

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, February 13, 2015

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

Present: Jay Green, LMCD Board; Gabriel Jabbour; LMCD Board; Rob Roy, 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). Also in attendance: Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 12/12/14 AIS Task Force Meeting were approved as submitted.

LMA, Discussion of AIS Prevention Proposal

Green asked for an overview of this agenda item from Frahm.

Frahm reviewed a proposal from the LMA to monitor boat accesses electronically (as an alternative to the human element). All watercraft would receive a transponder, possibly via a smart phone application, and all public accesses would receive an electronic transmitter/receiver. At these public accesses, signage would be installed to communicate to the public a numerical category for the type of AIS it has, ranging from a "0" for lakes with no AIS to a "7" for lakes with all AIS. These signs would also communicate fines associated with violating applicable laws. The thought process is to increase the numerical category based on the extent of AIS infestations and that watercraft would not be able to transport to a cleaner lake (a lesser numerical category) unless the watercraft is properly decontaminated. Additional equipment at public accesses would include a camera (possibly with sound) and a red-green light to communicate to the public to inform the public whether they can launch the watercraft. One of the goals of this proposal is not to track boats (the only thing being stored somewhere is the transponder activity). He stated that further work was needed to refine the proposal and he asked for feedback from the Task Force.

A summary of the Task Force discussion was as follows:

- How this proposal could be funded. Two possibilities discussed included the \$10 million funded to Minnesota counties for AIS projects and an Initiative Foundation grant request. There was also discussion of the how the residents on the lakes could possibly assist in funding.
- Implementation of the proposal (most likely statewide that would require new legislation to be passed).
- Possible legal and constitutional questions relating to the proposal (in particular the tracking of watercraft). It was noted that there would be some level of tracking of watercraft to issue a

citation. Another issue would be to follow through on the pictures taken of possible violators (referencing the legal issues for cameras on stop lights).

- The proposal would need to factor in time elapsed for watercraft transporting between bodies of water.
- A similar request is being considered by the Initiative Foundation for the Red River Basin Commission. It was suggested that the LMA may want to consider getting in contact with them.
- The challenges of classifying waterbodies in the State of Minnesota for AIS in a numerical basis (what the algorithm might be). An alternative approach could be infested vs. non-infested (red lake - green lake), which has been considered a great deal in the past.
- Seven or eight defensive strategies were evaluated by a contractor for the MN DNR in 2012. Annual costs estimates for these defensive strategies were provided to the MN DNR from this contractor (noting that these estimates are expensive if implemented statewide).
- The consensus of the Task Force was for the LMA to consider submitting an Initiative Foundation grant application (with a February 27th deadline of submitting a letter of inquiry).

Update on January 27th and 28th AIS Summit Relating to Design and Construction of Boats in Consideration of AIS

Green asked for an overview of this agenda item from Jabbour.

Jabbour provided the following update:

- The AIS Summit was conducted in Las Vegas (with approximately 125 registered from organizations with AIS background and expertise, as well as the boat manufacturing industry).
- Based on his observations, he believed that 100 percent of those in attendance he had dialogue with were rowing in the same direction. He did not observe push back from the participants, primarily due to the ground rules established by the America Yacht and Boat Club (AYBC) president.
- A short update on the breakout sessions, including the discussion at them that outlined challenges for the boat industry (i.e., how to design trailers to make it easier to clean around the bunks).
- A technical paper summarizing the conference will be prepared to be circulated to AIS officials and boat manufacturers. It is anticipated that AYBC will be getting back together in the next year or so, with new standards to be recommended by AYBC in the next two or three years.
- He reported that representation from Minnesota at the conference was well attended.
- AYBC is currently at the Miami Boat Show, which he also plans on attending.
- He concluded by stating that he believed a great deal of progress was being made on this topic.

Green thanked Jabbour for the update.

TRPD, Discussion of the Concept of a West Metro AIS Summit

Green asked for an overview of this agenda item from Barten.

Barten stated that a TRPD Commissioner has directed staff to research into the concept of hosting an AIS Summit (primarily in the west metro area). Some of the constituents for this TRPD Commissioner have expressed concern that there is not adequate information available for AIS (including an opportunity to engage in discussion about this). Thus, TRPD staff is proposing an AIS Summit for the West Metro area

possibly through the established committee that meets quarterly (rather than a stand-alone event coordinated by the TRPD). He asked for feedback from the Task Force on this.

The Task Force discussed this and the consensus was for Barten to pursue coordinating this through the West Metro AIS Coordinating Committee. A brief discussion took place with how this event could be coordinated.

Update on January 9th West Metro AIS Coordinating Committee Meeting.

