

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, December 14, 2012  
LMCD Office, 23505 Smithtown Road (Suite 120), Shorewood, MN 55331

**Present:** Kelsey Page, LMCD Board; Jeff Morris, LMCD Board; Chip Welling, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR); Keegan Lund, MN DNR; John Barten, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Dick Osgood, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Craig Dawson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Eric Fieldseth, MCWD; Tony Brough, Hennepin County Environmental Services; Jay Green, Anglers for Habitat; Gabriel Jabbour, Tonka Bay Marina; Dick Woodruff. Also in attendance: Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director.

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as submitted.

**Minutes**

The minutes from the 10/12/12 AIS Task Force Meeting were accepted as submitted.

**Agency Reports**

Welling stated that he was actively planning for 2013 activities and projects. He commented on Dr. Ray Newman's recently published paper on the management of Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CLP). Some Task Force members expressed interest in reviewing this paper, in which Welling stated that he would forward it to Task Force members through Nybeck. Preliminary results from the 2012 coordinated herbicide treatments on 2012 from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have been received and he proposed a summary of this information after the Chair update on the December 12<sup>th</sup> public hearing. The Task Force concurred with this.

Dawson stated that the MCWD Board of Managers had recently approved AIS stop gap activities for 2013, which were recommended by the MCWD's AIS Task Force. Despite this increase in activities for 2013, the MCWD Board of Managers approved this effort by re-directing funds from other budgeted capital projects. This action by the Board resulted in a flat levy for the fourth consecutive year. The long-term plan for watershed wide AIS plan has recently gotten back on track, and research projects are on-going for hand-pulling of flowering rush (FR) and biological control of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) with weevils.

Green stated that Anglers for Habitat is currently getting prepared for the upcoming legislative session. In particular, fine-tuning their agenda and identifying allies in the legislature.

Fieldseth stated that the MCWD would be partnering with the MN DNR over the winter to conduct veliger sampling in zebra mussel infested waters. The purpose of this project is to get better data on veliger presence during the winter months. Another project that the MCWD is current looking into with the U.S.G.S. and the University of Minnesota is idea of zequanox trials on Lake Minnetonka

Jabbour stated that he served on the MCWD's AIS Task Force and a concept being discussed is whether to pursue mandatory boat operators permitting for AIS. This has been supported by a group of stakeholders, as well as the LMCD, for public safety purposes for 20+ years. He understood that this

concept was going to be placed on the MCWD's legislative agenda and it might be considered by the TRPD. He encouraged looking further into this concept on a state-wide basis. If this were to be pursued, it would need to get the support of a number of stakeholders, which includes the fishing lobby and the resorts owners' coalition.

Woodruff stated that this idea should also get on the legislative policies agenda for the League of Minnesota Cities and the Association of Metro Cities.

Jabbour encouraged a representative from the MN DNR to attend the Miami Boat Show. He believed that this would be beneficial because it would allow MN DNR employees to see whether boat designs could be improved for decontamination purposes (getting their ideas up front).

**Chair Update of December 12<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing on Draft EWM and CLP Plan for Lake Minnetonka**

Page stated that a number of Task Force members were in attendance at this meeting, in which some testified. He was encouraged by the testimony because a number of the comments made were previously discussed by this Task Force or the AIS-Sub-Committee that created the draft Plan. There were some concerns raised as to mechanical harvesting being the "primary" management tool. He believed that verbiage to address the word "primary" was appropriate, although this would not change the intent of implementing the draft Plan. There was some opposition raised as to the use of herbicides in general, although he believed that these were minority views. Testimony was received from the City of Minnetonka (City). Although the City agreed that AIS pose serious problems to Lake Minnetonka, they made it clear that they do not want to contribute additional funds to the LMCD for this due to what they believe are funding formula inequities.

Woodruff stated that he understood the concerns raised by the City because he is a Shorewood City Council member. However, he believed it was disingenuous to recommend allowing the MCWD to fund this project and allowing them to take the political risk.

Page stated that everyone is looking to the MCWD to fund everything. In previous conversations, he believed that the MCWD has made it clear that vegetation management on Lake Minnetonka is the LMCD's responsibility. He recognized the City's comment on the idea of re-addressing what they perceive funding inequities with the legislature, if needed. He questioned why this position was being taken when Minnetonka residents would generally have the most to gain, due to Grays Bay being identified as a suitable bay for herbicide treatments.

