

**LAKE MINNETONKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) TASK FORCE MEETING
MINUTES**

8:30 a.m., Friday, June 10, 2011

LMCD Office, 23505 Smithtown Road (Suite 120), Shorewood, MN 55331

Present: Kelsey Page, LMCD Board; Herb Suerth, LMCD Board; Chris Jewett, LMCD Board; Bill Olson, LMCD Board; Debbie Siakel, LMCD Board; Roger Swanson, LMCD Board; Chip Welling, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR); Sean Sisler, MN DNR; Rich Brasch, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Dick Osgood, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Kelly Dooley, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Jay Green, Anglers for Habitat; Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director. Also present: Mike Netherland, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps); Patrick Selter, Professional Lake and Land Management (PLM); Tom Fletcher, City of Greenwood; Mark Washa, MCWD Citizens Advisory Committee; Tom Frahm.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 2/18/11 and 4/8/11 AIS Task Force Meetings were accepted as submitted.

Update from MN DNR on pending AIS legislation

Welling stated that the legislation, which has recently been passed, applies primarily to the prevention and spread of AIS. The legislation goes into effect July 1st and work is on-going by the MN DNR on its implementation. These issues are primarily handled by Luke Skinner, Jay Rendall, and Heidi Wolf at the MN DNR. He provided an overview of the changes relating to inspections, boating, property owners, service providers, and bait harvesting.

Nybeck stated that he understood the policy questions have been addressed in this new legislation, although the doubling of current AIS fines was removed. A question still remains as to how this new legislation will be funded. The attachment that was included in the packet was prepared by Skinner.

Page stated that one question he had received was how the public would obtain the new decal, including where to display it. One idea was to include this decal with an upcoming mailing of a LMCD Newsletter.

Welling stated that the answer to Page's question was currently being worked on by the MN DNR, noting that he would pass on the offer made by Page.

Nybeck stated that there was a follow-up meeting of statewide stakeholders to be hosted by the MN DNR at the end of this month. He believed that more will be known on the logistical questions.

Osgood stated that the educational sticker will identify the applicable AIS laws, including what needs to be done to comply with them.

Lake Minnetonka Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) Projects:

• **Coordinated Herbicide Treatments**

Welling stated that Dr. Mike Netherland, who is based out of Florida, has been in town the past week conducting fieldwork for this project. Netherland agreed to attend this meeting and provide further information on this project.

Netherland made the following comments:

- He reviewed the commonality of bodies of waters in Minnesota and Florida.
- The Corps utilizes field experiments to direct research efforts targeted to plant, site, and herbicide specific issues (acknowledging that research is first and foremost, as well as trying to solve concerns for stakeholders). Additionally, the Corps' research drives use patterns, which he reviewed. Those use patterns provide for a large sampling of impacts and assist in the consideration of system wide level of treatment vs. chasing milfoil with small treatments for the opening of access.
- He reviewed other projects that the Corps is involved with. These include western irrigation, the early season treatment with aquathol for curlyleaf pondweed, new product registrations for aquatic market (four registered since 2007), hybrid milfoil and its response to herbicides, and the detection of herbicide resistance (two new finds of resistance in 2010).
- Treatment plans are considered to match many stakeholder desires (acknowledging controversies that exist are consistent nationwide). The Corps' management goals are to increase native plant habitat, improve sediment stabilization, and improve clarity. Native plants cannot be removed and their research provides for the native plant's response to a respective treatment.
- In 2009 on Grays Bay, concern was raised by some stakeholders that the bio volume (or mass) was reduced as a result of this treatment. He believed that this was pretty subjective and a fathometer is currently being used to take this from opinion driven to data driven. He provided further background of how a fathometer is used.
- He got involved in this project in 2011 because a couple of new layers of surveying are being done. He talked about the limitations of point intercept surveys, in particular as to how they relate to biomass for both milfoil and native plants.
- A lot of data has been collected this week through the fieldwork this week on Lake Minnetonka. He summarized a sample residue level table for St. Albans Bay and its impacts to milfoil and native plants. A similar table will also be provided in 2011 for the remaining four bays, which will be valuable for Lake Minnetonka and Minnesota in general.
- A major Report is due sometime in September. This will take into consideration all of the Wisconsin data, as well as what is available in Minnesota, for residues and plant data. This will take into consideration some of the patterns that are merging for selectivity and efficacy for milfoil and native plants.
- He hoped to get feedback on the fieldwork currently being conducted back ASAP.
- He entertained questions and comments.

