

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, October 11, 2013

LMCD Office, 5341 Maywood Road (Suite 200), Mound, MN 55364

Present: Jeff Morris, LMCD Board; Fred Meyer, LMCD Board; Dick Osgood, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Craig Dawson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Eric Fieldseth, MCWD; John Barten, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Gabriel Jabbour, Tonka Bay Marina; Dr. Ray Newman, University of Minnesota (U of M). Also in attendance: Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director; Joe Shneider, Coalition of Minnehaha Creek Waters; Sam Pertz, Carver County; Marty Walsh, Carver County.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 9/13/13 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved as submitted.

Task Force Member Reports

Morris stated that he and Task Force member Jay Green were putting preparations together for an AIS workshop for the LMCD Board and anyone else that would like to attend. He believed that this would be pushed back to after January 1st to take into consideration that there will be changes in representation on the LMCD Board. The purpose of this workshop is to educate the Board on AIS, which is informative and worth the Board's time, and he stated that he was open on topics to discuss during this workshop.

Fieldseth stated that the 2013 hand-pulling of flowering rush project has recently wrapped up. Additionally, the U.S.G.S. recently conducted a smaller scale zequanox trial on Robinsons Bay.

Newman stated that he believed an offer would be made in the next week to the Zebra Mussel Coordinator for the Minnesota AIS Research Center. He provided background on the three candidates that were interviewed for this position.

Dawson stated that the MCWD Board of Managers in the near future will most likely approve a contract with the Minnesota AIS Research Center carp management assessment study on Six Mile Creek.

Jabbour commented on a number of AIS related topics, in particular two. First, Gary Montz from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) recently made a presentation on the likelihood of spreading zebra mussels through residual water at a MN DNR AIS Advisory Committee meeting. The conclusion is that the spread of zebra mussels is essentially zero by residual water and much more likely for larger boats (such as those stored at marinas). Second, there is a gap in the state law relating to yacht clubs being exempt from mandatory lake service provider training (noting that a sailboat from Lake Minnetonka was recently stopped by an inspector at the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes that was loaded with zebra mussels).

Dawson stated that he had recently attended a meeting where Dr. Chapman from the U.S.G.S. talked about asian carp in North America. It appears that the big head and silver carp will not threaten the watershed because they rely on moving water to reproduce. Grass and black carp are another discussion.

Walsh stated that Carver County coordinated watercraft at 10 lakes during the 2013 boating season. The Carver County Board has committed funding for watercraft inspections for 2014; however, funding is not clear beyond 2014.

Shneider stated that a \$3.65 million grant application was recently approved by Lessard Sams. Specifics on how to spend these funds are currently being worked on; however, the goal is to jump start the process for deployment of decontamination equipment and establishing regional inspection stations (possibly as pilot projects). Work is pending on an achievement plan that better defines how the funds will be spent, which has to be completed by mid November.

Update from 2013-2015 MN DNR AIS Committee Members

Morris stated that Jabbour provided a brief update for this agenda item under "Task Force member reports". He asked for further background from Barten on this.

Barten stated that after the presentation was made by Montz, the committee agreed to an idea proposed by Jabbour. In particular, distinguishing between outboard and inboard/outboard motor boats. Outboard motor boats generally do not carry a significant amount of residual water (unless the wet well is full). For inboard/outboard motor boats, there is the ability for a greater amount of residual water. Montz and the MN DNR will be further evaluating this, which might allow for more targeted watercraft inspections in the future. He reported that the MN DNR staff has communicated that they do not view all 5,000,000 boats that launch in the State of Minnesota as an equal threat.

Fieldseth stated that he generally agreed with the feedback for veligers surviving through the transfer of residual water. However, he was equally concerned about the transfer of adult zebra mussels on vegetation.

Jabbour stated that the committee discussion was to distinguish on the types of motors on a boat so that more targeted efforts can be done on cleaning. He questioned whether a boat can ever be fully decontaminated.

Osgood that profiling by the type of motor generally looks at the zebra mussel issue. He stated that there is a need to also consider other invasive species that are looming. Although he recognized there are a number of possible vectors for the spread of invasive species, he believed that an emphasis needs to be on boats and trailers.

Barten stated that most other species should be adequately addressed if the public properly cleans, drains, and dries. Some of the evidence suggests that there is a need to look beyond just the vector of spreading invasive species through boats (such as docks and water accessory structures). He stated that the committee is currently considering what are the best management and prevention tools with the limited funds that currently exist.

Jabbour stated that two of the more recent zebra mussel infestations were cause by the movement of docks and water accessory structures. For example, the sales of water trampolines on Craig's List. In the

near future, he believed that one of the primary threats will be the sales of boat lifts from Lake Minnetonka (in particular because of the difficulty of properly decontaminating them).

Morris stated that he believes the best defense to address the spread of invasive species is education. He hoped that there was a market based solution that could work.

Walsh stated that in addition to education, there is a need to put greater responsibility of the boat owner.

Jabbour provided a brief update on efforts for mandatory boat licensing for education on public safety and AIS. He stated that the education of AIS is lacking for the MN DNR Youth Operators Permit (there is currently only one question on this). Additionally, he hoped to changed how the boats are being manufactured to improve decontamination efforts for AIS.

Morris stated that his idea of education is to provide incentives for the public to want to participate on a boat operators course. He believed that this would be more effective rather than fining the public with much larger fines or requiring participation through a State of Minnesota mandated course. He hoped to develop a program that would create a win-win-win for the State of Minnesota, the private sector, and commerce.

