

**LAKE MINNETONKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

7:00 PM, Wednesday, August 4, 2010
South Lake Minnetonka Public Safety Facility

CALL TO ORDER

Whalen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Lisa Whalen, Minnetrista; Kelsey Page, Greenwood; Andrew McDermott, Orono; Tom Scanlon, Spring Park; Dan Baasen, Wayzata; Chris Jewett, Minnetonka; Steve Johnson, Mound; Dennis Klohs, Minnetonka Beach; Bill Olson, Victoria; Dick Woodruff, Shorewood. Also present: Greg Nybeck, Executive Director; Judd Harper, Administrative Technician.

Members absent: Doug Babcock, Tonka Bay; David Gross, Deephaven; Peter Hartwich, Excelsior; Herb Suerth, Woodland.

MEETING KICKOFF

Whalen welcomed those in attendance and stated that this was a Special Board of Directors Meeting due to the recent infestation of zebra mussels in Lake Minnetonka. This is not a meeting to gather public input on this topic. The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) get information from the experts on what is going on and 2) to discuss what the next steps are. A number of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force members are in attendance to inform the Board and the public on this, as well as to allow the LMCD Board to ask a few questions. Additionally, she stated an emergency AIS Task Force Meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 10th, to further discuss this topic. She welcomed Luke Skinner from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Luke Skinner stated that he was the Supervisor of the AIS Program. He provided an overview, via a PowerPoint presentation, which is summarized as follows:

- The MN DNR received a report of a possible zebra mussel found in Wayzata Bay on July 27th. This was confirmed by the MN DNR on July 28th and Rapid Assessment Surveys have been done on the water for six days since.
- He reviewed the methodology for Rapid Assessment Surveys, with the primary purpose to determine the location of zebra mussels, not to establish their densities. Based on these surveys, zebra mussels have been confirmed on the Lower Lake but not the Upper Lake. However, this does not mean that zebra mussels are not present on the Upper Lake.
- He reviewed a distribution map, pointing out that they are quite widespread. This includes Grays Bay, Wayzata Bay, Browns Bay, Robinsons Bay, St. Louis Bay, and near Big Island.
- He reviewed general background information on zebra mussels. This included:
 - Where they came from;
 - How they got to North America;
 - A distribution map for the United States;

- An overview of byssal threads and how they attach to hard surfaces, such as docks and boats;
- The primary means that zebra mussels are transported is by humans (zebra mussels can also attached to aquatic vegetation); and
- He reviewed microscopic zebra mussels, which are known as veligers, and the movement by humans through water in livewells or bait buckets.
- He reviewed why zebra mussels are a problem, in particular to recreational activities. This included docks, boats, swimming beaches, and lawn/motor water intakes, etc. Additionally, zebra mussels can kill native mussels.
- He reviewed a map of zebra mussel infested waters in Minnesota (currently there are 18). He reviewed three of these bodies of water, including: 1) Lake Zumbro (2000), 2) Lake Ossawinnamakee (2003), and 3) Lake Mille Lacs (2005). He stated zebra mussels respond differently to each lake and you cannot predict the density, impact, or final population size due to water quality and substrate. In fact, this could vary from bay to bay on Lake Minnetonka.
- There are no effective controls for zebra mussels in lake or river systems. Some of the methods evaluated in the past by the MN DNR included:
 - A physical drawdown of water and freezing of zebra mussels on Lake Zumbro;
 - Copper sulfate and potassium chloride treatments, in particular at the outflows on Lake Ossawinnamakee, for veligers (most chemicals are not registered for use and are not practical);
 - Biological products that have been used by industry, although not used in natural waters, citing the bacterial product zequinox as one example; and,
 - Although diving ducks and common carp eat zebra mussels, natural predators do not eliminate populations.
- He reviewed what can be done at this time. This included:
 - Survey the extent of the population through collaboration;
 - Continue actions to prevent the spread from the lake (inspections, enforcement, signs, and public awareness);
 - Education of property owners, lake users, and businesses on the potential impacts and actions recommended to reduce impacts to personal property; and,
 - Work with lake service professionals to help prevent the spread to new lakes.
- He reviewed actions for:
 - How lakeshore and boat owners can assist in containing the spread on Lake Minnetonka;
 - How the public can assist in the monitoring for zebra mussels;
 - How lakeshore and boat owners can assist in containing the spread to new lakes; and,
 - How lake service providers can assist.
- Next steps for the MN DNR include the following:
 - Establish a web page on the MN DNR website specifically for Lake Minnetonka, with regular updates and information related to zebra mussels;
 - Work with partner organizations around the lake to assess any new prevention actions; and,
 - Coordinate a follow-up survey later this summer.
- He entertained questions and comments from the Board.

Jewett questioned whether more funding would be available to Lake Minnetonka since zebra mussels have been discovered.

Skinner stated that the MN DNR funding would remain the same, including the current grant program. However, there will be a need to re-evaluate time dedicated to Lake Minnetonka, which should make more sense once an evaluation of needs has been established.

Scanlon asked what water temperature would kill zebra mussels.

