

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, February 8, 2013

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

Present: Jeff Morris, LMCD Board; Jay Green, LMCD Board and Anglers for Habitat; Rob Roy, 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; Gabriel Jabbour, Tonka Bay Marina. Also in attendance: Jeff Clapp, City of Tonka Bay; Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 12/14/12 AIS Task Force Meeting were accepted, with one change. Osgood recommended changing the second sentence in the seventh paragraph on page three to "The bay captains were concerned about the percentage of public vs. private funding."

Task Force Member Reports

Welling stated that the MN DNR is getting ready for 2013, in which he provided greater detail of. He made two additional comments. First, the MN DNR has formed an AIS Advisory Committee, in which three members serve on this Task Force. Second, funds available for 2013 will be slightly down from 2012, in which he expounded on.

Dawson and Fieldseth stated that 2013 stop-gap measurements are currently being implemented by the MCWD. Additionally, the MCWD's Task Force has completed its work on the watershed-wide AIS strategic plan, in which it will be reviewed by the Board of Managers in the next month.

Green stated that Anglers for Habitat is getting ready for the upcoming legislative session (i.e., pike regulations).

Brough stated that there will be a few tweaks in 2013 on the Hennepin County monitoring program at the North Arm public access. In particular, there will be some changes to how it's monitored, in which he provided further background of.

Osgood stated that the LMA was moving forward in 2013 with herbicide treatments planned for six bays (Carsons and St. Louis Bays are being counted as one bay). This work is being coordinated with the bay captains and a request has been made of the MN DNR to extend the approved Lake Vegetation Management Plan one-year for Carmans, Grays, and Phelps Bays.

Barten stated that the TRPD was getting ready for 2013, in which he assumed would be similar to recent years. One question at this time is that all of the funding has not yet been approved to implement these programs.

Jabbour stated that the MCWD staff has established a preliminary map of fire lanes on Lake Minnetonka. He believed that this map is incomplete and could use additional assistance on making it more comprehensive. He expressed concern that this committee has spent the vast majority of its time the past year talking about EWM. He believed the community is being short-changed because of this. He recommended that this committee should either be re-named to EWM or there is a need to start discussing other invasive species.

Morris stated that EWM is an issue that the LMCD plays a major role in its management. He welcomed the Task Force taking on more invasive species if discussion can be done effectively (commenting that the draft EWM and CLP Plan prepared by the Task Force has taken nearly a year to prepare, including LMCD Board review).

Jabbour stated that the consensus of the MCWD's AIS Task Force was to focus on the spread and introduction of invasive species, except EWM. He believed the consensus of this Task Force, excluding the LMA representative, was that EWM was primarily a nuisance and that there are other invasive species currently here, or on the way, where more time should be spent on. He recommended that this Task Force, as well as the LMCD, move on from discussing EWM. He asked other Task Force members to comment on this.

A summary of the discussion was as follows:

- Welling stated that the State of Minnesota has a plan for the management of invasive species (terrestrial and aquatic). This plan, which is a frame-work rather than a work-plan, was created in consultation with governmental agency representatives and members from the public. He believed that the MN DNR has spent a great deal of resources in preventing the spread of invasive species, although he recognized the difficulty of this effort because of the large number of water bodies in Minnesota. He believed that this Task Force has spent a large amount of time in the past relating to prevention (i.e. the "Red Lake- Green Lake" concept).
- Lund stated that he would be interested in feedback from the sub-committee that prepared the draft EWM and CLP Plan for Lake Minnetonka. He believed that there is a need to balance efforts in the management of invasive species, as well as reducing their spread to other bodies of water.
- Jabbour stated that the draft EWM and CLP Plan, in particular the funding recommendation for whole bay or large scale herbicide treatment projects, is causing political issues with some of the LMCD's member cities. The cities that have expressed concern about this have commented about funding inequities.
- Dawson stated that the MCWD's efforts are to focus on prevention, not long-term management. If management occurs, its primary purpose will be to protect the ecological integrity of the water resource (not economic and recreational concerns). The MCWD will focus on complimenting other organizations efforts, not taking them over.
- Barten stated that he believed the question posed by Jabbour is what the role is for the LMCD of all invasive species on Lake Minnetonka. He is an original member of this Task Force since it was created in the late 1980's. At one-time, this was the only forum in the State of Minnesota for the public to discuss invasive species (including other lake associations). Over the years, a lot of discussion on other invasive species has taken place at this Task Force, in particular on zebra mussels. As a result of this discussion, zebra mussel billboard campaigns were launched by the LMCD, as well as pressure washer was purchased in the 1990's. He believed the question for the LMCD Board, in which he questioned whether this committee can answer, is the future role of this Task Force on EWM and/or other invasive species.