Jabbour stated that he believed the City's comments from Ms. GERALYN BARONE referred to AIS being a problem in general, not EWM control. The LMCD was originally created as a coordinating agency and he believed that Barone's comments referred to mission creep (the LMCD was operating outside of their mandate)

Page stated that the LMCD received positive comments from a number of bay captains. One comment received was that the draft Plan was incomplete because it does not address FR. He did not believe that the public understood that FR is currently being addressed by the MCWD.

Woodruff stated that the draft Plan, if needed, should reflect that the MCWD is currently addressing FR on Lake Minnetonka.

Page stated that he believed this might need to be tweaked at the Board level and this comment might need to be re-addressed in the draft Plan.

Jabbour expressed concern about changing the recommendation that mechanical harvesting will be the primary tool used to manage EWM on Lake Minnetonka. A small percentage of the lakeshore property owners are pushing the agenda for the greater Lake Minnetonka community for whole bay or large scale herbicide treatments, which he believed is divisive. In particular, the LMA is trying to re-direct funds used historically for mechanical harvesting and use them for future for herbicide treatments.

Page re-stated that he would support changing the word "primary" with regards to the role of management of EWM on Lake Minnetonka by harvesters; however, this would not change the reality on the future role of harvesters. Overall, he believed that the comments received on a multi-faceted approach to manage EWM were positive.

Osgood stated that he believed that there was more substance to changing the word "primary". The LMA and bay captains have agreed to separate on this topic and he cannot speak for the bay captains any longer. However, he believed there remains a connection in other parts of the draft Plan with the use of the word "primary". He believed that this concern would be better addressed by the bay captains.

Page stated that the majority of Lake Minnetonka is already being harvested because it has been deemed the appropriate management tool. Although Osgood cannot speak for the bay captains, Page asked for his feedback on the observations of the bay captains on this.

Osgood stated that he believed the bay captains would generally agree with this; however, they are more focused on the bays where they reside that have participated in recent herbicide treatment projects. These residents have had experience with both management tools and prefer herbicides to harvesting based on past results. He questioned whether the bay captains had a full and complete recognition on the use of harvesting on other parts of the lake.

Jabbour stated that he appreciated Osgood's candid comments on this. One of the concerns he has with the proposed \$75,000 line-item in the LMCD's operating budget is that he believed this was just a door opener and that this could become a \$3 million project in the future. He was troubled with the testimony received by the LMCD that the bay captains were not involved in the process to create the draft Plan.

Osgood stated that there has been some concern raised as to funding inequities (public and private) where large scale herbicide treatments have been done. The bay captains were concerned about the percentage of public vs. private funding.

Page stated that he hoped that the bay captains would look at the policy of managing EWM lake-wide rather than just their own bays. He recognized that the \$75,000 line-item was just a starting point; however, the recommendation took into consideration what could be sold to the LMCD Board. If the bay captains do not get more behind the draft Plan, he believed there is a chance that it will be defeated.

Osgood stated that the bay captains are smart people and he believed they could get to the point recommended by Page. However, a mistake was made when the bay captains were not more actively involved in the process of creating the draft Plan, which he originally presumed he could represent them fully.

Jabbour questioned whether removing the "primary" reference to mechanical harvesting would also bring the discussion of the how historical funds received from the member cities could be used in the future.

Page stated that he did not envision this. The next step in this process will be the preparation of a Public Hearing Report, which will be reviewed and approved (most likely the LMCD Board). He envisioned that changes will be made to the draft Plan and a decision would be made by the LMCD Board at that time.

Barten stated that he was not hung up on the use of the word "primary"; however, the text needs to reflect what it says. In the draft Plan, it states that whole bay or large scale herbicide treatments would be done for a small part of Lake Minnetonka, with the rest of the lake using mechanical harvesting. He believed that this needs to be clear and up front in the draft Plan, which would not change reality and public interpretation.

Woodruff concurred with Barten that the use of herbicides is appropriate in a limited number of areas on Lake Minnetonka. The scope of these treatments is being limited for a number of good reasons, not because of harvesting. There just happens to be more areas of the lake where harvesting is appropriate.

Osgood stated that he believed a showing from the LMCD that the use of herbicides as the primary management on bays identified as suitable would be well received by the bay captains.

Brough commented on the use of the terms of "Public Areas" and "Private Areas" in the draft Plan. Based on his experience, these terms are defined but he believed that no one will read them. Hennepin County has had similar experience with this on county maintained channels and he recommended using different terms.

