

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, September 12, 2014

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

Present: Jeff Morris, LMCD Board; Jay Green, LMCD Board; Tom Frahm, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Craig Dawson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Eric Fieldseth, MCWD; Adam Doll, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR); Chip Welling, MN DNR; John Barten, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Dick Woodruff. Also in attendance: Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 8/8/14 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved as submitted.

MCWD Update

- **Zebra Mussel Infestation on Christmas Lake:**
Morris asked for an update on the efforts of the MCWD.

Fieldseth provided an overview of the MCWD's efforts for early AIS detection monitoring on Christmas Lake. He made the following comments:

1. MCWD staff checked the zebra mussel samplers on August 16th (four zebra mussels were found, with additional zebra mussels on rocks near the public access).
2. MCWD and MN DNR staff performed a widespread search on August 18th to assess the extent of the zebra mussel infestation (zebra mussels were only located at the public access). Testing for veligers was also done (no veligers were detected).
3. The public access was closed with a turbidity curtain installed (working closely with the MN DNR and the City of Shorewood). A thorough investigation within and outside of the enclosure was conducted (with an estimate of 5,000 zebra mussels within the enclosure). No zebra mussels were found beyond the contained area at the access.
4. The enclosed area was treated with zequanox on September 8th, which is being monitored by MCWD staff. Mortality rates of the zebra mussels were eight percent on day two and 23 percent on day three. It was communicated to him that the zequanox would break down between 12 and 20 hours after the product was applied (including dissolved oxygen). He reported that there was no dissolved oxygen after 24 hours, adding that the barriers had not been removed. Typically, the barriers are removed 24 hours after a zequanox application.
5. He entertained questions and comments from the Task Force.

The Task Force has a lengthy discussion on this agenda item. A summary of the discussion was as follows:

- Zequanox protocol (including maximum label rates allowed).
- Further discussion of monitoring efforts of the MCWD (including turbidity).

- Discussion of the zequanox product (including costs associated with it).
 - The preparation of a report for this pilot rapid response project.
 - The appropriateness of zequanox applications for the future (whether it would be cost effective and appropriate on a lake-wide basis).
 - Potash and the appropriateness to use it to kill zebra mussels (noting that this is not currently labeled for such and would need to be permitted by the Environmental Protection Agency). This may not be needed based on the effectiveness of the zequanox treatment.
 - A discussion of the zebra mussels discovered (in particular there was no spawning observed and it appears that they were transported in to Christmas Lake, possibly by another watercraft).
 - The gate utilized at Christmas Lake (including park hours when the gate is open and how the public has found ways to open gates when they are closed).
 - Watercraft inspections conducted in 2014 (including times that accesses are covered, the quality of the inspectors, etc.). There was discussion of checking up on the watercraft inspectors periodically in the future (i.e., similar to a secret shopper program).
 - What the protocol was for a decision to be made on the use of potash.
 - Monitoring is continuing to occur outside the containment area on Christmas Lake (including what the protocol was should zebra mussels be located outside).
 - Pathways, other than watercraft that utilize public access inspections, in which zebra mussels and other AIS can be transferred to non-infested waters (i.e., docks, boat lifts, and water trampolines).
- **Lake Minnetonka AIS Prevention Proposal (2015 and Beyond):**
Morris asked for background on the proposal.

Fieldseth suggested that he believed there was a need to improve what is currently being done prior to considering watercraft inspections expansion. There seems to be a greater incidence of watercraft coming from Lake Minnetonka in 2014 to other waterbodies with zebra mussels attached (either to the boat itself or vegetation). He made the following comments on a proposal for 2015:

- Coverage Dates- May 1st through October 31st;
- Coverage Hours- 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. (2,944 total hours for each access);
- Access Coverage- Nine public accesses to be covered, with the Echo Bay and Phelps Bay public accesses not covered;
- Decontamination Stations- Proposed at the Carsons Bay, Grays Bay, Lake Minnetonka Regional Park, Maxwell Bay, and Spring Park Bay public accesses; and
- Program Cost Details- Estimated at \$744,832.

Fieldseth stated that he prepared this proposal for discussion purposes by the Task Force.

A summary of the Task Force discussion was as follows:

- This model would cover inspections currently conducted by the LMCD, MN DNR, and TRPD.
- The level of the watercraft inspector(s) at the various public accesses (including Level 2 inspectors at the public accesses targeted for decontamination stations).
- The pool of resources available for potential watercraft inspectors (including the pay rates needed for quality inspectors).
- The TRPD hires between 600 and 1,000 seasonal employees annually. However, a question remains as to staffing when these employees go back to school (inadequate labor pool).
- Potential supervision and administrative costs associated with these programs.

- The regional watercraft inspector model (including pros and cons).
- Current inspection programs conducted by the LMCD, MN DNR, and TRPD are generally conducted during peak days and times to maximize the investment on inspectors.
- Concern was raised as to whether watercraft inspectors was currently working or whether there is a need to make changes (think outside of the box).
- There was consensus that the success of the various watercraft inspections should be communicated to the public.

AIS Task Force Member Reports

Fieldseth and Dawson provided an update on the Zequnaox project being conducted by the U.S.G.S. on Robinsons Bay.

Welling stated that the Army Corps of Engineers was making progress on the five bay herbicide demonstration project.

Barten stated that watercraft inspections are planned through mid October (weekends only) during the day. Inspections generally conclude around the end of September.

Doll stated that the typical metric used by the MN DNR in the past is the number of watercraft inspections conducted at a public access per hour. With the new data being generated, he believed that this could be refined further per public on an hourly basis (i.e., to identify the best times to schedule inspectors for decontamination purposes). 2014 was the first season where a conservation officer follows up with a watercraft owner when zebra mussels are attached to a watercraft. The vast majority of the conservation follow-up resulted in the issuance of written warnings, with some citations issued. Further assessment is planned with enforcement on how to improve this for the future.

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next meeting for the LMCD AIS Task Force was scheduled for Friday, 11/12/14 (8:30 a.m. at the LMCD office). In October, a West Metro AIS Coordinating Committee was scheduled for Friday, 10/10/14 (8:30 a.m. at the MCWD office).

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director