



WHITEWATER-RICE LAKES MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

P.O. Box 301
Whitewater, WI 53190



MINUTES

The December 8, 2022 Whitewater/Rice Lakes Management District board meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM by: Rich Charts. **Roll Call:** Completed by Rich Charts, Donna Sherman, Jerry Grant, Brad Corson, Chuck Chamberlain, Carol Ducommun, and Norm Prusener- online Mike Lindenmuth – Heidi Bunk – Stuart Hersh – Jim Mulcahy

ADMINISTRATIVE - Rich made a motion to approve the amended agenda to include the items listed in old/other business to be presented first; Norm moved to accept the amended agenda seconded by Jerry all in favor motion carried.

Old/Other Business: Discussion of water quality issues and potential remedies to consider with Heidi Bunk, WI DNR, including status of Rice Lake improvement studies and an update of our Lake Management Plan from SEWRPC.

Mike introduced Heidi Bunk. Heidi said she hears a lot about algae bloom issues and the lack of aquatic plant diversity on Rice Lake. She visited the lake early in November, 2020, to assess the discharge structure and earthen embankment and to determine whether it's possible to drawdown the lake. During the winter a drawdown can be beneficial to freeze out the vegetative portion of the plants and to allow the native plants to have more space and light. She mentioned Tripp and Cravath Lakes in Whitewater had recent drawdowns; it will be interesting to see the results next summer. Heidi visited Tripp Lake this fall and observed that the milfoil, coontail and elodea weeds were way down.

When Heidi observed Rice Lake from the shore, she could not get a good algae sample because it was windy. She said that, in general, Rice Lake is relatively impaired. There is talk of a shallow-lake, alum treatment; alum is a positively charged ion that reacts with the phosphorous to form a crust and prevents the phosphorous from being active.

Heidi said dredging is expensive and thinks the use of aquatic plants might be more cost effective. Nearby lakes, including Lake Comas, Pell Lake, Lake Lorraine and Muskego Lakes, all have struggled with similar issues, including navigability, algae, weeds and fish.

The new SEWRPC report for Whitewater and Rice Lakes discusses the mechanics of drawing down Rice Lake and refilling it from Whitewater Lake. Stuart Hersh noted that dropping Whitewater Lake a foot or more would make certain areas unnavigable. Heidi said a siphon could be used to drawdown Rice and refill it with 2-3 feet of water from Whitewater Lake. She said shallow lakes will require continued management after a drawdown, as sediment and algae continue to accumulate and plant diversity will continue to decline.

Stuart noted that the level of sediment in Rice Lake is relatively stagnant and causes high algae and plant growth. Asked whether we could remove sediment after a draw down, Heidi said it depends on whether the sediment is contaminated, how it is removed, and, if it is contaminated, how it will be disposed. Asked if we could dredge the lake deeper and add good quality vegetation before letting the water back in, Heidi said it would depend on the sediment. Stuart thought that it would be expensive to dredge the lake, and that we would need to do sediment testing first.

Heidi was asked about the impact of boats producing large wakes on lake sediment. Heidi has been asked about wake surfing boats a lot lately. To pass legislation on those boats, many lake residents around the state would have to file concerns.

There was a discussion about how to remove phosphorous from the lake. Stuart said new treatments are being used and that alum does not remove the phosphorous from the sediment. Heidi said Elkhart Lake is using iron filings to filter water before it drains into the lake. Stuart said we spend a lot on chemical treatments and weed cutting, and that if we reduce the phosphorus, it can reduce algae and plant growth. Heidi said one expensive option that not been tried here is to pump water into a textile bag with alum in it.

Another resident asked about EutroPHIX, a company that uses alum, and mentioned that True Green does applications in the winter. True Green employees don't always know what they are applying. Phosphorus-based chemicals are not legal in WI. Heidi suggested speaking with regional manager to address any concerns, as well as to fellow residents to see if this is something they need to be using.

Heidi said in the short term, the healthy lakes grant program is doing simple things, including paying up to \$1K per practice such as a rain garden (a front-line buffer) and fish sticks. The deadline this year was November 15. Therese Stegemann is our local contact.

Two thirds of Rice Lake's frontage is owned by the State, and much of it has severe undercutting. Heidi said the State has not had sufficient funds and staffing to address this issue; she will speak to Anne Korman and get her thoughts.

Asked if we could pump out sediment onto land using a vacuum process instead of doing a draw down, Heidi said there is not much interest because people do not want wet soils on their property. We could not deposit this soil on the other side of the dam because it is a wetland owned by the DNR.

