# TUG LAKE DISTRICT

Lincoln County, Wisconsin
www.tuglake.com

AGENDA ITEM 1

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS — MEETING MINUTES

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| DATE | Wednesday, August 5, 2026 |
| TIME | 9:09 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. |
| LOCATION | IncredibleBank, Merrill Branch, lower conference room<br>3210 E Main Street, Merrill, WI 54452<br>and online via Zoom |

### Attendance

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| PRESENT | Todd Nicklaus, Chairperson<br>Don Olson, Treasurer<br>John Greenwood, Secretary |
| ALSO PRESENT | Residents and property owners (5): Reid Badeau, Jean Greenwood, Jeanne Nienow, David Klecka, Jack Koltes. |
| GUESTS | Tom Boisvert, Lincoln County Conservation Program Manager<br>Daniel Guild, LGMP, Consultant<br>Sara Guild, LGMP, Consultant<br>Buzz Sorge, Consultant |
| ABSENT | Jeremy Neubauer, Town of Rock Falls representative<br>Gene Simon, Lincoln County representative |

*General note: discussions on the listed topics may not have occurred in the exact order as listed in the original agenda, but all topics were discussed during the meeting and the key points were as described in these minutes.*

## Minutes

### Call to Order, Roll Call, Discussion Guidelines, Discussion Timelines, and Timeline Modifications

Meeting was called to order at 9:09 a.m. Greenwood provided a brief overview of the meeting's guidelines and agenda topics. Quorum of Commissioners = 3 out of 5 present (Nicklaus, Olson, Greenwood)

### 1. Tug Lake Management Plan Review (20 minutes) Buzz Sorge, Daniel Guild

Sorge walked attendees through a recent draft of the Tug Lake Management Plan and provided additional context on each section. Key topics of discussion included: Blue-green algae & lake impairment status (approval process and impact). Sorge reiterated why addressing blue-green algae issues was listed as the highest priority for the plan. There was extended discussion regarding the

process and impact of having the lake designated as “impaired” by the DNR; it currently does not have this designation and 2028 is the soonest it could potentially receive it, assuming the lake can be shown to meet the necessary criteria using the lake’s recorded historical data plus new rounds of testing. Getting this designation could make it easier to be approved for future grant funding and assistance. 9:33 a.m.: Nienow arrival  Purpose of, and meaning behind, various data points conveyed via the charts and tables in the plan 9:46 a.m.: Koltes arrival  Ideas for how to most appropriately incorporate easements and other lake protection options into the plan. Attendees debated various methods that would balance property owner rights and preferences with Sorge’s professional recommendation to include the pursuit of conservation easements as a key part of the plan, which may increase its likelihood of being eligible for grants. Additional management items could include options like adding buffer strips along the lakeshore. The Board’s final guidance was to include enough lake management options in the plan to demonstrate that the watershed will be sufficiently protected over the long term, thereby making alum treatments viable and sustainable, without relying exclusively on conservation easements.  Brief review of the draft sections regarding alum implementation actions, aquatic/wildlife habitats, and aquatic invasive species management. BREAK: 10:35 – 10:50 a.m.

**2. “Building Community Capacity for Long-Term Lake Stewardship” White Paper:**

Motion to gain resident feedback through a Decision Register during a review period ending August 29, 2026 (30 minutes) Buzz Sorge, Daniel Guild

Guild shared a “Decision Register” document outlining some key questions/decisions that the Board and residents may want to consider as part of the final lake management plan development process. He also asked how much history the Board wished to capture as part of the plan, noting that the plan development process is providing an opportunity to organize and preserve the District’s history for future Boards and residents; however, he also noted that doing so could significantly increase the size of the final plan. Attendees spent significant time discussing the goals of the plan and sharing their preferences for the final plan’s content based on its multiple audiences and purposes, such as initial DNR approval, acquisition of future grants, and long-term community support and engagement. Final guidance directed Guild to incorporate a detailed history as an appendix to the plan while keeping the main plan approximately 20-30 pages. He was also asked to provide a succinct “executive summary” that will make it easier for residents to review the plan’s key points. The historical information gathered during the process should also be made available on the updated website.

