. (We are due for a new in 2020)
	+ The first step to developing a new APMP is having a Point Intercept Survey done as soon as possible (ideally after ice out and before weed harvesting begins).
	+ I have been in contact with the person that does the survey. I am waiting for a conformation.
	+ We will be posting all relevant information on the website.