- Morris believed that this Task Force needs to take an active role on advising the LMCD Board on actions it should take. Things have changed over time and there are currently regional programs with multiple Task Forces established. He believe the community is best served if this Task Force is effective, objectives, and goal-oriented.
- Brough stated that he believed there are benefits to partnerships (the sharing of ideas and the leveraging of funds to get more done). However, sometimes partnerships cannot agree on how to get things done and this Task Force is a good forum for these discussions. He believed the draft EWM and CLP prepared by this task Force was a good plan and has merits (although he expressed up front some concerns about it). He believed that the plan is a recommendation from the Task Force and the question of funding needs to be resolved by the policy makers (the LMCD Board). He hoped that additional discussion by this Task Force could take place on other invasive species (i.e., the construction of long-term infra-structure at public accesses).
- Roy questioned whether the Task Force has prepared a long-range plan for other invasive species (goals and objectives). In particular, for prevention efforts. He recommended that the Task Force should discuss this at the next meeting.
- Nybeck stated that this Task Force, in recent years, made an attempt to create an invasive species plan for Lake Minnetonka. This effort was worked on for nearly a year and was scaled back after consensus could not reached on certain elements of a plan. Last April, this Task Force recommended that the three-bay, five-year coordinated herbicide treatment project should not continue after 2012, or be expanded to other bays, until a comprehensive vegetation management plan was developed. Discussion of this plan was initiated last June and the plan was developed in four months.
- Jabbour stated that the LMCD should be the coordinating agency for Lake Minnetonka on invasive species, per statute, in consultation with this Task Force. He hoped that when this Task Force makes recommendations, the policy makers will listen.
- Lund stated that he believed there should be discussion on whether the role of this committee is to continue advising the LMCD. However, he represents the MN DNR on the MCWD's TAC and he believed there was a need to have this type of a forum to discuss AIS on a regional basis.
- Morris stated that the LMCD's AIS Task Force is for Lake Minnetonka, in which its efforts should focus on. This is different that the MCWD's AIS Task Force because it's efforts are more regional, although this includes Lake Minnetonka.
- Nybeck stated that last February, the Task Force conducted an exercise with Brian Stenquist (strategic planner from the MN DNR) to discuss goals and objectives for this committee moving forward. He recommended that this discussion be brought back at the next AIS Task Force meeting.
- Osgood stated that EWM is one of the topic issues since 2001 with LMA members. The draft EWM and CLP Plan for Lake Minnetonka is an attempt to manage this, whether it be done by mechanical harvesting or herbicide treatments on a lake-wide basis. The bay captains have communicated mixed messages for public and private funding, adding that he believed this will be primarily funded privately in 2013. He believed that the primary question to answer is whether EWM is a nuisance and should there be public involvement in the management of it. He concurred that there is a need for the LMCD to better define the role of this Task Force, in which the LMA recommends that prevention should be a priority to keep new invasive species out of Lake Minnetonka.
- Green stated that there is a lot of firepower that participates at these Task Force meetings. He proposed two questions for committee members to consider. First, each committee member

should identify the most imminent and credible threat to Lake Minnetonka. Second, committee members should identify lessons learned from EWM and zebra mussels (including what could be done differently for new threats to Lake Minnetonka).

