

- 1) Gordy Vetsch called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Gordy introduced the Board Members and asked for new attendees and property owners.
 - a. A few attendees have been on the lake for at least 50 years.
 - b. There were 32 attendees plus 8 board members.
- 4) Guest Speaker AIS Scuba Diver Ellie Joing gave a wonderful and informative discussion about her AIS Survey scuba dive in September 2025
 - a. Starry Stonewort (SS) was not found where she searched at both public accesses.
 - b. No lake in Aitkin County has SS.
 - c. She surveyed in a "U" pattern which is best for large areas
 - d. AIS is spread mostly by boats (Ground Zero).
 - e. Best management is Clean, Drain, Dry
 - f. SS is very difficult to manage and eradicate - one branchlet can spread quickly.
 - g. SS grows underwater in 3 – 13 feet of water, not deeper
 - h. The white bulbil indicates it is invasive SS and it appears in the Fall.
 - i. The online tool EDDMaps shows where there is infestation and can identify if an uploaded photo is invasive, with tons of information. <https://www.eddmaps.org/>
 - j. Ellie did not see Eurasian Milfoil, she doesn't know why.
 - k. She saw more, smaller zeebs on south side. Zeebs will eventually plateau and then disappear.
 - l. Attendees said there are other areas of the lake where boats are launched, and they should be surveyed also.
 - m. Ellie works for the SWCD (Soil Water Conservation District)
 - i. The Cost Share Program, which manages natural resources, will reimburse 75% of approved upgrades to shoreline.
 - ii. Rip Rap hinders protection of shorelines and to work needs a 3 to 1 slope
 - n. Ellie Joing's contact: 218-927-7284
 - o. The next AIS Survey is September 12, 2026
- 5) Attendees approved the 2025 Member meeting Minutes
- 6) Jennifer McGuire's treasurer report and membership update -
 - a. \$87,000 account total

- b. 206 members in 2025 and 176 to date.
 - c. \$8,000 was spent on walleye stocking the lake last year.
- 7) Cheryl McDonough reported on the website and communication
- a. Average membership over past 5 years is 213 members
 - b. The mass mailing was mailed on May 20 to 372 property owners at a cost of \$1,459. Tidholm Productions did the printing and mailing.
 - c. FILIA was approved for \$1,650 for the 2026 AIS Education Grant. This will pay for the mass mailing.
 - d. April 14, 2026, WIX website 3-year renewal at \$551. This was a 50% discount
 - e. Feb 18 , FILIA was not selected for the 2026 Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Grant. MNDNR plans to offer this program again in 2027 and plans to continue to prioritize waterbodies that were not selected in the previous year(s).
 - f. There are 3 programs to which we donate – Minnesota Lakes and Rivers (MLR) (\$200), South Aitkin First Responders (\$700), ACLARA (\$25).
- 8) Russ Hoppe reported water level at 1255. OHWL stands for Ordinary High Water Level, which is 1255.50 feet above sea level
- a. Water clarity is at 19 feet.
- 9) Bylaws were reviewed by Gordy Vetsch and the membership voted to approve the following changes.
- a. The number of Directors was changed from 9 down to 7.
 - b. The treasurer shall report to the Board of Directors the end-of-year financial statements instead of reporting to an independent entity or individual.
 - i. Sharon Mattison and others said that a second pair of eyes should also look at the reports.
 - c. Removed the requirement of posting a notice of meetings in newsletters and/or in the local newspaper.
- 10) Gordy reviewed the revised Mission Statement which was accepted. A vote was not required.
- 11) Scott Scheele's loon update mentioned that one of the artificial platforms needs a new chain and mallards are nesting on the other platform.
- 12) Cheryl McDonough's update on Get the Lead Out mentioned that the program began in 2020 and will expire in 2027.

- a. The lead collective initiative had recruited over 125+ lead collection partners all over the state, from the Gunflint Trail to Winona.
 - b. Over 1,650 lbs of lead has been collected.
- 13) Cindy Chuhanic reported on ACLARA, ACSWCD, and other Aitkin County Meetings
- a. Aitkin County is looking for donations for fireworks
- 14) 4th of July Boat Parade is Saturday July 4th and starts at noon at the south public access.
- 15) Russ Hoppe reported that the Lake Health water tests for chlorophyll “a” and phosphorus results will be available end of the year.
- 16) Shoreland management – Score Your Shore. FILIA is not a policing organization, but we can continue to mention the program in newsletters.
- 17) Gordy Vetsch discussed board membership and that there appears to be a lack of involvement from property owners as evidenced by number of meeting attendees (32) and that we’ve had a board member opening for 3+ years.
- a. Put in the newsletter: “Why don’t you attend the meeting?”
- 18) Board Member updates
- a. Gordy Vetsch (president) was elected for a 3-year term as a board member.
 - b. Cheryl McDonough will retire from the FILIA board at the end of this year
 - c. Dennis Kraimer will retire from the FILIA board at the end of this year
 - d. We are seeking a new board member to serve as secretary, someone to maintain the website, and a newsletter editor.
 - i. The attendees discussed keeping the secretary board member position separate from the website maintenance and editor (Media Manager).
 - ii. Communication is important.
- 19) AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) discussion.
- a. The board approved hiring Ellie Joing, the scuba diver, to perform an AIS survey this fall.
 - b. The decontamination unit on the north public access is blocking access to the lake.
- 20) Walleye stocking, fisheries management discussion.
- a. Last year the DNR stocked an additional 389 LBS, and FILIA stocked 400 LBS. This stocking was done based on Rick Bruesewitz’s (Aitkin Area Fisheries Supervisor) report from October 2025 - that “the electrofishing survey showed pretty poor results for Farm Island for both young-of-the-year and yearling Walleye”
 - b. Electroshocking is done every fall.

- c. The DNR stocked fry this spring again (they stock them annually) and then review in the fall after electrofishing. If they don't get a year class from the fry they will go ahead and change their stocking plan to fry in even years and fingerlings in odd years. But, they will wait to see before anymore changing.
- d. A few folks said that there are less boats on the lake this year, which is probably due to Mille Lacs increasing slot limits, etc.
- e. The lake did get pressure this winter.

21) AIS Watercraft Inspectors for Farm Island Lake

From Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District (ACSWCD) AIS Project Coordinator Brian Roulet, May 4, 2026. Roulet.aitkinswcd@gmail.com | 218-927-7284

- a. Aitkin County AIS will be staffing the north access of Farm Island with an inspector and the decontamination unit; we will most likely not be staffing the south access unless certain circumstances arise. We have a 25% reduction in inspectors this season due to budget restraints.
 - a. Note that the south public access has AIS inspectors this year.
- b. The DNR currently have 12 inspectors to cover all of Aitkin County. We only have funding for the AIS program through July of 2027; unless there is a change, we may not have the program at all in the coming year.

If someone from the lake association would like to go through the DNR volunteer training program, they could then work at the access to help inform boaters of AIS.

22) Bill Haroldson mentioned:

- a. Starry Trek will be in August – contact Janet Smude.
- b. In the 30's the lake was 1 foot lower than OHW.
- c. There are many online tools for Shoreland Management.

23) Mark Fjerstad mentioned that Forest Lake started harvesting vegetation years ago and is now harvesting 2x a year.

24) Scott Scheele and Jennifer McGuire gave away the door prizes: Aerial photograph of Farm Island Lake, two \$50 Joint gift certificates, two \$50 Aitkin Bucks

25) Meeting was adjourned at 10:50AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl McDonough

FILIA Secretary