

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

8:30 a.m., Friday, October 12, 2012

LMCD Office, 23505 Smithtown Road (Suite 120), Shorewood, MN 55331

Present: Kelsey Page, LMCD Board; Fred Meyer, LMCD Board; Jeff Morris, LMCD Board; Chip Welling, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR); Keegan Lund, MN DNR; John Barten, Three Rivers Park District (TRPD); Dick Osgood, Lake Minnetonka Association (LMA); Craig Dawson, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD); Eric Fieldseth, MCWD; Jay Green, Anglers for Habitat; Gabriel Jabbour, Tonka Bay Marina; Dick Woodruff. Also in attendance: Greg Nybeck, LMCD Executive Director; Jack Kimball, Phelps Bay; Thomas Lowe, Carmans Bay; Kent Norby, Carsons and St. Louis Bays.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes

The minutes from the 6/8/12 AIS Task Force Meeting were accepted as submitted.

Agency Reports

Fieldseth provided an update on work being done by the MCWD's AIS Task Force. In particular, progress made on the long-term watershed-wide AIS Plan, as well as AIS stop gap measurements that are being considered for 2013. He also provided an update on: 1) a Flowering Rush study on parts of Lake Minnetonka, and 2) the limited weevil study being done with EnviroScience (a small portion of Christmas Lake). Reports for both of these projects are currently being prepared.

Welling made the following comments:

- The MN DNR hosted an AIS stakeholder meeting in St. Cloud on August 23rd. Both prevention and management efforts were discussed at this meeting. He stated that the MN DNR was currently establishing a formal advisory committee for this topic, with membership on this committee pending.
- The U.S. Army Corps participated in 2012 on the sampling efforts for the coordinated herbicide treatments. A lot of information has been collected on Lake Minnetonka, as well other water bodies, over the years by the Army Corps and the MN DNR. Further assessment of this information is planned over the winter.

Barten stated that a near incident was averted when a boat lift from Prior Lake, which was encrusted with zebra mussels, was nearly introduced into Medicine Lake. He provided greater details of this incident, including involvement of MN DNR Conservation Officers.

Jabbour stated that he had some interesting conversations with Army Corps employees this past summer on keys to successful treatments, such as not treating before the thermo-cline. He hoped that this information could be shared with the MN DNR and this Task Force.

Welling stated that he hoped to have preliminary Report information from the Army Corps by sometime in December.

Page asked Welling to comment on the use of 2,4-D for the treatment of EWM.

Welling stated that both 2,4-D and triclopyr have been used for the treatment of EWM in conjunction with MN DNR grants. Both herbicides can be effective and licensed herbicide applicators have varying opinions. Generally, the use of 2,4-D is cheaper than triclopyr.

Review of Draft Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) and Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CLP) Plan for Lake Minnetonka

Page stated that a sub-committee of the full AIS Task Force met seven or eight times over the summer in preparing this draft Plan. This proposed Plan was finalized at the last sub-committee meeting and this agenda item has been scheduled for review and comments by the full AIS Task Force. He hoped to forward this draft Plan (or an amended Plan) before the LMCD Board of Directors sometime later in October. He recommended reviewing the draft Plan on a page-by-page basis.

A summary of the Task Force discussion, as well as recommended changes to the draft Plan, are as follows:

Pages 1 and 2

- Page stated that until the last sub-committee meeting, this draft Plan was intended to be a comprehensive vegetation management plan for Lake Minnetonka. However, since the sub-committee discussion generally focused on EWM and CLP, and due to the time constraints, this draft Plan was changed to a EWM and CLP Plan.
- The Task Force made no changes to page 1 (Title Page) and page 2 (Table of Contents).

Pages 3 and 4

The Task Force made no changes.

Page 5

The Task Force made no changes.

Page 6

- There was discussion of adding a statement to the draft Plan that Flowering Rush was already in Lake Minnetonka to ensure the public does not conclude that this is being ignored. A recommendation was made to add a sentence to the "Problem Statement" that would clarify that additional aquatic plants (established or not established) have the potential to cause problems.
- Nybeck stated that Task Force member Tony Brough (Hennepin County Environmental Services) was not in attendance; however, he has submitted an e-mail comment to eliminate the reference of "Public Areas" based on his professional experience. Otherwise, Brough was complimentary of the first draft of this Plan
- The Task Force discussed Brough's comment and the consensus of the Task was not to make a change. This was based off the premise that the draft Plan was prepared to provide distinction between public benefits and private benefits for the investment of public funds
- In the first sentence for "Private Areas" under "Management Areas", the consensus of the Task Force was to change the word from "will" to "would".

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- The consensus of the Task Force was to delete the last sentence, which carries over to page 7, because it was repetitive.

Page 7

The Task Force made no changes.

