

2025 Meeting Minutes

October 15th, 2025 – Cotton Town Hall

St. Louis County Hunting Shack Lease Association (HSLA)

Annual Lease Holders Meeting

For contact information on leases, rules, and construction/ remodeling authorization request forms go to: St. Louis County Cabin Lease Program

Present:

SLC Commissioners: Keith Nelson

SLC Lands and Minerals Office: Jason Meyer, Dave Skrula, Josh Carlson and Kelly Johnson

MN DNR Wildlife: Chris Balzer

HSLA Board Members Present - Korey Halvorson-President, Tim Ferdon-Secretary/Treasurer

District Directors: Glenn Latour, Tim Ferdon, and Rick Beckrich

Guest Speaker: Gloria Erickson, Dovetail Partners on Fire Safety

Call to order: 7 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Financial report: The balance on September 10, 2025 was \$6,131. Income received for 2024-25 was \$1,600. Expenses for printing/ mailing the annual meeting notice \$1,029. Tax preparation expense was \$100. Cotton Community Center rental was \$85. We estimate next year's expenses to be \$1,400. The Treasurer's report passed.

Minutes: Minutes from the previous annual meeting were approved.

Nominations are open for Doug Hildenbrand and present is open.

Current officers are as follows:

President: Kory Halvorson

Treasurer/Secretary: Tim Ferdon

District 1: Tom Beauregard

District 2: Glenn Latour

District 3: Tim Ferdon

District 4: Jerry Flashberger

District 5: Curt Wercinski

District 6: Rick Beckrich

District 7: Doug Hildenbrand

Member at Large: Rob Anderson

Discussion:

1. We discussed Facebook and email as future options for sharing information. Rick Beckrich has offered to input emails into a contact list.
2. Jamie Stauber attended representing the Stauber family, long time lease holders, and made a generous contribution.
3. Keith Nelson spoke about the importance of keeping this group together and said we have the best lease association in the state. Nelson will retire in 18 months so next year will be his final meeting. Nelson cautions that not all commissioner support the lease association. Nelson also thanks all for keeping up the Shacks and reporting problems and encourages us to keep mailing out letters even if we add email and other options. The county may be able to offer a label list next year to make mailings more affordable. Kelly Johnson is the person to contact if there are updated addresses. There are 726 shacks and the county relies on lease fees as a significant portion of their budget.
4. Jason Meyer reminded all that lease bills go out in January and please pay on time or there will be a late fee.

General conversation was had on the three fires this year; Camp House Brimson fire, Jenkin Creek fire and the Munger Shaw fire.

5. Kelly Johnson said inspections went well overall and reminded all to let her know if there is any construction and this includes repairs. If it is an emergency construction need, let them know after the fact or you may get a violation. New window, new roof also are considered new construction and should be reported.

There was discussion on firewood and be reminded that free permits for firewood are available with restrictions. Firewood left by logging may be available by contacting the land department.

Road conditions were discussed and the county works with loggers and cabin owners to maintain roads. White Face truck trail is in need of an upgrade and the county is aware of this.

ATV trails are an ongoing issue and discussion was had. Note: Trails on Federal land are consider closed unless they are posted as open. The state trails are considered open unless posted closed. This can be confusing and the County is working on this.

Snowmobile/ATV clubs are working with the DNR to create new ATV trails, in particular using high ground to avoid wet lands. Shack owners are encouraged to contact Kelly Johnson with trail concerns.

Education session on Wildfire Resiliency by Gloria Erickson

Erickson let us know that protecting people is a fire fighters first priority. It is up to us to help them by being fire wise. Most cabins are protected by volunteer fire departments and a shout out goes to all who serve.

Here are a few highlights from her talk. You are encouraged to spend some time gaining knowledge and working to make your cabins/ homes as safe as possible.

- *Roof Debris- routinely remove plant debris such as pine needles, leaves branches, bark (particularly birch bark) from the roof.

- * Spark Arrester-Install an approved spark arrester on chimneys.

- *Windows- Close all windows if wildfire is threatening and replace single-pane with multi pane tempered glass.

- *Vents- Cover attic, eve and foundation vents with 1/8" wire mesh to prevent ember entry.

- *Rain gutters- Clean debris, especially pine needles out of gutters.

- *Wood Piles- move any wood stacks (fire and construction wood) at least 30' from all buildings including sheds, outhouses and under decks.

- *Propane Tanks- Store these as far away as possible from the cabin and store small propane tanks inside the cabin.

4. Chris Balzar MDNR Wildlife reported that the deer population is much improved with two consecutive mild winters. The DNR is still going to be conservative with doe permits until the deer population rebounds in the hard shipped areas.

CWD testing was completed in the Cloquet area and did not find and CWD. Elk is on a “strategic pause”. Grand Rapids continues CWD testing as some issues were found there. The wolf plan was discussed in regard to de listing. Wolves are still endangered at this time. Moose populations are up and may be due to the decreased deer population. Bears have a long recovery if over harvested because they have a 3-5 year first breed cycle. Call Nancy from Two Harbors or Chris with bear questions.

The question of vandalism or break ins was raised and Derek, conservation officer reported that has not been an issue this past year.

5. The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 14, 2026, 7PM. Cotton Community Center.

6. Meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM.

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Barbara Montee