

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, June 14, 2013

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

Present: Jeff Morris, LMCD Board; Jay Green, LMCD Board and Anglers for Habitat; Fred Meyer, LMCD Board; Chip Welling, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR); Allison Gamble, MN DNR; John Barten, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Dick Osgood, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Craig Dawson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Tony Brough, Hennepin County Environmental Services; Gabriel Jabbour, Tonka Bay Marina; Dick Woodruff. Also in attendance: Mike Netherland, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps); Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as amended. Green requested a discussion of how to produce materials for the public in how to deal with zebra mussels. Morris stated that this would be discussed after the consolidation of AIS Task Force/Advisory Committees agenda item.

Minutes

The minutes from the 4/12/13 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved as submitted. The minutes from the 5/10/13 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved with one change. Osgood requested that the fifth bullet point on page three should be amended to read "To discuss Topic 4 at the June AIS Task Force Meeting (with Osgood and Lund to provide a one to two page summary sheet for discussion)."

Task Force Member Reports

Brough stated that reinforcement banners for the North Arm public access on AIS messages have been installed. Hennepin County has recently approved capital upgrades to the Spring Park public access. Planning will be done during the upcoming winter, with construction planned for 2014. He encouraged feedback from Task Force members on possible changes.

Osgood stated that curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) treatments occurred on Gideon Bay last week. Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) treatments are planned for the week of the 23rd, with the possible exception of Grays Bay. A EWM treatment is planned for St. Albans Bay, although the exact date is a moving target.

Green stated that a tour of Lake Minnetonka is planned by the MN DNR Advisory Committee on July 11th. Some of the topics planned for this tour include: 1) a review of Hennepin County's efforts at the North Arm public access, 2) a review of what can (and cannot) be decontaminated on watercraft at a commercial marina, and 3) a general tour of Lake Minnetonka.

Netherland stated that the Army Corps has been working on this demonstration project for the past five years (more actively involved the past two years with the adding of Gideon and St. Albans Bays in

2011). Vegetation growth for this time of year is way behind, which makes it more difficult to assess what is going on. Based on sampling that has been done, a summary of his comments were as follows:

- St. Albans Bay has a lot EWM and is ready for treatment. EWM is generally in the same locations as it was in 2011.
- Grays Bay has a significant loss in coontail, which is a significant feature of this bay. This loss could have some significant implications. He questioned whether the plant is currently down due to the water clarity or the water clarity is down because the plant is down. He did not think the loss of coontail was due to the treatment conducted in 2012 (based on sampling data from last August).
- Sampling for CLP and EWM is currently being finalized on Gideon Bay.
- Sampling has also occurred on Phelps Bay.

Jabbour asked which bays are committed to conducting treatments in 2013.

Osgood stated that all five bays are committed to some level in 2013, although a treatment may not be needed on Grays Bay.

Jabbour thanked the Army Corps and the MN DNR for the participation by the Army Corps in this 2013 project.

Welling concurred that the continued participation by the Army Corps has been useful, although the funding question has to be addressed each year.

Netherland stated that he had prepared a draft Report for the five years, which has been forwarded to the MN DNR and is pending Welling's comments. He provided the following summary comments:

- Larger treatments on these bays appear to have greater long-term benefits. However, he recognized the costs and decisions that need to be made are significant.
- Smaller treatments can provide relief; however, generally for only that season.
- Some bays tend to lend themselves to two years of relief (Grays and St. Albans Bays).
- Phelps Bay has been a challenge since day one of this project.
- Carmans Bay and the change in the treatment protocol in 2011 seems to have greatly improved (in particular treating after the thermocline has formed).

Woodruff stated that assuming that the funding questions can be addressed, he questioned whether the project is of value to the Army Corps and would continue to participate in future years.

Netherland stated that there is value in continuing to collect long-term data (even if treatments do not occur).

Welling stated that the efforts of the Army Corps are extremely useful to the MN DNR for the State of Minnesota. A lot has been learned on this since this was originally discussed in 2005 with former U.S. Representative Jim Ramstad, including reasonable expectations that need to be communicated. It is advantageous for the MN DNR when information is available that summarizes this has been tried, this has been looked at, and these were the results (recognizing that the results have been mixed).

Jabbour stated that it would be beneficial for decision makers at the local level for the Army Corps to communicate in writing what factors do not work (such as deeper water and open bays).

Woodruff stated that it would be of benefit to provide a targeted summary of the results that is not part of the Final Report. Herbicide treatments are an art, not a science, and it would be of benefit to identify situations where they will (and will not) work.

Netherland stated that he believed that the Army Corps would consider providing this (within the context of how herbicides may affect EWM and native plants).

Morris stated that he has learned that certain herbicide treatment protocols work on certain bays (and not on other bays). He questioned whether guidelines could be prepared for certain bays on Lake Minnetonka.

Netherland stated that treatment guidelines for certain types of bays might be more appropriate (citing Grays and St. Albans Bays as one example).

