

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, July 12, 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; Sue Shuff, LMCD Board; Chip Welling, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR); John Barten, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Dick Osgood, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Eric Fieldseth, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Gabriel Jabbour, Tonka Bay Marina; Dick Woodruff. Also in attendance: Joey LeMay, Lakeshore Weekly News; Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 6/14/13 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved with one change. Osgood stated that there was a typo in the first bullet on page two (the word "reading" should be changed to "ready").

Task Force Member Reports

Barten stated that inspections are on-going and proceeding well (other than normal complaints). EWM growth has been observed to be minimal in 2013. The TRPD is assisting Dr. Netherland on residual samples for the whole bay or large scale herbicide treatment projects in 2013, noting that there has been some problems with getting these samples due to personal watercraft activity.

Meyer stated that a representative from the MN DNR attended the last Board meeting to give an update on the tablets and application being used by their watercraft inspectors in 2013. A question was raised as to why an inspection is necessary when the last waterbody the watercraft was in is the same waterbody to be launched into (i.e., Lake Minnetonka).

Nybeck stated that he believed the MN DNR has expedited the inspection process for that type of situation through their new application. However, a quick inspection would still be done that included making sure the plug was out.

Jabbour provided a summary of historical laws pertaining to watercraft leaving an access. The initial law stated that a watercraft could not leave the access until the watercraft is fully cleaned. Recognizing the number of watercraft that leave Lake Minnetonka in the fall, the MN DNR allowed the watercraft to leave the access to a cleaning site. The law was then amended to allow lake service providers to take these watercraft off-site to be cleaned. He expressed concern about some stakeholders that were exempted from the lake service provider training legislation (public works, fire boats, and yacht clubs).

Barten stated that all watercraft are inspected at TRPD properties. There are some instances where people may not recall or be truthful on the last waterbody that their watercraft was in.

Osgood stated that a curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) treatment occurred on Gideon Bay in May. Four Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) treatments have recently taken place. Large scale treatments have occurred on Carmans and Phelps Bays (46 acres each). Whole bay treatments have occurred on Carsons/St. Louis and St. Albans Bay. No substantial EWM has been found on Grays Bay so no treatment is planned in 2013. No treatment is planned at this time for Gideon Bay (it has been observed to be laying on the bottom with zebra mussels attached to it). This will continue to be monitored in 2013.

Barten asked what concentrations were used on the whole bay treatments.

Osgood stated that concentrations varied by water depths.

Welling stated that the target concentration on St. Albans Bay was .035 parts per million.

Morris asked what herbicides were used.

Osgood stated that triclopyr was used on all bays, except Carmans Bay. 2-4D was used on Carmans Bay.

Jabbour stated that there has been a show on channel 2 that discusses the potential concerns of using 2-4D. He encouraged Task Force members that have interest to watch it.

Welling stated that he had not watched this show. He provided a historical summary on the use of 2-4D, which included some of the potential concerns raised relating to people. 2-4D has been around since the 1940's and has been evaluated with regards to its toxicity impacts to human health, fisheries, and wildlife by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA has concluded that its use is acceptable provided the instructions on the label are followed. However, there has been concern raised at times in the past in its use.

Woodruff stated that he believed the use of herbicides, including 2-4D, has improved over the past 30 or 40 years due to regulatory oversight and labeling instructions.

Jabbour stated that one of the concerns he had with its use on Carmans Bay was the lack of communication from the bay captains after the treatments was done utilizing 2-4D so that the City of Orono could decide whether to restrict use at its public swimming beach for period of days. He asked the LMA to provide the Task Force a balance sheet of the five bays treated because he was unclear on the status of the finances.

Osgood provided an overview of the balance sheet based on his recollection, which he stated he could provide a more detailed update at the next meeting. Funds collected for this project are deposited into a segregated account (delineated on a bay-by-bay basis). The most recent checking account balance was approximately \$200,000, although the treatments occurred to date have not been paid, which he

estimated between \$180,000 and \$220,000. He stated that some grant funds are still pending from the MN DNR and some cities.

Welling stated that management of invasive aquatic plants has been relatively quiet in 2013. Two contributing factors to this included high levels of spring precipitation and greater levels of nutrients. A number of early season CLP treatments have occurred, although some other proposals have been withdrawn due to the lower levels of invasive aquatic plants. The MN DNR is currently reimbursing approved 2013 grant projects and he reported a couple of new EWM occurrences in 2013.

