

## BRAINERD LAKES UNITED ENVIRONMENTS (BLUE) April 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING MINUTES

Brainerd Lakes United Environmentalists (BLUE) held our monthly meeting on Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 7 p.m. The meeting took place online via the Zoom website. Dean Borgeson, Pat Scott, Judi and Richard Schiller, Bill Haugan, and Doug Olson joined the online BLUE meeting. BLUE meeting participants approved the Thursday, March 9 BLUE meeting minutes.

BLUE members discussed Winona LaDuke stepping down as the Executive Director of Honor the Earth at the end of March. LaDuke co-founded Honor the Earth in 1993 and served as Executive Director for 30 years. LaDuke planned to step down later in 2023, but a Becker County jury's decision to award Margaret Campbell, a former Honor the Earth staffer, \$750,000 in damages for lost wages and emotional distress, persuaded LaDuke to step down earlier. Campbell's suit alleged Honor the Earth officials including LaDuke did not adequately investigate her complaints of sexual harassment by an Honor the Earth co-worker. Campbell resigned from Honor the Earth in 2015 and has not worked in the environmental movement since. LaDuke posted an apology to Campbell on LaDuke's Facebook page. LaDuke acknowledged she might not have done enough to support Campbell because she was focused on stopping the Line 3 pipeline. Honor the Earth questioned the amount of damages the jury awarded Campbell. The amount is heavy considering Honor the Earth is a small non-profit organization. Campbell's attorney, Christy Hall, contended the damages awarded Campbell were not excessive. Krystal Two Bulls is the new Executive Director of Honor the Earth. Two Bulls issued a statement describing the difficult circumstances which led to LaDuke's resignation. Two Bulls pledged Honor the Earth would institute stronger policies to prevent and investigate sexual harassment. Two Bulls vowed to continue Honor the Earth's environmental and Indigenous rights advocacy work. Two Bulls' statement and a *Star Tribune* article about LaDuke's resignation can be read at the Honor the Earth Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/HonorTheEarthOfficial> and [https://www.startribune.com/global-environmental-advocate-winona-laduke-resigns-honor-earth-ojibwe-sexual-harassment/600264808/?link\\_id=2&can\\_id=4ab3c5ddea932a4c08025cfa203063f4&source=email-a-message-from-honor-the-earths-new-executive-director&email\\_referrer=email\\_1894270&email\\_subject=a-message-from-honor-the-earths-new-executive-director](https://www.startribune.com/global-environmental-advocate-winona-laduke-resigns-honor-earth-ojibwe-sexual-harassment/600264808/?link_id=2&can_id=4ab3c5ddea932a4c08025cfa203063f4&source=email-a-message-from-honor-the-earths-new-executive-director&email_referrer=email_1894270&email_subject=a-message-from-honor-the-earths-new-executive-director)



[Globally recognized environmental advocate Winona LaDuke steps down from her organization](https://www.startribune.com/global-environmental-advocate-winona-laduke-resigns-honor-earth-ojibwe-sexual-harassment/600264808/?link_id=2&can_id=4ab3c5ddea932a4c08025cfa203063f4&source=email-a-message-from-honor-the-earths-new-executive-director&email_referrer=email_1894270&email_subject=a-message-from-honor-the-earths-new-executive-director)

The decision came a week after a court ruling in a sexual harassment case involving Honor the Earth.

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BLUE meeting participants agreed LaDuke's resignation, and the sexual harassment lawsuit were blows to Honor the Earth but hoped Honor the Earth would emerge a stronger organization after implementing new sexual harassment policies. Honor the Earth has done a lot of good work for environmental protection and Indigenous rights and should continue to do so under Krystal Two Bulls' leadership. Honor the Earth informed Pat Honor the Earth can accept the donation of \$371.50 from BLUE's treasury. Pat mailed a check to Honor the Earth and closed the BLUE bank account on Monday, March 27.

Pat mailed copies of the final Brainerd Lakes United for the Environment financial statement to the Minnesota Secretary of State's office and Minnesota Attorney General's office on Friday, March 31. This essentially wrapped up the dissolution process for Brainerd Lakes United for the Environment.

The BLUE Earth Day film presentation in the Brainerd public library's large conference room will be held on Saturday, April 22 (Earth Day). The Brainerd public library is located at 416 South Fifth Street, Brainerd. The film presentation begins at 1:30 p.m. BLUE plans to show *The Story of Plastic*, a 2019 documentary about plastic pollution, for the film presentation. If the *Story of Plastic* can't be shown, the 2016 Leonardo DiCaprio documentary *Before the Flood* or the 2006 documentary *Who Killed the Electric Car?* will be shown instead. Light snacks and beverages will be offered at the BLUE Earth Day film presentation. Dean plans to bring beverages. Doug will bring cookies. Pat plans to create posters for the BLUE Earth Day film presentation.

