

## **Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment (BLUE)**

### **March 10th Meeting Minutes**

Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment (BLUE) held our monthly meeting on Thursday, March 10 at 7 p.m. The meeting took place online via the Zoom website. Dean Borgeson, Judi Schiller, Richard Schiller, Pat Scott, Doug Olson, and Brainerd Lakes Area Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) co-chair Julius Kapushinski joined the BLUE meeting.

BLUE meeting participants discussed the Brainerd Area Joint Democracy Group meeting held online on Wednesday, February 16.

Among topics discussed at the Brainerd Area Joint Democracy Group meeting were the Brainerd May Day March being organized by DSA, the Water Protector solidarity rally held outside the Aitkin County courthouse on Thursday, February 10, and possibly changing the group's name as there is a consensus among group members the name Brainerd Area Joint Democracy Group is too generic. Meeting participants agreed to switch the day of the Brainerd Area Joint Democracy Group meetings to Thursday so BLUE co-chair Dean could participate in the meetings.

The Brainerd Area Joint Democracy Group plans to hold their next meeting on Thursday, March 17. [This meeting had a modest turnout. Dean, Doug, Julius, and DSA member Holden Hollister joined the meeting. Dean gave an update on the Earth Day event BLUE plans to table at on Saturday, April 23. The meeting discussed the possibility of holding Water Protector solidarity vigils in Brainerd in support of Water Protectors going on trial in Aitkin, Cass, and Hubbard Counties for committing civil disobedience to stop the construction of Line 3].

BLUE officially endorsed the Brainerd May Day March at the meeting. The decision to officially endorse the Brainerd May Day March came after BLUE members tentatively endorsed the Brainerd May Day March at the Thursday, February 10 BLUE meeting. As part of the February BLUE meeting minutes, Doug sent a question to fellow BLUE members asking if BLUE should endorse the Brainerd May Day March. No one objected to BLUE endorsing the Brainerd May Day March. BLUE endorses the Brainerd May Day March, a pro-union event organized by DSA, because BLUE believes in an economically just transition to clean energy and supports the right of workers in the renewable energy industries and electric vehicle industry to organize unions.

Julius discussed the Brainerd May Day March at the BLUE meeting. The Brainerd May Day March will be held on Sunday, May 1 at 1 p.m. The Brainerd May Day March begins with a rally at the Brainerd Area AFL-CIO headquarters, located at 804 Laurel Street, in downtown Brainerd. Brainerd May Day March participants will march from the Brainerd Area AFL-CIO headquarters to Brainerd city hall. Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Party 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District candidate Ernest Joseph Oppegaard-Peltier III will be one of the featured speakers at the event.

Several organizations have endorsed the Brainerd May Day March. Endorsing organizations include BLUE, DSA, Brainerd Area Coalition for Peace (BACP), Brainerd Lakes Pride, Lakes Area Move to Amend (LAMTA), the Crow Wing County DFL Party, TakeAction MN, Brainerd Trades and Labor, and Teamsters Local 120. No organization is required to provide financial support for the march. Signs and pamphlets will be available for Brainerd May Day March participants. T-Shirts for the march will be available for purchase. The theme of the Brainerd May Day March is encouraging workers to organize unions so they can achieve better pay, benefits, and working conditions and have a say in their workplaces. A Facebook Event Invite for the Brainerd May Day March can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/696824828151436?ref=newsfeed>

## Second Annual Brainerd May Day March

We are pleased to announce the Second Annual Brainerd May Day March! Join us on International Workers' Day for a show of worker solidarity, with a short rally involving numerous guest speakers...

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

[Doug posted the Brainerd May Day March Event Invite on the BLUE Facebook page].

Meeting participants discussed the Brainerd Earth Day event organized by Morrison County Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist Destiny Mankowski. The Brainerd Earth Day event will be held at Rotary Park, which is adjacent to Kiwanis Park in Brainerd, on Saturday, April 23. The Brainerd Earth Day event is scheduled to last from 12 to 3 p.m. Participating organizations can set up their tables at 10 a.m. Destiny Mankowski invited BLUE to host a table at the Brainerd Earth Day event. BLUE members accepted the invitation at our February meeting.

The BLUE Earth Day table could encourage people to do a plastics audit at home to raise awareness of plastic pollution. Finding substitutes for lead ammunition would be a good issue to discuss with people who stop by the booth as lead ammunition does tremendous harm to wildlife and the environment. Shut Down Line 3 literature could be offered at the booth. Coloring sheets, crayons, markers, and poster boards could be brought to the BLUE booth so children have something fun to do at the booth. Some children and adults might create pro-environment signs with the markers and poster boards. Fellow BLUE member John Reynolds plans to use part of the BLUE table to demonstrate safe trapping techniques to avoid trapping dogs. John is working to raise awareness on this important issue.

A banner or poster board could be used to identify the BLUE booth.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the BLUE booth for the Brainerd Earth Day event is encouraged to contact Dean at [brainerdblue@gmail.com](mailto:brainerdblue@gmail.com)

Pat gave an update on a possible film presentation of the 2019 documentary *The Story of Plastic* at Central Lakes College (CLC) this spring. Unfortunately, CLC sociology professor Gary Payne, who expressed interest in the film presentation, won't be able to hold a film presentation this spring because he is on sabbatical for spring semester. Furthermore, many CLC students are still doing distance learning because of the coronavirus pandemic. BLUE may want to wait until the 2022-23 academic year before trying to host *The Story of Plastic* film presentation at CLC.

BLUE will hold our next monthly meeting on Thursday, April 14 online via Zoom. The BLUE meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and last 40 minutes, the maximum amount of time Zoom provides for free meetings. A link to the BLUE meeting on Zoom will be sent with the notice for the BLUE meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

BLUE Meeting Notes Submitted by Doug Olson

## **Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment (BLUE)**

### **March 10th Meeting Agenda**

The March monthly meeting will be held on-line via Zoom, a link will be provided in the cover letter for this agenda. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be restricted to 40 minutes by Zoom, so please join on time. You will be held in the waiting room until the meeting administrator admits you to the meeting so, please be patient. You may reply to the cover email if you wish to have anything added or changed in the agenda.

#### **Current Business:**

- Discussion of the Brainerd Area Joint Democracy Meeting held on Wednesday February 16<sup>th</sup> via Zoom @ 7:00 pm.
  
- Discussion of BLUE's participation/endorsement of a May Day event sponsored by the AFL/CIO on Sunday May 1st.
  
- Discussion of the Earth Day event in Rotary Park hosted by Pheasants Forever on Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12-3 p.m. The site has been reserved from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. to allow for the setup and take down of booths.
  
- Further discussion of BLUE facilitating a 'plastics audit' on or around Earth Day 2022 in support of the Break Free from Plastics Act and a showing of the 'Story of Plastics' movie.
  
- Discussion to identify possible future BLUE events or actions.

#### **New Business:**

- Treasure's report