

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, August 8, 2014

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

Present: Jeff Morris, LMCD Board; Tony Brough, Hennepin County Environmental Services (Hennepin County); Tom Frahm, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Jill Bjorklund, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Eric Fieldseth, MCWD; Darren Lochner, MCWD; Adam Doll, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR); John Barten, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Dr. Ray Newman, University of Minnesota (U of M); Dick Woodruff. Also in attendance: Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director; Merideth Moore, City of Eden Prairie (Eden Prairie).

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 6/13/14 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved as submitted.

Mid-Season Update on 2014 Lake Minnetonka Watercraft Inspection Program

Morris asked Doll for an update on this agenda item. In particular, he had interest in being able to provide the LMCD Board an update on how the tablets purchased by the agency were being used for the 2014 program.

Doll stated that he had prepared a draft report through July for watercraft inspections conducted on Lake Minnetonka by: 1) TRPD (Lake Minnetonka Regional Park), 2) MN DNR (primarily Grays, Maxwell, North Arm, and Spring Park public accesses), and 3) LMCD (Carsons, Cooks, Halsteds, and Wayzata public accesses). One of the current challenges is to document which party has a specific tablet (including the on-going downloading of surveys collected from watercraft inspections conducted).

Morris asked if using the tablets was beneficial to the MN DNR.

Doll stated that the use of tablets has made his and other staff members at the MN DNR much easier. In particular, surveys collected by tablet are generally complete while some paper surveys collected are incomplete.

A summary of the Task Force discussion was as follows:

- The efficiencies and benefits of using tablets (in particular when compared to incomplete or missing data received for Lake Minnetonka in 2013).
- Factors that possibly contributed to the high number of incoming watercraft inspected at the Spring Park Bay public access with plants or animals attached (most likely launching into Lake Minnetonka for the first time in 2015, which were not adequately cleaned after removal in 2014, that are being launched by lake service providers).

- A discussion of how these types of violations have been forwarded to a MN DNR Conservation Officer (CO) for their discretionary follow-up. There was some interest in gathering summary data on the number of violations forwarded to a CO (including the number of citations issued). Doll stated that he would contact a CO on collecting this information.
- Why there is such a large discrepancy on AIS violations between road checks vs. watercraft inspections (including contributing factors).
- "High Water" on Lake Minnetonka and whether this contributed to a reduced level of watercraft inspections in 2014. Additionally, there was discussion of how this could have contributed to increased traffic on nearby lakes (i.e., Lake Independence) and increased AIS risks for Lake Minnetonka watercraft (a possibly unintended consequence).
- The authority of a watercraft inspector vs. a MN DNR CO (including the concept of a providing a watercraft inspector additional authority to possibly writing an AIS violation in the future).
- Utilizing this statistical information (and possibly other data) and communicating it to the public (Telling a Story).
- Possible changes to the MN DNR survey in the future (i.e., whether an individual was launching a watercraft for the first time in a boating season).
- The level of watercraft inspections being conducted on Lake Minnetonka and the State of Minnesota (including the effectiveness of the current programs). Further discussion took place on necessary legislation and Minnesota constitutional changes to restrict access or quarantine lakes because of AIS.
- The need to get the local law enforcement agencies trained to enforce and write citations (where appropriate) for AIS violations.

LMA, Update on 2014 Whole Bay or Large Scale Herbicide Treatments

Morris asked Frahm for an update.

Frahm stated that treatments have occurred on Gideons Bay, North Arm, and the Shorewood portion of Phelps Bay. Treatments are not planned for Grays Bay, Carsons Bay, the remaining portions of Phelps Bay. One of the contributing factors for non-treatments in 2014 was "High Water". He reported that PLM (the contractor) is currently taking samples for hybrid milfoil (with a future decision on whether treatment protocols need to be adjusted).

A summary of the Task Force discussion was as follows:

- The types of herbicide used by the LMA in 2014.
- The areas allowed to be treated in 2014 were reduced by the MN DNR.
- The treatment protocol on North Arm Bay, with a request from the LMA for the LMCD to keep the harvesting equipment out of the bay in 2014.
- Better coordination needs to be made between the LMA and the LMCD in herbicide and harvesting efforts on Lake Minnetonka (in particular for 2015). This should improve public expectations.