Jabbour stated that he had been working with the City of Greenwood on creating a lake improvement district (LID) to take away the pressure each year for public funding for large scale herbicide treatment projects. He believed that Greenwood was on board to create a LID and he hoped to facilitate a meeting with a couple of Excelsior city council members to discuss the same topic in the near future. He commented on a successful tour of Lake Minnetonka by the MN DNR Advisory Committee on July 11th (in particular the MN DNR trained dogs for zebra mussel detection and the review of a variety of watercraft to discuss how watercraft could be better manufactured for AIS management and prevention). He believed that there is a need for standard certification to how boats are manufactured and designed taking into consideration AIS.

Green expounded on the July 11th MN DNR Advisory Committee Tour, in particular feedback from MN DNR watercraft inspectors that the frequency that boats arrive at the Spring Park public access with the plug in has increased in 2013. A request has been made from the MN DNR to check into whether the statistics support this. He also commented on a paper from a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) employee (Eric Engbretson) on the unexpected consequences of herbicide treatments on EWM (in particular preventing fish from reproducing). One of the comments he made during the public hearing for the approved plan is whether herbicide treatments affect fish spawning. He questioned what the sources were that supported the data in this paper.

Welling stated that he had major problems with this paper. The MN DNR has spent a great deal of funds on assessing herbicide treatments and the their potential impacts on the fisheries. The paper is a story and flies in the faces of years of scientific evidence.

Morris provided a summary of the paper. Lake Ellwood in Wisconsin has treated EWM with 2-4D. This paper states that certain types of fish are not going up from a reproduction standpoint. although it is not concluding that 2-4D is the cause for this. However, it points out that other plant life is possibly being affected by the use of 2-4D, which can cause habitat and food concerns for some young fish. There is no scientific data to support these correlations.

Welling added that there is no context to this paper, pointing out that Lake Ellwood had limited vegetation to begin with and that the EWM treatments were very small in size. He stated that he believed the facts were being misrepresented in the paper.

Jabbour questioned how to respond to the fishing lobby that commented five years ago that they were not fishing Grays Bay due results from the five-year demonstration project.

Welling stated that he has been employed with the MN DNR for the past 20 years and the agency has been concerned about this over this time. The MN DNR is highly supportive and protective of the

fisheries in Minnesota. He provided a historical summary on the aggressive use of fluridone and other herbicides in the State of Minnesota. He re-emphasized his concerns about the context of the paper.

The Task Force continued to discuss this paper, with the general consensus that there seems to be some information missing and does not tell the whole story.

Woodruff stated that there was currently a private harvester on Phelps Bay that off-loads at the public access. He questioned who oversees this activity (in particular with EWM leaving Lake Minnetonka with the possibility of attached zebra mussels).

Welling stated that the activities of private harvesters are permitted and regulated by the MN DNR.

Fieldseth stated that a Zequanox public meeting coordinated by the United States Geological Services is scheduled for July 14th at 7:00 p.m. at Deephaven City Hall. He provided further details on the purpose of this meeting. In addition, he commented on the 2013 weevil project, which included limited research funding of Dr. Ray Newman from the University of Minnesota (estimated at \$8,000).

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 was the second version of this document, with the first version discussed at the June Task Force Meeting. A summary of the proposed changes, which did not include input from Keegan Lund from the MN DNR, included the following:

- Essentially, there were no changes to the "AIS Threats" and Responses/Remedies" sections.
- The changes made were to the "What Can/Should We Do" section.
- Prevention should be the top priority. In particular:
 1. Education, awareness, and voluntary action.
 2. Focus on all pathways.
 3. Support a comprehensive AIS prevention and management system in Minnesota.
- Early Detection/Rapid Response (EDRR).
- AIS Management.
- Lead Organization.

A summary of the Task Force discussion to these changes was as follows:

- Clarification that the chinese mystery snails were found in Lake Minnetonka in 2012.
- The apparent increase of sea plane activities on Lake Minnetonka (and possible education opportunities).
- Possible education opportunities for all lake service providers.
- In the EDRR section, it needs to be done comprehensively and well in advance. The consensus was to add a bullet point to prepare a EDRR plan for each of the species.
- The various levels of AIS monitoring (current and the past).
- The MCWD AIS Prevention and Management Plan (including how it could be implemented and not duplicated by the LMCD). In particular, there is a need to have a discussion with the MCWD on whether they would support recommendations of this Task Force.

- A discussion of the second bullet point under "AIS Management", with the consensus to remove it.
- Changes made to this document are reflective of all of the various partners and organizations (not just the LMCD).
- Further refinement of this document, based on this discussion, is planned for the August Task Force Meeting. The consensus was that further information was needed prior to forwarding this to the LMCD Board.

Morris stated that he would like to fine-tune this document to better educate the Board on what AIS might be next, including how the LMCD might better position itself to address public perception that the agency is the weak link in prevention efforts. He hoped to have this discussion in a workshop session.

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 August AIS Task Force meeting due to time constraints.

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Friday, 8/9/13.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director