

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention and Management

Ad Hoc Committee -- Florence County

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 18, 2014

The AIS Prevention and Management Ad Hoc Committee meeting was called to order at 2 PM by Florence County Conservationist Margie Yadro in the Courthouse First Floor Workroom. Those in attendance included County Board Supervisor Susan Theer, Lake Association Representatives: Bill Collard (Ellwood), Cary Anderson (FCLARA), Glen Johnson (SECOLA) and Annette Seibold (Keyes).

Members began with a review of AIS source waters and a discussion of recommended techniques and tools used to prevent or manage existing populations of species such as Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) and Zebra Mussels. Yadro highlighted recent grant funded projects including a "Warning" billboard sign soon to be installed at North Lake on the Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes, and the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition staffing of three area boat landings with paid watercraft inspectors. Boat landing data entered into the state's SWIMS database reports that North Lake recorded the county's highest volume of boat inspections in 2013 along with busy public accesses at the Twin Falls Flowage and Keyes Lake respectively.

Johnson extended concerns expressed by Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes Association (SECOLA) members that included AIS prevention options, needed resources, and possible enforcement. Collard shared information regarding the AIS treatments conducted on Lake Ellwood. The Association has been permitted by the state to use the Diver Assisted Suction Harvest (DASH) system that they contracted for last year's removal of 2,300 pounds of EWM augmented by additional hand pulling. The results of the project will be reported at their upcoming June 28th Annual Meeting. Yadro, Seibold, and Theer, added that they had recently attended a County Board meeting where a presentation was given by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to explain a proposal by U.S. Geological Survey for the use of Zequanox (pesticide) as an experiment to remove zebra mussels from native mussels in Keyes Lake. Seibold shared her concerns for public health in the use of this controlled pesticide. Yadro noted that an earlier tank experiment of Zequanox was conducted on Shawano Lake, and supplied contact information for those to make comments to the permitting agency (DATCP) until 4 PM on June 19th regarding this proposal. Anderson explained that the FCLARA newsletter had been actively following continued research of this product.

In seeking further AIS prevention and treatment guidance, Yadro agreed to request additional expertise for boatwash design, use and effectiveness for a follow-up at the next AIS Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Seibold suggested that County Forestry & Parks be invited to join the Committee.

All members agreed with the need to identify an AIS prevention and management strategy and then develop a funding stream that would allow for implementation phases to reach long term AIS prevention and management effectiveness. WDNR AIS grants were stated as beneficial but not dependable as demonstrated by the current lack of local project funding. Other resources suggested were commercial/industrial landowners, conservation partners, potential user fees/designated county funds.

The developing Action Plan includes: commenting on Keyes Lake Experimental Use of Zequanox; confirming the North Lake Landing site as a potential portable boat wash decontamination station; requesting availability of the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC) as a staffing agent for additional watercraft inspector hours; collecting DASH treatment results from Lake Ellwood; and, finding existing examples of stable revenue streams generated to address local AIS prevention and management. At 4 PM, the committee members agreed to adjourn until July 9th at 2 PM in the First Floor Workroom.

Respectfully drafted by: Margie Yadro