- Jabbour stated that he hoped the ideas being considered by the State's AIS Advisory Committee could be considered by this Task Force.

Morris encouraged the Task Force members to contact him on potential ways to change the direction of this committee. Tentative discussion is planned for the April Task Force meeting and he directed Nybeck to send out the minutes from the February, 2012 AIS Task Force Meeting.

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

Barten stated that the TRPD has been concerned about CLP over the years and the TRPD has explored the idea of managing CLP to improve water quality, as well as restoring native species. A number of lakes have been worked on by the TRPD and he reviewed data for the following two lakes:

1. Hyland Lake:

- A 60-acre lake in Bloomington, with a maximum water depth of 10 feet. This is a heavily used recreational lake, with paddleboats and other rental boats offered by the TRPD.
- Early spring herbicide treatments occurred (aquathol).
- He reviewed data taken from April, June, and August in 2012.
- He reviewed total phosphorous levels through the typical summer months (an average, per date, over the past seven years). Things seemed to work well from a recreational standpoint through mid July or early August.
- The TRPD plans to track over the next couple years the recovery of native species.

2. Lake Rebecca:

- A watershed nutrient loading reduction project was initiated in 2006, CLP control was initiated in 2009, and alum treatments occurred in the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011. He provided further reviews of all three efforts.
- Hennepin County Environmental Services greatly assisted in working with the management of manure at the Shriners Horse Farm.
- He reported that there was no impact on water clarity in 2009 and 2010 (based on CLP control efforts). He stated that CLP treatments alone may not be enough.
- He reviewed a series of charts for TP, Chlorophyll-a, and Secchi Depth Measurements from 1992 through 2012.
- He reported that there were some reductions on internal nutrient loading (with additional expected over time).

The Task Force asked a number of questions, in which Barten addressed.

Update From 2013-2015 MN DNR Advisory Committee Members

Nybeck stated that three members of this Task Force serve on this committee (Barten, Green, and Jabbour). This agenda item was scheduled to allow for them to provide a brief update.

Green stated that meetings are scheduled for the first and last three months in 2013, with the first meeting coordinated in January. This meeting provided for a discussion of charter and goals, in which it allowed committee members an opportunity to get to know each other. The issues for invasive species vary greatly around the State of Minnesota and this is apparent based on the discussion at the

first meeting. Meetings are planned for February and March and he stated that the Task Force will be updated in April.

Jabbour stated that on-site visits this summer for Lake Minnetonka and the Minnesota Sea Grant in Duluth.

Chair Update on Draft Comprehensive Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) and CLP Plan (Plan) for Lake Minnetonka

Morris stated that the LMCD Board in October received the draft Plan prepared by the Task Force. A public hearing was conducted by the LMCD Board in December. Public feedback that was clear was that there is varying level of support to the recommendation to include \$75,000 in the LMCD's annual operating budget for whole bay or large scale herbicide treatments projects.

Nybeck stated that revisions are planned, based on the testimony at the public hearing, to address that mechanical harvesting will be the "primary management" tool for EWM and CLP on Lake Minnetonka. LMCD Board Chair Doug Babcock has proposed additional changes and he recommended that Morris work with Babcock on them. He believed that there is a need for closure by the LMCD Board on the draft Plan ASAP since the process for the 2014 LMCD Budget will commence in late March.

A summary of the Task Force comments were as follows:

- The draft Plan was prepared by the Task Force and is a consensus document.
- The work of the Task Force has been completed and there is a need for the LMCD to take action on it.
- Any further work appears to be policy related, which needs to be addressed by the LMCD.
- The Task Force recommends that the technical aspects of the draft Plan, with or without the funding recommendation should be voted on by the LMCD Board. This should allow the Task Force to work on other invasive species topics.
- Morris stated that he would report back to the LMCD Board on this at the next meeting.

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Friday, 4/12/13.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director