



BALSAM LAKE PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT

Monthly Meeting Minutes October 15, 2022 8:30 AM

Call in phone number 612-508-0879

Zebra Mussels Report:

<https://teams.live.com/meet/9329717896285>

1) CALL TO ORDER:

- Commissioner Kelly called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM

2) COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- Tom Kelly, Gary Schneider, Dave Mariani (teleconference), Jack Weix (teleconference), Dale Ulbrich

3) OTHERS PRESENT:

- Patty Kabus (recorder)
- Eric Wojchik (Land & Water)
- Tyler Mesalck (DNR-teleconference)

4) APPROVE AGENDA:

- Commissioner Schneider motioned to approve the agenda, Commissioner Ulbrich seconded, all approved. Motion carried.

5) APPROVE MINUTES:

- Review September Minutes. Commissioner Ulbrich motioned to approve the September Meeting Minutes, Commissioner Schneider seconded, all approved. Motion carried.

6) PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- A group from Little Balsam is looking for no wake boats on Little Balsam and wondering what we are up to on it

7) ZEBRA MUSSELS:

- Eric Wojchik gave a presentation with Tyler Mesalck providing additional input on Zebra Mussels on Balsam Lake (presentation is available on the BPRD website).
 - Zebra Mussels like to attach to the underside of rocks but have also been known to be on the underside of various native vegetation. Several were found around some of the islands on the lake as well as Boston Bay.
 - A boat landing signage template is available.
 - Future Management – There are various products available. All products used will have non-target effects on other species and are cost-prohibitive for many lakes. There are some manual methods available but may not be suitable since Balsam Lake invasion is more widespread. Placing of plastic sheeting is an option if it is just a localized option.
 - The DNR and Land and Water will continue to monitor the rate of spread throughout the lake.
 - Diligence in decontamination is going to be very important.
 - Commissioner Schneider asked what can we expect to happen to the ecosystem in the lake?
 - Increased clarity, more sunlight, fisheries would be impacted. People may not want to walk with bare feet in certain areas. Issues with motors can happen. This can be a pretty rapid spread
 - Commissioner Schneider will coordinate posting signage in the short term while they work on better signage for spring.
 - Bass Lake in St Croix County was the first inland lake in our area to report Zebra Mussels in 2010 or 2011. Secchi clarity since then has varied, but has not reported a lot of impact due to Zebra mussels.
 - Commissioner Mariani said as he has been talking to people from other lakes, the first year is the worst in terms of impact. It then tends to level out somewhat.
 - Balsam Lake is categorized as suitable for Zebra Mussels due to the calcium level in the lake. Conductivity is also a factor (number of ions with a positive and negative charge) and Balsam Lake is also high enough in both of those to be considered a suitable environment for Zebra Mussels.
 - Commissioner Schneider asked what is next? Encouraging people to not bounce to other bodies of water is a good next step, but there really is nothing we can do to eradicate them in our lake.
 - Commissioner Mariani asked if there are any studies or publications on the history of infestations. Tyler said he will talk with the statewide coordinator to see if there are any studies we can refer to or any planned. He thinks it would be good if we can start looking at something like that. He is currently not aware of any fact sheet publications that are available. Information is available but not easily accessible. Eric is going to take this back to Land and Water to suggest they put something together.

Commissioner Kelly mentioned that the BLPRD would be interested in being involved in this project.

- Tyler noted that the McKensie chain did some research on finding pathogens for treatment but he has not seen any results from that yet. This study is being conducted by a professor who lives on the McKensie Chain.
- Commissioner mentioned he has heard that once Zebra Mussels have consumed all the nutrients in an area, they die. Tyler confirmed this is true in some places but this is not a direct cause and effect, there are other factors that are in play in those locations.

8) TREASURER REPORT:

- Financials / Schneider
 - Financials / Schneider - Commissioner Schneider presented the August Treasurer's reports (September is not available yet). Commissioner Ulbrich motioned to approve the August and September Financial Reports, Commissioner Weix seconded, all approved. Motion carried.

9) Water Quality

- East Balsam / Wilhoit
 - Commissioner Kelly reported for Commissioner Wilhoit. Commissioner Kelly met with one of the Cedar Lake board and she advised him they had a significant algae bloom including some blue-green algae. It is being investigated, they think the sulfate in the aluminum sulfate and the iron level in the lake (which is different from ours) may have impacted the algae. We need to be aware of what is happening there. There are some potential solutions that are still in the investigative stage. As of right now, our initial reductions continue to hold.

10) Aquatic Plant Management and Invasive species

- CBCW / Mork
 - As of Oct 15th, they are stopping the monitoring for this year.
- Purple Loosestrife Yellow Iris eradication / Mork
 - There is some identified on the northeast corner of East Balsam. They are in discussions as to next steps. Eric reported that they will be equipped next year to do more beetle releases as they are geared up to rear them now. They also have a product that can kill vegetation. To apply, they cut the stem and brush or sponge on the chemical. Commissioner Kelly said the newly identified site is fairly large and the landowner and a neighbor contacted the BLPRD. Caitlyn or Colton are the main contacts. Caitlyn has been out to inspect the infestation.
- Harvesting CLP & Navigation / Weix
 - This year's harvesting has been concluded. Moving into 2023, they are going to reach out to some other lakes to see if he can get any insights into how they manage their program, find out what is successful and what is not.