West Metro AIS Coordinating Committee, Update on July 11th Meeting

Morris asked for an update.

Barten stated that there was good representation at this meeting and the primary topic of discussion was funds being made available to 80 counties by the State of Minnesota for AIS prevention and management

projects. Carver County anticipates receiving \$145,000 in 2014 and \$325,000 in 2015, which is initially planned for improve technology and an additional seasonal staff member. Hennepin County anticipates receiving \$145,000 in 2014 and \$325,000 in 2015, in which Brough is currently working on a plan for approval by the Hennepin County Board.

Woodruff asked if discussion had occurred regarding centralized watercraft inspections.

Barten stated that there was discussion at the July meeting and that Carver County had some interest in exploring this concept. TRPD may also have some interest in how this could work; however, questions remains as to the logistics.

Nybeck stated that further discussion is planned at the October West Metro AIS Coordinating Committee meeting. In particular, Carver County staff member Marty Walsh was going to collect legal challenges from other committee members for discussion in October.

Barten stated that one of the discussions was to possibly establish permanent decontamination stations throughout the county, which could include Carver County.

Doll provided the protocol used by the MN DNR to determine when a decontamination should take place.

Barten stated that he believe the meeting was productive and the funds being made available from the State of Minnesota could make coordinating efforts regionally easier to accomplish. In particular, further reducing AIS risk management (recognizing that this statistic will never be zero).

Nybeck stated that the frequency of the quarterly meetings seems to work better for the stakeholders. Other topics planned for discussion in October include updates on 2014 watercraft inspection programs and an update from Fieldseth on the framework for an early detection and rapid response plan.

Brough and Fieldseth discussed the idea of keeping some funding available for: 1) early detection and rapid response, and 2) educational opportunities.

Update on U of M Research Center Advisory Board

Morris asked for an update.

Barten stated that the Board had met in the past few weeks. One of the tasks for the Board is to establish possible future priorities for the U of M Research Center, which he elaborated on. Additionally, he provided a brief update on two new positions being considered to be hired, which will work closely with the MN DNR and MN Sea Grant.

Newman stated that both positions would have an extension component with the U of M (one for research and one for teaching).

Barten stated that an additional \$4 million in funds for AIS has been made available by Lessard Sams, in which he elaborated on. There will be some stringent requirements in order to receive some of these grant funds.

AIS Task Force Member Reports

Newman provided an update on weevil populations on Lake Minnetonka, in particular Smiths Bay. This bay has not been harvested for a number of years and there is a fair weevil density. Little Eurasian watermilfoil has been observed on this bay; however, there is a diverse plant community (including northern watermilfoil). Overall, he believed that bio control has a tendency to be more effective on larger and broader areas, in which he provided an overview of possible factors that might contribute to higher weevil populations.

Moore stated that Eden Prairie conducts watercraft inspections and she reported that the "High Water" on Lake Minnetonka provided some challenges at Lake Riley for a couple of weeks. She reported on longer lines and two incidents on Lake Minnetonka watercraft where watercraft were inspected with zebra mussels attached to plants.

Barten stated that the TRPD had similar concerns at Lake Independence and Medicine Lake. Thus, a decision was made to increase inspection hours for four hours per day. He reported some instances of zebra mussels attached to the hulls of boats, which indicates that these watercraft were either owned by Lake Minnetonka homeowners or were slip customers. The TRPD is currently having staffing challenges for watercraft inspectors that are going back to school.

Newman stated that he was working with Breck students on the distribution of zebra mussels on three different plant species. He provided further background on this project.

Doll provided an update on Lake Minnetonka vegetation collected, in particular coontail, for photos by the MN DNR. This vegetation was stored in a cooler and he reported that the zebra mussels were attached to the sides of the cooler at the water line the next day.

Fieldseth stated that the carp assessment project with the U of M on the Six Mile Creek sub-watershed is on-going. He reported that early detection and monitoring is taking place on Lake Minnetonka on Grays Bay, Libbs Lake, Maxwell Bay, and St. Albans Bay. The USGS will be hosting a public information meeting for the Zequanox project on Robinsons Bay (6:30 p.m. on August 21st at Deephaven City Hall).

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meetings

The next meeting for the LMCD AIS Task Force was scheduled for Friday, 9/9/14 (8:30 a.m. at the LMCD office).

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director