The Task Force made a number of comments and asked a number of questions, in which Netherland addressed. Some of these included: 1) whether an impact of herbicide treatments could cause chromosomal damage to native plants, 2) what type of aquatic plants were in Florida (in particular hydrilla), 3) when further fieldwork was planned (including whether a follow-up meeting could be coordinated with the LMCD Board), 4) what target residue levels will kill milfoil and not damage (or minimally damage) native plants, 5) current management tools used in Florida (mechanical harvesting, herbicide treatments, and biological control), 6) the growth characteristics of hydrilla vs. milfoil, 7) the herbicide treatment projects on Carmans, Grays, and Phelps Bays are managed based on a Lake Vegetation Management Plan (including some recommended changes that have been briefly discussed by the Task Force), and 8) the viability of conducting lakewide herbicide treatment projects on Lake Minnetonka.

Osgood stated that the 2011 herbicide treatments occurred on May 26th for St. Albans Bay, June 8th for Carmans and Phelps Bays, and June 9th for Gideons Bay. Grays Bay is on hold due to the discharge through the dam because of the high lake levels. At some point, the lake levels will subside and a discussion will take place at that point on whether a treatment will be done in 2011 (including possible conditions from the MN DNR). He concurred with the discussion that a whole lake treatment would be difficult. He proposed a follow-up plan to the current five year LVMP that would assess management of milfoil on a lakewide basis, including

the management tool(s). He commented on the actual costs vs. the costs estimates in the LVMP. Based on his experience, he believed that a whole bay treatment would not be needed on an annual basis and should last up to two or three years.

- **2011 LMCD EWM Harvesting Program**

Nybeck stated that the program was scheduled to commence the week of June 13th. However, due to limited growth based on an aerial flight and survey work in the field, the program has been suspended to at least the week of June 20th.

2011 Lake Minnetonka Watercraft Inspection Program

Nybeck stated that the MN DNR has committed to 4,000 hours of watercraft inspections for 2011. On Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays, these inspections will be done at the Grays Bay, Maxwell Bay, North Arm, and Spring Park Bay public accesses. These inspections will be complimented by LMCD watercraft inspections at the Carsons Bay, Cooks Bay, Halstead Bay, and Wayzata Bay public accesses on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. The Three Rivers Park District will be conducting similar watercraft inspections from May through Labor Day at the Lake Minnetonka Regional Park. The program has commenced and will be funded primarily by the LMCD, MCWD, and MN DNR.

Page asked what will happen to MN DNR watercraft inspections if there were a governmental shutdown.

Welling stated that there were internal discussions taking place at the MN DNR addressing that question.

Nybeck stated that he hoped that some of the LMCD watercraft inspectors would be able to be relocated to the more heavily used public accesses if a governmental shutdown were to occur.

The Task Force briefly discussed coverage by the MN DNR inspectors on scheduled days of coverage, including some apparent gaps in coverage. Public accesses (including days and times) were provided, in which Nybeck was to follow-up with the MN DNR on.

Future Direction (Changes) for AIS Task Force

A summary of Task Force member comments include the following:

- The need for a comprehensive AIS management and prevention plan for Lake Minnetonka.
- A concern was raised by a non Task Force member as to the legality of herbicide treatments on Lake Minnetonka due to the outflow through the Grays Bay dam, including any impacts it might have on the Minnehaha Creek.
- The need for a spray and decontamination station for Lake Minnetonka, including getting the LMCD's sprayer operational.
- The need for a whole lake vegetation inventory to be considered for 2012 for baseline information (with a preliminary estimate of \$60,000 provided).
- A request was made of Task Force members to think about and communicate relating to the most effective use of the committee's time other than discussion of herbicide treatment projects.

Other Business

Dooley provided the following:

- A draft Report prepared by Steve McComas on the diving efforts coordinated by the MCWD last fall.
- An update on known zebra mussel locations based on feedback from the lake service providers last fall. She noted that some of the sites have not been confirmed by the MN DNR.
- An update on sampling stations as part of the MCWD's water quality sampling program.

Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next AIS Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Friday, 8/12/10, at 8:30 a.m. in the LMCD office.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director