Page 8

- Page stated that he believed the concept of “Whole Bay or Large Scale Herbicide Treatments” was one of the primary focus areas for the Task Force to discuss. The sub-committee has identified eight bays that are suitable at this time, which is further detailed in the matrix (Appendix E).
- Barten stated that the sub-committee identified these eight bays because they are small enough, are generally enclosed, have historical EWM issues, and have public use features. This list of bays could change in the future if conditions were to change.
- Page stated that the sub-committee took into consideration current financial, technical, and regulatory constraints.
- Jabbour raised some concern about the public nature of the eight bays. The Task Force discussed the public benefit for the eight bays identified as suitable (for investment of public funds).
- The Task Force discussed the two funding options agreed to by the sub-committee (\$63,000 for Option 1 and \$73,125 for Option 2). In order to be treated with public funds, there is a need to establish a defined need and there will have to be a public/private funding partnership. The consensus of the Task Force was to remove the verbiage of on projected funding costs for Options 1 and 2, and to include one funding figure for consideration by the LMCD Board (\$75,000 from its annual operating budget).
- Jabbour stated that he would like this draft Report to make more prominent the review criteria referenced in Section B2 on page 9. The consensus was to clarify this in the first paragraph on page 8 under “Whole Bay or Large Scale Herbicide Treatments”.
- The Task Force requested that clarification be added that a pre-inventory of EWM, CLP, and other aquatic vegetation has not been conducted on North Arm Bay.
- Some Task Force members (Jabbour and Green) asked that matrix be clarified that some of the criteria used to determine whether a bay is suitable will never change.
- There was a brief discussion with Mr. Kimball (LMA Phelps Bay Captain) for funding from the MCWD for herbicide treatments. This request was not supported by the MCWD’s Citizens Advisory Committee; however, this same committee supported funding for the use of weevils. Kimball believed that some organization needs to assume responsibility for the fundraising component up and above the recommended LMCD component of \$75,000 annually.
- Page stated that he believed the LMCD component would assume the two-year model (suitable bays would be treated every other year). Jabbour stated that he would like to see grant request where bays would compete for the LMCD funding.

Page 9

- Page stated that the sub-committee could not make a recommendation on project management for whole bay or large scale herbicide treatments because there was not consensus. Thus, the draft Plan references that project management could be done by a public agency, most likely the LMCD, or a non-public sector organization.
- Kimball recommended that a timeline be added to take into consideration for fundraising needs by the bay captains for the following year. The Task Force recommended adding a fourth bullet point under Section B3 that the Report indicating the data collection results would be due by October 15th of the preceding year.

- The Task Force had a lengthy discussion on project management for whole bay or large scale herbicide treatments. Some of the comments included:
 - Woodruff stated that he believed a firm recommendation should be made to the LMCD Board on the organization coordinating the project management. He appreciated the different viewpoints on who should do this but he believed a recommendation that the LMCD would conduct this was appropriate, which would require changes to the “Project Management” and “LMCD Roles and Responsibilities” Sections.
 - Page stated that the sub-committee could not conclude a majority opinion on this question. He questioned whether the Task Force would like to amend the draft Report with a firm project management recommendation.
 - Jabbour stated that if tax payer funds are used for this project, he believed that project management has to be coordinated by a public agency. The LMCD has jurisdiction over all of Lake Minnetonka and he recommended utilizing the agency.
 - Page stated that when this discussion took place at the sub-committee, Welling communicated that the MN DNR could work with either the LMCD or LMA as project manager.
 - Welling stated that was correct; however, he appreciated Jabbour’s comment because there is a different level of accountability working with a local unit of government.
 - Barten stated that one-time the TRPD provided its mechanical harvester to Lake Minnetonka on a part-time basis. If a request were made for the TRPD to participate in funding herbicide treatments in the future, he believed the TRPD would prefer to work with a government agency (not the LMA).
 - Woodruff stated that he would prefer a specific recommendation in the draft Report from the Task Force, in which he believed the LMCD made most sense for project management.
 - Fieldseth stated that he believed the MCWD would also prefer for the project management to be done by the LMCD.
 - Osgood stated that the bay captains will not raise funds for this project with the LMCD serving as project manager. Since he believed the viability of this project relied on private funding, the LMA has relied on private fundraising by the bay captains. If the Task Force would like further background on this, he recommended the bay captains address this.
 - Feedback from the bay captains included: 1) concern about how fundraising efforts might change, in particular with the cities, 2) it might be cumbersome to work with the LMCD in some aspects, 3) the LMCD has a prejudicial opinion on the management of EWM, 4) the additional funds from the cities would be welcomed; however, the LMA would prefer to continue as project manager, and 5) concern was expressed about the Report presented last spring from this Task Force to the LMCD Board on this project.
 - Page and Jabbour expressed an interest in taking a vote on the project management question, which would then be forwarded to the LMCD Board. Welling stated that the MN DNR would not be voting on this question since its role is advisory/technical and the question of project management is local issue to be resolved. Dawson concurred with Welling’s comments because he believed project management was a question for the LMCD to resolve.
 - Page summarized that he did not believe there was a consensus on this and the draft Report should be amended to reflect that the Task Force could not reach consensus on ownership of project management. The Task Force concurred with Page’s recommendation.
- The Task Force recommended adding an additional “Role and Responsibility” to the LMCD, MN DNR, and LMA that each stakeholder could request a whole bay or large scale treatment.

Page 10

The Task Force made no changes.

Page stated that he would recommend forwarding this draft Report to LMCD Board of Directors for review and comments, unless the Task Force objected. There was unanimous support for this recommendation, with the draft Report to reflect the changes that were made to it today.

Woodruff asked for feedback on the distribution of the draft Report when it's brought forward to the LMCD Board of Directors. The consensus of the Task Force was to allow the LMCD Board to make the decision on the dissemination of the draft Report.

2012 LMCD EWM Harvesting Program Final Report

Page stated that this was included on the packet for informational purposes only. Unless there were questions from the Task Force, he did not believe there was a need to discuss it. There were no questions.

Schedule Next AIS Task Force Meeting

The next Task Force Meeting was scheduled for Friday, 12/14/12.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Nybeck
Executive Director