



White Bear Lake Conservation District

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Nov. 21, 2023, 7:00 p.m., White Bear Lake City Hall Council Chambers
(6:00 pm LUC meeting)

1. **Roll Call/Quorum** – Present: Chair Bryan DeSmet, Vice Chair Meredith Walburg, Treasurer Mike Parenteau, Mark Ganz, Chris Churchill, Scott Costello, Susie Mahoney, and Alan Kantrud. Absent: Diane Longville, Darren DeYoung and Mark Wisniewski. A quorum was present.
2. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Bryan DeSmet.
3. **Approval of Agenda** – Administrator salary was added under New Business. Motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Mike Parenteau, seconded and passed.
4. **Approval of Previous Board Meeting minutes** – Motion to approve the Oct. 17, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Mark Ganz, seconded and passed.
5. **Public Comments** - none
6. **New Business**
 - Summary of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) survey and treatment – Steve McComas, Blue Water Science presented information about the survey and treatment of EWM on White Bear Lake this summer.
 - An extensive meander survey was conducted in June and data was collected on areas of light, moderate, and heavy density of EWM. Sixteen areas of moderate and heavy growth were detected, and 47 acres were treated on July 18, 2023. All areas of growth were revisited about a month later to see if the treatment was successful, and if there was additional EWM that went undetected earlier. Most areas showed good control, with a few areas showing partial control.
 - The survey also noted that native plants, such as northern watermilfoil, water star grass, and water celery were abundant in the lake.
 - Survey and treatment trends since 2012 show that a few areas of heavy growth need to be treated annually, and the number of acres treated vary from year to year. Areas of growth in the middle of the western part of the lake, and along the southwestern show are persistent. Low lake levels seem to correlate with higher levels of treatment.
 - 1988 was the first year EWM was detected in the lake, and by 1998 it had spread around the lake, and since then it's been variable.
 - A 2023 point intercept survey, sponsored by the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD), aligned with our assessment of EWM, and it also noted if there were zebra mussels attached to plant stems. This benchmark data showed that they are well-distributed around the lake, though less abundant on the western lobe. Though their numbers cannot be reduced, they can be tracked. This survey, which is conducted every 4-5 years, will help track the zebra mussel community.
 - Starry stonewort, an invasive macro algae that looks similar to native *Chara*, called muskgrass, is not present in White Bear Lake, but its presence is expanding in Minnesota. Because it is present at most of the public access sites on lakes where it present, we sampled the three access points on the Lake, and did not find presence of Starry Stonewort. When treatment is needed, copper sulfate is applied 2-3 times a year, and costs about \$1,000 an acre each time.
 - When asked about invasive signal and rusty crawfish, which decimate lakebed plants, McComas said they are not present in the lake.

- There are some hybrid watermilfoils (a cross between native and invasive) in White Bear Lake, and area treated the same as EWM. Some genotypes are resistant to herbicides, but not the ones in White Bear Lake.
- In response to a question by Bryan DeSmet about monitoring other potential issues in the lake, McComas said septic systems are a minor potential issue. Also, in a survey of Lake Sylvia access points, uncombusted petroleum products were not detected and that would probably be the same observation of access points on White Bear Lake and in Commercial Bay. However, in the future there is some concern about the PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). But unless there is a known source, such as runoff from firefighting foam, there is no concern; the EPA is developing some trigger levels for PFAs which will be tracked. It was noted that the toxic chemicals from Water Gremlin have little chance of contaminating the lake, as the groundwater flows from east to west. Finally, while chloride levels in the lake are gradually increasing, it is not impacted and the level is lower than most lakes due to our small watershed.
- When asked what more McComas would like to know about White Bear Lake, he said he'd like to see a trend analysis on chlorides, fish and native plant species, algae species, EWM, lake use, boat traffic, and toxicology (specifically algae).
- Alan Kantrud asked about invasive phragmites, which the District treats, and McComas said the challenge will be the hybridization of invasive phragmites with native phragmites which can take over. At this time, the District is doing a good job of managing it. McComas also said that yellow iris, which is an ornamental invasive, won't take over the lake and doesn't need to be actively monitored like EWM or phragmites.
- MN Law (new) – Earned Sick & Safe Time (ESST) Mike Parenteau explained the new law which provides for options to give employees leave time and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2024. It was decided that the WBLCD will follow the City of White Bear Lake's option which is to pay it as it accrues at one hour of leave for every 30 hours worked.
- Administrator Salary – Bryan DeSmet stated that the 2024 budget included a salary increase for the Administrator. Motion to approve a \$2 increase as of January 1 was made by Bryan DeSmet, seconded and passed.