A resident said a farmer would be interested in the soil, but trucking would be involved. Heidi said Delavan used a floating barge to collect the soil, and farmers were taking it left and right; the process is expensive. Selling the sediment is not an option, and in the permit application you need to specify where the soil will go. Asked if a nearby quarry could be used for disposal, Heidi said it would depend on the quality of the material. Norm Pruesner clarified that specific site is not quarry.

Lastly, Heidi said that while dredging usually ends up being expensive, adding marsh vegetation such as wild rice, cattails, etc. on the state-owned frontage was a good option for Rice Lake and if we added that strategy to the SEWRPC plan, we could apply for an implementation grant. Adding those plants could reduce phosphorous and algae growth, but we would still need to manage the milfoil. Harvesting lanes would be maintained, and textile bags would be needed to build up the banks that are being carved out.

Mike would like to schedule a follow up with Heidi after the meeting in January to discuss the SEWRPC report.

Rich asked for a motion to approve the November 10, 2022, meeting minutes – Jerry moved to approve, Chuck seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

Norm motioned to approve the August Annual Minutes for posting on the website pending approval at the next annual meeting, seconded by Jerry, all in favor motion carried.

January 11th zoom meeting for review of the lake management plan. Larry asked them to include an analysis of the dams.

Brad said the SEWRPC grant expense will be rolled over.

Public Input- Community resident Nick Alt (nick.alt@live.com, 612-750-3539) has 120x90 and 30x40 barns for storage, as well as a 3rd operation where he can work on boats. He has 22 acres of outdoor storage space for rent for a 6-month (Nov – May) storage season. Brad gave his contact information to Nick. Nick will reach out to Amy Rodgers regarding the lake Facebook page.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

Secretary's Report/Correspondence- Mike no report

Finance – Brad asked for a motion to approve the November expenses totaling \$10,831.80 including voided check and administrative expenses; a newspaper bill; the final bill from JNT Marine Pros of \$5,814 (\$9,150 less the \$5,000 advance = \$4,150 plus \$1,664 for July 28, August 5, and August 17), and web design balance of \$1,000. Chuck motioned to approve as stated, seconded by Mike.

Chuck has all equipment keys and he gave the Casey's credit card to Brad.

Brad said we are at about \$125K in surplus going into next year, approximately \$65K higher than budget.

Weed Harvesting – Carol report emailed to Heidi.

Chemical – Mike no Report.

Bog Removal – Rich no Report.

Equipment – Chuck stated all equipment is in storage; the equipment trailer is on Jeff's property where Jeff stores a lot of other equipment.

Reports of Standing Teams

Navigator Team Updates- No Report

Fish Stocking – 2 cribs are in the water – there was some controversy, but we followed all the DNR rules – there were 2 residents from the city. Brad reached out to Tom about fish stocking; he has \$3K in his budget that he has to spend. Rich mentioned Saturday, February 18, location to be determined, there will be a fish biologist available to have a discussion.

Wildlife Management- No Report

Safety- No Report

Audit-No Report

Water Quality – No Report. Mike mentioned getting a piece of new water quality testing equipment – Jim Mulcahy will be a backup for water quality

Lakeshore management- No Report

2022-2023 Schedule- Rich will review and update what is needed.

New Business:

Status of 2023 harvesting RFP - posted in the newspaper and sent to Jeff Widner, Clearwater Solutions, DJ at Lakeshore Pier Services; Kevin Vanderplyum and The Boathouse. Brad said right now DJ was not able to take on anything new. Kevin asked for prior contracts and will review. Charlie from Delavan is retiring but Rich thought he may be interested in doing some consulting work. Brad stated that depending on the winning bidder there may be some necessary training involved and Charlie could be a good resource.

Update status for bog - we may not have a separate bid for bog harvesting, but an amendment to the original RFP to include bog harvesting depending on who gets the harvesting contract. Brad suggested having a discussion in June with the contracted service provider to discuss the bog work. Rich will add that to the May 2023 agenda.

Storage plans – Brad said there would be an RFP for Storage. Chuck provided a list of storage building requirements for inside storage. The other document was criteria for land and property acquisition.

Status of storage facility research - Carol identified 21 possible prospects for land acquisition, and Rich identified a few as well. Chuck suggested getting a realtor involved to help review the possible prospects. Potential builders include Walters Buildings, Tanis Construction, and Pekul Buildings. For land, we will contact prospects within a two-mile radius of the lake and ask if they have an interest in selling two acres to the district. Rich will draft a letter with Carol to reach out to identified landowners.

Other Business- Website and email update

Next meeting date- January 12, 2023

Adjournment- Rich asked for a motion to adjourn Carol motioned seconded by Jerry @ 8:47 PM – all in favor motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by: Donna Sherman - Clerk