Jabbour provided feedback of how his marinas have been assisting PLM (access to Lake Minnetonka to make their efforts more cost effective) and USGS. (the zequanox trials planned for Robinsons Bay in 2013).

Dawson stated that the MCWD was assisting the U.S.G.S. on logistics on this project. The EPA is fast tracking to see if the use of zequanox could be effective in an open water system.

The Task Force had a brief discussion on the use of zequanox in an open water system. Some of the discussion included whether there might be unanticipated outcomes, whether there is a benefit unless all zebra mussels are eliminated (including public perception and rumors), what a practical application for Lake Minnetonka might be to manage zebra mussels, and what the costs associated with the use of zequanox might be.

Osgood stated that the next agenda item will discuss new AIS risks and preparations for those being introduced. Although the zequanox efforts are worthy and credible, a quick fix for zebra mussels is unlikely.

Morris stated that he was concerned about rumors and public perception that zequanox is going to fix zebra mussels on Lake Minnetonka.

Barten updated the Task Force on three items. First, all of the park maintenance and seasonal employees have been completed watercraft inspections and lake service provider training. Second, a couple of lake associations have requested whole lake or significant herbicide treatments on Bryant and Zumbra Lakes. The current request is for permission from the TRPD; however, a request is anticipated for funding in the future since the TRPD owns a large percentage of shoreline on both lakes. A dilemma for the TRPD is can, and does it want to, consider this when staff's assessment is that EWM is not a problem for recreational purposes. Third, some resolution in how to deal with dead zebra mussels when the boats are originally launched in the spring would be of benefit (citing situations at the Lake Minnetonka Regional Park in 2013 as an example).

Dawson updated the Task Force on two items. First, a weevil project is planned for 2013 on Veteran's Bay and Christmas Lake. Second, a proposal has been received from Sorenson Laboratory for carp management. The MCWD is considering a 2 1/2 year study of carp management within the sub-watershed, which could have some impact on water quality on Halsteads Bay.

Woodruff asked for feedback on the draft 2014 LMCD Budget (Options 1 and 2).

Morris stated that the LMCD Board, on June 12th, adopted the 2014 LMCD Budget (Option 1). Option 1 does not have the \$55,000 line-item included for whole bay or large scale herbicide treatments.

Nybeck stated that the 2013 EWM Harvesting Program was scheduled to commence this week. However, the project has been postponed a few weeks due to the low growth of EWM on Lake Minnetonka. Training for the employees is tentatively set for Monday, June 24th.

Review of Prospective New AIS Risks and Preparations for Those Being Introduced

Morris asked Osgood for background on this agenda item.

Osgood stated that this agenda item was discussed at the May Task Force Meeting, in which he and Keegan Lund agreed to put together a two-page summary document. A summary of his comments were as follows:

- He reviewed AIS threats to Minnesota lakes and rivers, based on those identified by the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Committee for plants, animals, and other. Those that are "bolded" are the most likely for Lake Minnetonka (based on their judgment). He commented that this was an art and not a science.
- Responses and remedies for AIS animals and plants are different. In all cases, eradication and containment is extremely unlikely. Remedies for plants are available; however, remedies for AIS animals are substantially lacking. He briefly reviewed remedies for AIS plants (hand pulling, mechanical harvesting, contact herbicides, systemic herbicide, and biocontrols).
- Research is on-going on a number of various levels; however, counting on it for management, containment, and eradication at this time is ill-advised.
- He entertained questions and comments from the Task Force.

The summary of the Task Force was as follows:

- Other AIS animals could be added to this document (i.e. Rusty crayfish).
- What has contributed to Spiny waterflea not being introduced in Lake Minnetonka (noting that this contradicts the myth that fishermen are the primary vector that they are spread).
- How to prevent the spread of asian carp (in particular through minnows).
- Whether inspection procedures for AIS animals need to be adjusted (similar to AIS plants and all vegetation).

Morris stated that he would like to make a presentation on this topic to the LMCD Board a refresher. He questioned how this document could be improved.

Green stated that this document needed one more section added to it. In particular, what needs to be done from a preventative standpoint differently.

The Task Force discussed this and the consensus was to add a section recommended by Green. Further discussion of this is planned for the July AIS Task Force meeting.

Consider Consolidation of AIS Task Force/Advisory Committees Focusing on Lake Minnetonka or West Metro Lakes

The consensus was to move this agenda item to the July AIS Task Force meeting due to time constraints.

Production of Zebra Mussel Materials

Green stated that he requested adding this agenda item at the request of the Mound City Council. One condition as part of the 2013 Right of Entry Agreement (to allow for LMCD watercraft inspectors at Cooks Bay) was that materials and other information would be prepared prior to 2014 to hand-out to residents and at the public accesses on how to deal with Zebra mussels.

This Task Force briefly discussed possible best management practices for this request. The consensus was for the Task Force to work on this information in the near future (possibly coordinating through the LMCD's Save the Lake Committee).

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Friday, 7/12/13.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director