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

Morris stated that he appreciated attendance from Shneider, Pertz, and Walsh for this agenda item (noting that other representatives were invited to attend this meeting). Task Force member Barten has previously raised the idea of this AIS Task Force consolidating with other west metro lake AIS advisory committees. He asked Barten to provide further background on this topic.

Barten stated that this topic was originally discussed when there was discussion of a work plan for this committee. This Task Force is facilitated by the LMCD and has been in existence for 26 or 27 years, in which he is a charter member. In recent years, a number of other agencies and organizations have established AIS advisory committees, in which the same stakeholders are serving on multiple committees. He stated that he would like to explore the idea of creating one larger AIS advisory committee (rather than five or six that currently exist). There was discussion of this topic at the September AIS Task Force Meeting, in which he summarized the following):

Issues/Concerns

1. Inconsistent message (some organizations believe that the current system is successful, yet could be improve, while other organizations believe the current system is a failure);
2. Coordination (i.e., the need to better coordinate watercraft inspection programs on Lake Minnetonka by the LMCD, MCWD, MN DNR, and TRPD) ;
3. Conflicting objectives (i.e., the level of watercraft inspections and the various management techniques for Eurasian Watermilfoil); and
4. Information transfer (local decision makers are not always aware of the most up to date data).

Alternative Models to Address Issues/Concerns

1. Status Quo;
2. Lake Minnetonka coordinating committee;
3. Regional (watershed wide) coordinating committee; and

4. Regional (county, west metro, or metro wide) coordinating committee.

Discussion Focus

1. Is there a need for a single multi-agency coordinating committee?
2. What is an appropriate scope for such a committee (lake, watershed, west metro, metro, or other)?
3. What should be the primary focus of the committee (technical, policy, educational) and should it be strictly advisory when asked or should it develop recommendations for future concerns?
4. Composition of the committee, including appropriate size? Additionally, who decides on the composition of the committee?

Barten stated that it would be beneficial to receive feedback from other stakeholders, not appointed to the LMCD's AIS Task Force, on this topic.

There was a lengthy discussion on this topic. Highlights of this discussion included the following:

- Osgood stated that he was generally on board with regards to one larger AIS advisory committee (coordination would be useful and helpful). He believed that any individual that serves on such a committee should decide whether they need their own advisory committee for their purposes. He believed the larger advisory committee might work similar to the MN DNR AIS Advisory Committee and there will be some staffing requirements in order for the committee to work well.
- Dawson stated that another model to consider would be create a formal quorum group (i.e., the Sensible Land Use Coalition). This type of a model could allow for information exchange and networking.
- Jabbour stated that he believed that having a super AIS advisory committee would provide for better education of the elected officials and the general public. Additionally, he talked about the benefit of periodic AIS symposium's.
- Fieldseth stated that he supported the concept of a broader AIS advisory committee; however, there would be a need to clarify the focus of this committee. Additionally, he questioned the exact number of AIS advisory committees that could be consolidated.
- Pertz stated that inconsistent messages relating to Carver County watercraft inspections vs. inspections done elsewhere was the biggest frustration communicated to Carver County inspectors. He believed that a consistent message on a regional basis would be of benefit to the public.
- Morris stated that he believed that the LMCD's AIS Task Force should be proactive and present ideas to the LMCD Board. He questioned whether the creation of a larger AIS advisory committee would be consolidation of efforts.
- Jabbour stated that one alternative for the LMCD Board to consider would be to participate in a larger AIS advisory committee and relinquish this AIS Task Force.
- Shneider supported the concepts of information sharing and coordination. However, he questioned the likelihood of achieving a consistent message amongst the various stakeholders. If a message were agreed to, he questioned its effectiveness because it would be the least common denominator.
- Morris stated that one approach would be for the various stakeholders to agree on one subject, which could be coordinated by a larger advisory committee, that all the stakeholders could work together on. He believed that this approach might allow for an assessment on whether a larger committee was worthwhile and effective.

- Barten stated that the TRPD staff currently makes recommendations to the TRPD Board on funding allocations for AIS management and prevention projects. This is a challenge for the TRPD and he believed that the Board and staff would benefit on recommendations from a larger AIS advisory committee (with a consistent message).
- Osgood stated that he believed a consistent AIS message could occur through a larger AIS coordinating committee, which would be contingent on formalizing the committee structure and would need to be staffed.
- Jabbour stated that he believed the intentions of the various stakeholders is well intended; however, implementation is an issue.
- Walsh stated that he believed there would be a benefit to larger AIS advisory committees. However, policy Boards are not going away. Should a larger AIS advisory committee be established, there is a need for clear goals and objectives, which would be brought to the various policy Boards. He believed that there could be benefits to the west metro area with a clear message and information sharing.
- Newman questioned whether an advisory committee could agree on a uniform message with the diverse organizational interests. However, he believed that information transfer and coordination was a possibility.
- Shneider stated that there are topics that he believed the various stakeholders could agree on.
- The consensus of the Task Force was for Morris to coordinate an agenda item with the LMCD Board to solicit their feedback on this topic. Barten stated that he would attend this meeting to assist in the discussion with the LMCD Board. Morris stated that he would report back to the Task Force on this topic.

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Friday, 11/8/13, at the LMCD office.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director