

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

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

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

Present: Jay Green, LMCD Board; Fred Meyer, LMCD Board; Rob Roy, LMCD Board; Tony Brough, Hennepin County Environmental Services (Hennepin County); Josh Leddy, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Craig Dawson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Eric Fieldseth, MCWD; Chip Welling, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (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 amended. Green added an agenda to discuss mapping conducted by LMCD staff on utility lines in the water for Lake Minnetonka.

Minutes

The minutes from the 11/14/14 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved as amended. Welling requested that the second sentence in the third paragraph on page four be amended to read "He attended and there was a lot of discussion on controlling zebra mussels."

Lake Minnetonka Utility Line Mapping

Green stated that there was an incident in 2013 where a utility line was severed (possibly from a harvester). Judd Harper (the 2015 Eurasian Watermilfoil Harvesting Project Manager) has been asked to check with the various utility companies to prepare a map for Lake Minnetonka. Progress has been made on this project and he asked for an update from Harper.

Harper summarized the following comments:

- A modified Gopher State One request has been made with the various utility companies of Lake Minnetonka (estimated at 35). He believed that this was the first request for most utility companies to receive this information.
- Quite a bit of information was received last spring. This information was received in a variety of forms (some was better than others and some companies were more difficult to work with).
- The map is a public information document that is a graphic location of the utility lines and no way indicates exact locations. However, this information is good because the harvesting equipment will most likely stay out of areas where known utility lines exist.

A summary of the committee discussion was as follows:

- The map would be more useful if a legend was prepared that identified the company for each utility line.
- The legend could also identify whether the lines are active.
- How Lake Minnetonka lake service providers may be of value to further update this map.

Harper stated that this map was a work in progress.

2015 Lake Minnetonka AIS Prevention and Management Programs

• **Watercraft Inspections**

Green stated that he and Nybeck were currently working on the 2014 Watercraft Inspection Program Report. It has been observed that the 2014 data was broken and that Adam Doll from the MN DNR had to fix some parts of the statistics in the spreadsheet. Recently, a meeting took place with the LMCD, LMA, MCWD, and MN DNR to discuss watercraft inspections for 2015. Options to consider include: 1) do nothing, 2) 24/7 coverage, which is financially impossible, 3) continue the current program, in which there were issues in 2014, and 4) contract with someone else to take the lead. The MN DNR has communicated that they cannot take this added program on; however, there is a question of whether the four public accesses covered by the LMCD could be contracted with the TRPD.

A summary of the Task Force discussion was as follows:

- The process of how to approach the TRPD with the request for contracted watercraft inspectors.
- The need to tighten and have consistent watercraft inspection protocol (based on some watercraft leaving Lake Minnetonka in 2014 and being caught during inspections at other bodies of water).
- There were 339 watercraft denied launch on Lake Minnetonka in 2014 that needed to be decontaminated. The Task Force had a discussion of how to improve decontamination efforts in the future, which included ideas being considered by Hennepin County. One temporary decontamination option discussed was the transportation overflow lot in Orono near Spring Park Bay.
- Another option discussed was utilizing the private sector such as the commercial marinas (including the issue of liability and whether enforcement would buy into a certification concept).
- The quality of watercraft inspections conducted by the LMCD inspectors in 2014 was discussed, including the need to improve this in 2015. In particular, watercraft inspection protocol.
- A discussion of whether to consider expanding the number of watercraft inspection hours in 2015.
- A discussion of the need for equal focus on incoming and outgoing watercraft inspections on Lake Minnetonka in 2015. The Task Force discussed how this might be accomplished (i.e., change the inspection hours to a later time).

• **Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM)**

Green stated that the LMCD was currently in the process of updating its approved strategic plan. The Comprehensive EWM and Curly-Leaf Pondweed Management Plan was adopted by the LMCD in 2013 and some things have changed since its adoption (i.e., the establishment of a lake improvement district on St. Albans Bay). He questioned whether any updates to this plan should be considered by this Task Force (since this plan was part of the approved strategic plan).

A summary of the Task Force discussion was as follows:

- Whether the LMCD has established a priority in the management and prevention of AIS on Lake Minnetonka.
- A discussion of the eight bays that are identified as suitable for whole bay herbicide treatments (funded with public dollars). This assessment was based on the physical potential for success (not based on whether there are adequate funds available and the desire to proceed with this).
- The general consensus was that the assessment for physical potential success had not changed; however, some homeowners are willing to take a great risk with their funds. Should residents want to have other bays considered beyond these eight bays, the general consensus was that this should be between these residents and the permitting agency (MN DNR).
- Knowledge of the plan amongst the LMA bay captains was discussed (including the need to circulate it). Nybeck was directed to forward this to Leddy for this purpose.
- The plan provides guidance with regards to coordination between whole bay herbicide treatments and mechanical harvesting.
- The growth of EWM on Lake Minnetonka, including the factors that could contribute to its growth (i.e., weather conditions such as a season long drought).
- Invasive species that have the greatest attention of the public at this times includes zebra mussels and asian carp.
- Whole bay and large scale herbicide treatments (including the challenges of selectivity and unintended consequences).
- It was noted that some the "Roles and Responsibilities" have changed and should be possibly updated.
- The Task Force had a discussion of hybrid milfoil, based on the coordinated herbicide treatment projects. There was discussion of the submittal of a project to Hennepin County to further research this.
- An update was provided on the lake improvement district process for St. Albans Bay.
- Whether there was a need to establish a comprehensive invasive species plan for Lake Minnetonka.

AIS Task Force Member Reports

Brough stated that January 9th was the deadline for grant applications to Hennepin County for AIS projects. Hennepin County is contracting with a company to research places that sell aquarium plants and animals. Further work by this company is planned under cover to ensure that these places are complying with law. An early detection program, most likely to not exceed 30 volunteers, is planned for the spring/summer. He hoped to engage fishermen, homeowners, and lake service providers in this program.

Fieldseth stated that the potash treatment on Christmas Lake is planned for December 16th. The MCWD plans on submitting a grant application to Hennepin County to better manage and reduce the amount vegetation leaving Lake Minnetonka (in particular because zebra mussels are attaching to this vegetation).

Dawson provided an update on the MCWD common carp project being worked on by the University of Minnesota.

Welling stated that Army Corps of Engineers may be of assistance for research purposes should a grant request be submitted to Hennepin County for hybrid milfoil.

Green stated that an AIS Summit is being coordinated on January 20th and 21st in St. Cloud (sponsored by the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts).

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next meeting for the LMCD AIS Task Force was scheduled for Friday, 2/13/16 (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