Page stated that he had previously reviewed Brough's comments; however, these terms were used primarily for acreage calculation purposes.

Morris stated that he would have reservations changing the word "primary" for mechanical harvesting in the draft Plan if the motivation of the bay captains were to use some of its public funding for herbicide treatments.

Woodruff supporting changing the word "primary" because it is a lightning rod, subject to it not changing the intent of the plan. He stated that it was refreshing to hear testimony from a Grays Bay resident that they would continue to contribute \$1,000 annually for this project, provided it was targeted for herbicide treatment projects.

Page stated that how this draft Plan precedes will be up to Chair Babcock, as well as the LMCD Executive Committee. He hoped to get this closure on this in the near future so that it could be implemented.

#### **Summary of Draft Data from Aquatic Plant Surveys on Grays Bay, Phelps Bay, and Carmans Bay (2007-2012)**

Page asked Welling for an overview of this draft Report.

Welling's comments were summarized as follows:

- Preliminary summary data has been received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with more data forthcoming.
- He reported that there have been no dramatic changes on Carmans, Grays, and Phelps Bays from 2007 through 2012.
- He reviewed the following tables, providing further background on each:

- Table 1- assessment of the health of the native plants;
- Table 2- native plants with significant changes (taking into consideration cause and effect);
- Table 3- frequencies of EWM (takes into consideration distribution, not abundance);
- Table 4- an inventory of the treatment protocols;
- Table 5- the percentage of frequency and average number of native plants in Gideon and St. Albans Bays; and
- A series of tables from Carmans, Grays, Phelps, Gideon, and St. Albans Bays identifying subjective survey assessments of EWM (August, 2012).

A summary of the Task Force comments were as follows:

- The difference in the delineation points on Phelps and Carmans Bays (from the pilot project to the current draft Plan for Lake Minnetonka);
- The need to include data collected by Blue Water Science for native plants (Table 5); and
- Documenting costs for the Army Corps and MN DNR for their efforts on these projects (in particular since these services could go away in the future and might need to be budgeted for). There was discussion of possible future participation on these types of projects from the Army Corps.

### **MCWD Projects Update**

Page asked Fieldseth for background on the Zebra Mussels Within the Watershed Report.

Fieldseth summarized the following highlights:

- Non-infested lakes were monitored in 2012, with no new infestations.
- Zebra mussels were found further down the Minnehaha Creek in 2012.
- Densities on Lake Minnetonka included:
  - More consistent higher densities in 2012 (with the exception of bays on the west end);
  - Veliger sampling has been low when compared to other lakes at this stage (based on feedback from Gary Montz from the MN DNR); and
  - There was a big increase in the presence of veligers on parts of lake (Crystal Bay and Lower Lake).

Brough stated that he had observed variability of zebra mussel presence in the same area when buoys are being removed from Lake Minnetonka. He offered Fieldseth to observe this in future when Hennepin County removes buoys from the lake.

Page asked Fieldseth for background on the Management of Flowering Rush (FR) Report.

- 2012 was the second year where this project was conducted to assess hand-removal of FR.
- In 2011, this project was conducted on two parts of Smiths Bay and the channel leading from Crystal Bay to Maxwell Bay. The project was effective in the two areas of Smiths Bay (primarily due to the soft sediment). However, this project was not effective in the Crystal- Maxwell Bays channel (primarily due to the rocky substrate).
- In 2012, the scope of this project was reduced to the two parts of Smiths Bay. Results indicate that the biomass removed was dramatically reduced when compared to 2011. Additionally, the number of stems decreased dramatically when compared to 2011 (based on survey work conducted by Steve McComas from Blue Water Science).
- General observations of this project include:
  - The presence and population of FR has been thinned out. This is based on survey work done by Blue Water Science, with the 2012 survey report pending at this time.

- FR is not currently a nuisance or causing ecological harms, although this could change in the future.

A summary of the discussion by the Task Force included:

- The FR situation on Forest Lake and Detroit Lakes.
- The discovery of FR in the last 1970's on Maxwell Bay near Norenberg Park by a TRPD employee.
- The survey work being done by Blue Water Science (in particular that this survey work assesses emergent FR, not submerged FR).

**TRPD, Update on Lakewide Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CLP) Treatments on Highland Lake and Lake Rebecca**

This agenda item was tabled to the next AIS Task Force Meeting.

**Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting**

The next Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Friday, 2/8/13.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck  
Executive Director