**3. Discussion/Action: Surface Water Grant and Alum Grant Award election cycle**

(20 minutes) Buzz Sorge

Guild noted that it was no longer possible to complete, submit, and receive DNR approval of the lake management plan in time to apply for the Fall 2026 Surface Water Grants, which can be used to fund activities such as alum treatments that occur in 2027. Therefore, Tug Lake’s final plan can be used to apply for the Surface Water grant no sooner than Fall 2027, with the first alum treatment happening in 2028 if approved. Due to this timing, Guild and Sorge recommended extending the deadline for final plan completion beyond August 29th. They suggested using the Tug Lake Annual meeting in August to share information with residents and begin gathering community feedback, but to then continue working on developing a strong plan throughout the fall with final approval later this year. Attendees affirmed that this proposal made sense and expressed support for the adjusted timeline.

**4. Community Capacity, Education, and Leadership Development Team Projects for September**

through December 2026 preparation of Surface Water Grant education (30 minutes) Buzz Sorge, Daniel Guild, Todd Nicklaus, Don Olson, John Greenwood

Attendees discussed various ideas for engaging residents and interested stakeholders in both the development of the lake management plan and in future lake management and leadership activities. Lake properties includes a mix of both generational families and newer owners, and establishing communication with the newer residents and younger generations has been particularly challenging. Boisvert also noted that non-lake residents who have a personal connection to the lake can be great assets and strong supporters and recommended intentionally including them in engagement efforts.

Attendees proposed creating more opportunities to hold meaningful personal conversations with residents and stakeholders to build trust. Doing so may also help the Board identify activities that align with each stakeholder's interests and abilities. It was also suggested that the Board attempt to give residents and stakeholders clear opportunities to impact key decisions involving the lake so that people will feel more empowered and thus more inclined to spend their time engaging with District leadership.

Guild is putting together an updated District resident contact list in order to distribute information and surveys but requested assistance with finalizing the list. He also recommended the District look into creating a ".gov" email address to help prevent email communications from being filtered out as spam.

**5. Consultant Support: Whether to request a written scope of services from LGMP for grant application**

and implementation support. (20 minutes) Todd Nicklaus, Don Olson, John Greenwood

DISCUSSION POSTPONED to a future meeting due to anticipated delay in grant application timeline.

**6. Discussion/Action: Confirmation of the content of the notice for the August 29 Annual Meeting,**

including any statement of proposed borrowing or tax levy; district website updates. (30 minutes) Todd Nicklaus, Don Olson, John Greenwood, Daniel Guild

Attendees identified multiple key topics to be covered as part of the Tug Lake Annual Meeting in relation to the lake management plan. The formal meeting in the morning will include a summary of the work completed by the Board and Lake Science Team to date that was used to form the basis of the lake management plan draft, as well as a high-level summary of the key points of the lake plan draft. Guild will work with Sorge, the Commissions, and the Lake Science Team members to create a PowerPoint outlining the draft highlights along with an explanation of existing lake issues and how the plan will help address them long-term, including emphasizing why residents should still be concerned despite the perceived lack of largescale algae issues in recent years.

Both the morning meeting and the afternoon picnic will also serve as the official kick-off for obtaining public feedback and engagement, which is critical for final plan development. The Guilds will prepare printed documents summarizing key pieces of information along with a survey that can be completed in person or online to gather community feedback and identify opportunities for additional resident engagement. The Board also discussed potentially scheduling one or more public hearings later in the fall to provide additional opportunities to receive lake plan feedback in person and/or online.

District leadership agreed to hold weekly meetings with Guild throughout August to help ensure plan development and preparations for the Annual Meeting remain on track; Guild was asked to schedule virtual meetings every Wednesday morning.

**7. New Business: Donation Money, Consultant/Clerk, Lake Management Plan Support, District**

Financial Analysis, Resident Information Distribution, Contractual Agreement (20 minutes) Don Olson

Olson reported that some funds that had previously been donated to support community-building activities such as the annual picnic had been moved into the District's general fund per Board action from a prior meeting. No other topics listed under this item were discussed at this time.

**8. Public Comment – NONE**

**9. Adjournment – Adjourned by BoC consensus at 12:15 p.m.**

*Note for the record: rules of order. The District's parliamentary authority is Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, and the Board follows its procedure for small boards. A motion needs no second, the Chair may take part in discussion and may vote, and a member need not be recognized before speaking. Where these minutes name both a mover and a seconder, both are recorded because both occurred. Questions are taken by voice or by show of hands, and a ballot is used where the governing rules require one or the Board directs it.*

Tug Lake District meeting minutes approved 09/30/2026 by a vote of 3-0; recorded by John Greenwood, Secretary. Prepared by LGMP.