Green asked for an overview of this agenda item from Barten

Barten provided the following summary:

- Tony Brough provided an update on how funds received from the State of Minnesota are planned in Hennepin County. This included: 1) \$100,000 for a grant application process, which are currently being reviewed, and 2) a large investment is planned for the design and construction of a permanent decontamination station (in which he provided further detail of).
- Marty Walsh provided an update on how funds received from the State of Minnesota are planned in Carver County. A centralized inspection station (voluntary) is being considered (as well as partial funding of local agencies for watercraft inspections is planned).
- A sub-committee is currently considering uniform educational message (similar to what is already offered by the MN DNR and the Minnesota Sea Grant). It was suggested that the University of Minnesota AIS Research Center be offered to participate on this project.
- The West Metro AIS Coordinating Committee is currently considering whether to submit an Initiative Fund grant application (i.e., the hiring of an intern to track the movement of boats and boatlifts that are sold).

Dawson stated that Carver County was considering placing a decontamination station at Lake Waconia (in which the MCWD is considering some partial funding due to its accessibility to the upper watershed district).

MN DNR, 2014 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Lake Minnetonka

Green asked Doll for an overview of this agenda item from Doll.

Doll stated that he had prepared the 2014 Summary Report (dated 2/2/15). The format used was similar to 2013. Thus, some 2013 statistics were included in some of the charts. For example, the drain plug violation rate at the Halstads, Carsons, and Cooks Bay public accesses decreased dramatically in 2014 when compared to 2013. This is similar to the statewide trend. The total number of inspections per month was down significantly in June and July. This reflects the lakewide minimum wake restrictions implemented on Lake Minnetonka in 2014. An overview of changes being considered to the survey application was offered. He believed that the balance of the report was self-explanatory and he entertained questions or request for additional information from the Task Force.

Green stated that there was a great deal of discussion for AIS containment at the conference recently coordinated in St. Cloud. It appears that the level of inspections for inbound watercraft is double when compared to outbound inspections. He asked for comments from Doll on this observation.

Doll stated that he had a similar observation and that he inquired with MN DNR staff on this. This is of particular interest since outbound inspections take priority over inbound inspections when there are two watercraft at a public access that is infested with an AIS. Surprisingly, the figures do not support this (one possibility could be the time of when the inspectors are scheduled).

Green concurred that it could be when the public accesses are staffed with inspectors.

Doll provided an overview of scheduling of watercraft inspectors in 2014. He stated that he hoped to stagger inspection hours more in 2015, which he provided further details of. Additionally, he and other regional Watercraft Inspection Supervisors are considering a quality control pilot project in 2015 (possibly through volunteers that launch watercraft throughout the State of Minnesota).

AIS Task Force Member Reports

Green stated that he and Jabbour had recently visited with TRPD Superintendent Boe Carlson regarding the concept of the LMCD contracting with them for coverage at four public accesses in 2015 (Carsons, Cooks, Halstead, and Wayzata Bays). The TRPD already has presence on Lake Minnetonka at the Regional Park and he believed that this type of arrangement would work well (since they are already staffed with supervisors and law enforcement). At the February 11th LMCD Board Meeting, he communicated that he was authorized to submit a formal request to the TRPD asking for their assistance in the 2015 LMCD watercraft inspection program.

Roy stated that the Cities of Excelsior and Greenwood recently signed off on a joint power agreement authorizing the lake improvement district (LID) on St. Albans Bay. He provided further details on the LID (the establishment of a Board by the cities, the types of projects that can be funded, etc.). It is anticipated that the LID will be included on the 2016 tax statements.

Doll stated that two training positions are currently at Human Resources, in which the sole purpose for these seasonal positions would be to train local governmental unit watercraft inspectors. This change will assist in relieving some of his workload (although this could affect some organizations that have had some of their employees trained by the MN DNR in the past to do this themselves).

Welling stated that the MN was working on guidance for rapid response and detection plans for zebra mussels and hydrilla. Additionally, the University of Minnesota recently held the first of three interviews for a staff position open at the AIS Research Center.

Jabbour recommended updating the labels to allow for a quicker response (pre approval) for emergency situations that occur (i.e., Christmas Lake in 2014). Additionally, hot water introduced into engines cannot be above 105 degrees Fahrenheit (exceeds manufacturer standards for sensors).

Doll concurred and he stated that the MN DNR was checking further into this.

Dawson provided a legislative update by the MCWD on the trailer decal program.

Fieldseth provided an update on the Christmas Lake rapid response plan for zebra mussels (including what is planned after ice out in 2015). Additionally, he provided an overview of early detection monitoring conducted in 2014 on Grays Bay, Libbs Lake, Maxwell Bay, and St. Albans Bay. He circulated 2014 Aquatic Plant Survey Reports prepared for Maxwell and Stubbs Bays.

Barten provided an update of a rapid response plan for zebra mussels on Lake Independence in 2015.

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next meeting for the LMCD AIS Task Force was scheduled for Friday, 3/13/16 (8:30 a.m. at the LMCD office).

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director