Mr. Gary Montz, MN DNR Zebra Mussel Coordinator, stated that the temperature would vary based on the size of the zebra mussel because larger zebra mussels tend to be more resistant to water temperatures. If a boat can be sprayed for a couple of minutes with water temperatures upward of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, this will generally kill zebra mussels. With water temperatures ranging between 120 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit, zebra mussels should be killed within one minute of a high pressure spray. For veligers, they can be killed quicker with high pressure and water greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Scanlon stated that Hennepin County had previously discussed providing high pressure wash stations at public accesses, in particular at Spring Park Bay. He asked if this would be beneficial.

Skinner stated that boat washing stations at public accesses would be of great benefit, although it would not be an end tool. For example, allowing a boat to dry completely before being transported to another body is just as useful of a tool. The MN DNR's current recommendation for drying is at least five consecutive days.

Montz stated that if zebra mussels are attached to a boat, State law requires the removal of them before getting on a public road. High pressure with hot water, even up to 200 degrees Fahrenheit, most likely will not remove them. Instead, they will need to be manually scraped from the boat.

Bassen stated that there was a need for coordinated leadership because he was concerned about misinformation to the public. Education is key and he wanted to ensure that there was a unified message being communicated. He asked whether the MN DNR would take the lead on this.

Skinner stated that the MN DNR would agree to take the lead on communications, partnering with the local agencies and organizations.

Woodruff stated that he had a number of questions, which he believed were more appropriate for the upcoming AIS Task Force meeting. He hoped that a Work Plan could be created as a result of the work of this Task Force in the near future.

Klohs asked for feedback on the MN DNR's philosophy to place greater emphasis on a body of water after it has been infested with new AIS rather than preventing new AIS.

Skinner stated that the MN DNR has done the best that it can do with limited financial resources. Approximately 85 percent of the MN DNR's time is spent on AIS infested waters to reduce the risks of spreading these AIS to other bodies of water. This is done through inspections, education, and enforcement. One of the primary challenges is that there are 10,000 lakes in the State of Minnesota, with both public and private accesses at the majority of them. Other more aggressive steps might involve legislative changes.

Johnson stated that he believed publicizing the current fine schedule for AIS violations would be of benefit to the public. He questioned whether this could be done.

Skinner stated that court fines range from \$50 to \$1,000, depending on the severity of the infraction. This fine schedule will be included on the MN DNR web page. In the past, there have been recommendations to increase the severity of these fines. This could be re-evaluated sometime again in the near future.

McDermott questioned whether zebra mussels preferred certain types of habitats, citing riprap as one example.

Montz stated that zebra mussels are not picky about the type of rocks, whether or not they are installed as part of a riprap project. More extensive hard surfaces could create a better habitat. However, riprap is not always the greatest habitat because it is generally in shallower water and zebra mussels have problems surviving the ice and the winter. In general, future reproduction is greater in deeper waters.

Page questioned what residents might be able to do in the future if they do not use a lift to store their boats in Lake Minnetonka.

Skinner stated that there are antifouling paints available that should assist in addressing this. One of the biggest challenges will be the inability to lift the motor entirely out of the water for those boats that cannot be stored on a boat lift.

Montz stated that he heard very few engine problems for boats that are being stored in the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers. He believed that this was the case due to the frequent use of these boats, as well as the short boating season in Minnesota.

Page asked if cleaning solutions, such as bleach, should be used when cleaning boats.

Skinner stated that the MN DNR generally supports ecologically safe cleaning solutions, although there is a concern about using them at public accesses and having these solutions run into the water.

Montz stated that a better solution for veligers in livewells is hot water. Adult mussels may sense chemicals and they may close their shells.

Olson commented that he would like to see the MN DNR use Lake Minnetonka as a beta site. He believed that financial constraints on Lake Minnetonka are less of an issue and he hoped to consider any possible solution to eradicate or better contain zebra mussels.

Whalen asked how quickly zebra mussels could attach to boats or other hard structures.

Montz stated that it will take weeks for an egg to go from the egg stage to the stage where it is ready to be attached to a hard surface. Once byssal threads attach to a hard surface, they could be attached to this hard surface within an hour or two. Most likely, a zebra mussel would not attach to a boat in motion that has been launched and removed within the same day.

Skinner stated that the greatest risk within Lake Minnetonka would be the movement of water.

Whalen asked how zebra mussel might impact the bass fishing on Lake Minnetonka.

Skinner stated that was an unknown. A similar concern has been raised about walleye fishing on Lake Mille Lacs.

MEETING SUMMARY

Whalen stated that she believed a number of discussions will need to take place at the August 10th AIS Task Force Meeting, in particular the education component. For those in the public who like to talk to Skinner or Montz, she believed that they will be able to discuss questions and comments after this meeting.

Skinner stated that he would forward information on the MN DNR webpage to the LMCD office, which could then be forwarded to the member cities and other stakeholders on Lake Minnetonka. There are also pamphlets that could be distributed at the local level.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Lisa Whalen, Chair

Andrew McDermott, Secretary