11) Water Patrol / Schneider

- We don't have the final report from Tommy yet but we have about 180 hours, which is less than our 220-hour goal. This is mostly due to boat issues. There were 13 citations and 19 warnings issued this year. They do want to find a second person for next year. The relationship with the Homeowner's Association is going well and the conversations about a new boat for the program has been started.
- Prior Lake has a volunteer water patrol. Commissioner Schneider is going to get more information about this.
 - Commissioner Ulbrich will work on an article for the next DockSide

12) OLD BUSINESS

- Polk County AIS decontamination ordinance / AIS transportation amendment - BOAT CLEANING STATIONS CD3 / Ulbrich
 - The 7 grant applications went in in August. The DNR is favorable to us going forward with the final Applications in November. We should hear back in February as to whether the grant is approved, with stations installed around May if approved. The way they determine funding for all of the applications is based on the total number of applications they get. This number has been in the 40% range, rather than the 50-70% range initially reported. This is about \$78,000 more than initially thought. The grant will only pay for the first 4 years of the 10 year useful life (as published). Commissioner Kelly asked if this changed amount fits within the cost to the district that was approved at the annual meeting. Commissioner Schneider confirmed that this is within the range reported, but is on the higher end of the range. Tyler noted that since we now have Zebra Mussels, we are more likely to be approved for the grants as we are considered a priority lake. We are one of the priority lakes, out of the 13,000 lakes in the state so have a higher likelihood than the vast majority of lakes.
- Nanno Bubbles technology / Ulbrich
 - No update. Commissioner Ulbrich said the DNR is not really favorable to things that disrupt the bottom of the lake. Discussion around how this impacts the lake and phosphorous level impacts.
- Large wave boats - shoreline erosion and safety / All
 - Commissioner Kelly recapped last month's discussion and noted that 100 feet from shore is the current law. Studies recommend 200-500 feet. A recent ordinance in Minnesota for Lake Minnetonka requires 300 feet from shoreline with a 5 MPH maximum speed – this is just one example. The ordinance applies to all boats, not just wake boats. The question was asked how you go about taking off skiing from shore if an ordinance like this were passed. These are the kinds of things we need to consider in looking at this type of ordinance.
 - Commissioner Kelly asked the board if we are interested in developing a local ordinance, we should start working on wording. We do have legal guidance to help us through this process. We just need to document the specifics on paper. Also needing to be addressed is jet skis, which are currently at a 200-foot requirement.

We have gotten quite a bit of feedback from residents on this topic. If we do this, it should probably apply to all boats, not just wake boats. Commissioner Weix noted that we should not put more laws on the books if we are not enforcing current laws consistently. Commissioner Kelly noted that enforcement is not perfect but that yes, this is important to make sure we are enforcing the current laws. Commissioner Weix is in favor of putting a document out there but not necessarily of adding a new ordinance that applies to only one area. Commissioner Kelly confirmed that any ordinance would apply to the entire lake, which Commissioner Weix is more in favor of. Commissioner Schneider noted that the DNR is looking at a statewide ordinance on wake boats but nothing has been done yet. Commissioner Schneider suggested we contact our attorney to see what is happening with this. Commissioner Kelly asked Commissioner Schneider and Commissioners Weix and Mariani to do some research on what the state is doing, and for Commissioner Schneider consult with the attorney as needed to accomplish this. Commissioner Weix suggests putting buoys in certain parts of the lake that are having more serious issues to help inform and enforce them. Commissioner Kelly noted that the entire lake has this issue, not just specific points. Discussion around the practicality of doing this in certain areas instead of across the whole lake. Commissioner Schneider noted that in last year's survey, wake boats were the #1 issue and had the lowest satisfaction around the lake so this is a large issue. Commissioner Weix noted we should really focus our enforcement of the existing laws and maybe in those areas where it is the biggest issue.

- BL snowmobile club use of BLPRD building for servicing snow graders / All
 - There is a question about insurance and whether we can facilitate the use of the building. We also need a place to put the Cleaning Stations but it doesn't necessarily need to be in the building. Commissioner Kelly will look at the building to see how much space is available. Don Coddington mentioned that he could move things around to make room. Commissioner Schneider said that Commissioner Mork voiced a concern about risk to our equipment, as well as our insurance policy concerns. The fact that this is outside our purview was voiced, in addition to the other concerns. Commissioner Schneider will contact the insurance company to ask the questions about insurance coverage.

13) NEW BUSINESS

- None

14) OTHER REPORTS:

- Village / Schneider
 - Commissioner Kelly checked on the boat launches at 46 and the main beach. They are getting bids over the winter with an eye to doing something in the spring.
- County / Mariani

- Nothing going on related to our lake at this time. Commissioner Mariani noted we may want to look into how the Zebra Mussels will impact the Alum Treatment and vice Versa.

15) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- None

16) ADJOURN:

- Commissioner Schneider motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Ulbrich seconded, all approved, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:13 AM