Dean will send an email to the BLUE listserv about the BLUE Earth Day film presentation. Doug will post a notice on the BLUE Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BlueLakers/>) and send a notice to the *Brainerd Dispatch*. Richard will post a notice on the BLUE website ([www.brainerdblue.org](http://www.brainerdblue.org)).

[The BLUE Earth Day film presentation went well. 13 people joined the film presentation, including BLUE members Dean, Pat, Doug, Richard, Judi, Isaiah Oleson, Larry Fisk, Gayle Nielsen, and John Reynolds. Unfortunately, *The Story of Plastic* couldn't be shown due to technical issues. *Before the Flood*, provided by Larry and Gayle, was shown instead.]

Meeting participants reviewed the BLUE vigil held outside the Brainerd Wells Fargo Bank on Tuesday, March 21. The BLUE vigil lasted from 4 to 5 p.m. The BLUE vigil was part of environmental group Third Act's "Stop Dirty Banks: National Day of Action" on Tuesday, March 21. The "Stop Dirty Banks: National Day of Action" demanded banks, such as Wells Fargo, stop funding fossil fuels projects and instead support renewable energy projects. The BLUE vigil went extremely well, despite poor weather. Around 12 people joined the vigil. Vigil participants included Dean, Pat, Doug, Judi, Richard, John, Brainerd Lakes Area Democratic Socialists of America (BLA DSA) co-chair Julius Kapushinski, and Lakes Area Move to Amend members Joe and Dawn Stattine. The vigil received a mostly positive response from passing motorists. Many motorists honked their horns or gave thumbs up to support the vigil. Julius posted photos of the vigil on the BLA DSA Facebook page ([facebook.com/BrainerdLakesAreaDSA](https://facebook.com/BrainerdLakesAreaDSA)) and Richard posted photos on the BLUE website. Dean sent vigil photos to the Third Act website ([thirdact.org](http://thirdact.org)).

BLUE meeting participants agreed BLUE should endorse the Brainerd May Day March. The Brainerd May Day March will be held on Saturday, April 29. BLA DSA and Brainerd Trades and Labor will host the Brainerd May Day March. The Brainerd May Day March is a pro-union march advocating workers' rights and economic justice. The third annual Brainerd May Day March will support proposed legislation in the Minnesota legislature providing paid sick and family leave for workers. The Brainerd May Day March begins with a rally at the Brainerd AFL-CIO headquarters at 1 p.m. The Brainerd AFL-CIO headquarters is located at 804 Laurel Street, Suite 103 in downtown Brainerd. After the rally, Brainerd May Day March participants will walk to Brainerd city hall. Brainerd city hall is located at 501 Laurel Street, Brainerd. A rally will be held at Brainerd city hall. After the rally, Brainerd May Day March participants will return to the Brainerd AFL-CIO headquarters for a potluck dinner.

[The Brainerd May Day March went very well. 13 people joined the march, including BLUE members Pat, Doug, and Isaiah. The march received a mostly positive response from passing motorists.]

Doug discussed the Spring Brainerd Area Coalition for Peace (BACP) Adopt a Highway cleanup. The Spring BACP Adopt a Highway cleanup will be held on either Saturday, May 6 or Saturday, May 20, depending on which date works best for the most potential cleanup volunteers. Cleanup volunteers will meet in the former Knotty's on 371 restaurant parking lot at **11 a.m.** for a short assembly to plan the cleanup. The former Knotty's on 371 parking lot is located off Highway 76 north of Little Falls. The cleanup will probably take a few hours.

[With potential cleanup volunteers roughly split on which date worked best for the cleanup, the Spring BACP Adopt a Highway cleanup is scheduled for **Saturday, May 6**. If bad weather forces the cleanup to be cancelled, the Spring BACP Adopt a Highway cleanup will be rescheduled for Saturday, May 20.]

BLUE's next monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, May 11 at 7 p.m. The BLUE meeting will be held in Gregory Park. Gregory Park is located at 511 North Fifth Street, Brainerd. BLUE meeting participants will meet in an available picnic table across from the Brainerd United Church of Christ (UCC). The Brainerd UCC is located at 415 Juniper Street, Brainerd. If bad weather prevents a meeting in Gregory Park, the BLUE meeting will be held in the Brainerd UCC Fellowship Hall. The Fellowship Hall is located in the downstairs section of the Brainerd UCC.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. BLUE Meeting Minutes Submitted by Doug Olson

## **BRAINERD LAKERS UNITED FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (BLUE) April 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING AGENDA**

The April monthly meeting will be held on-line via the Zoom link provided in the cover email to which this agenda is attached. As usual the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. Please reply to the cover email if you have any questions or anything you wish to add to or change in the agenda.

### **CURRENT BUSINESS:**

Approve last month's minutes.

Discuss Honor the Earth's leadership changes.

Discuss the Group's Earth Day (Saturday, April 22, 2023) event at the Brainerd Public Library.

Discuss BLUE's endorsement of the DSA May Day march in Brainerd

Discuss holding BLUE's May meeting 'in person' rather than on-line.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Discussion to identify possible future events or actions for the group.

Treasure's report