7. Unfinished Business

- VFW-EAW update – Bryan DeSmet reported that an updated EAW was received by the VFW that incorporated comments from a DNR peer review. A section still needs to be completed, and a review received from the State Historic Preservation Office. Let the Administrator know if you have any comments before the next Board meeting.
- Buoy placement and map – Meredith Walburg presented a buoy placement map with dates that the buoys would be placed in the water and removed. Susie Mahoney suggested adding the red and green buoys on the west side of the lake where there is a rock pile. It was suggested that a shallow water buoy could be placed on the rock pile to steer watercraft away from the area. Motion to approve the map and dates, and an additional buoy on the rock pile west of the island, was made by Meredith Walburg. It was noted that, along with the added buoy, an additional buoy was missing on the map that Cheri will add.
- 2024 Lake use study RFP approval – Motion to approve the amended Lake Use Study RFP for public consumption was made by Meredith Walburg, seconded and passed. Mike Parenteau asked if any of the suggestions from Steve McComas could be added, but it was suggested that it would be best to take some time to reflect on that and devise a water quality sampling program, possibly working with the RCWD or DNR.

8. Reports/Action Items

- **Executive Committee** – Bryan DeSmet noted that the Executive Committee met and discussed the sick leave policy, buoy placement map, RFP, aeration devices, and the St. Germain Bay sign. A location for the sign is still being researched.
- **Lake Quality Committee**
 - Lake level – The lake level today is 922.15'. In Nov. 2023, it was 922.48'.

- Lake temperature – The lake temperature today is 42°F. On Nov. 15, 2023 it was 33°F and the lake froze on Dec. 6, 2023.
- 2024 DNR AIS Control Grant Program – Mike Parenteau submitted an application for grant funds to help with the costs of treating Eurasian Water Milfoil in 2024.
- **Lake Utilization Committee**
 - Special Olympics MN-Polar Plunge fundraising event permit application for Jan. 27, 2024 – Motion to approve the event permit, and waive the application fee was made by Mark Ganz, seconded and passed.
 - WB Area Food Shelf-Bear'ly Open fundraising event permit application for Feb. 3, 2024 – Motion to approve the event permit, and waive the application fee was made by Ganz, seconded and passed.
 - VFW Post 1782 commercial permit renewal (revised from last year) – The LUC tabled the permit application due to the need for additional paperwork that needs to be processed, and an adjustment of the ADUA line between the City and VFW on the diagram which is not in agreement with the ADUA line surveyed by EG Rudd last year. The City of White Bear Lake and the VFW are also working together on some details.
 - City of WBL:
 - Municipal Marina-commercial permit renewal (revised from last year) – The City asked for an extra slip for the Bear Boating boat, but an arrangement was made with the VFW to keep it in the VFW's ADUA, and therefore there's no need for an additional slip. The VFW also did not allow for the City to moor its fire/rescue boat in the VFW's ADUA, so the slip count is 160, the same as last year. Motion to approve the amended application of 160 slips and to stay within their 300 ft ADUA was made by Ganz, seconded and passed.
 - Matoska Park-commercial permit renewal (same as last year) – Motion to approve the permit for 28 moorings and 29 skids was made by Ganz, seconded and passed.
 - Veteran's Park Memorial Fishing Pier-permanent dock permit renewal (same as last year) – Motion to approve the permit and to waive the permanent dock fee was made by Ganz, seconded and passed. An annual application for the pier will no longer need to be submitted, unless there is intent to make changes to the permitted structure.

In addition, because the ADUA line on the diagram between the pier and the VFW isn't in agreement with the Rudd survey, the LUC will work with the VFW and the City to revise their diagrams.
 - Lion's Park-permanent dock permit (new) – The City was asked to submit an application and documentation on the Lion's Park Pier which was given by the DNR, and managed by the City, as no permit has ever been issued for the pier. Motion to approve the Lion's Park pier, and waive the fees was made by Ganz, seconded and passed.
 - Tally's Dockside-commercial permit renewal (revised from last year) – Tally's requested an additional three slips, and the LUC recommended 64, the same as last year. Tally's will be asked to submit a variance request and reasoning for the additional slips. Motion to approve 58 slips and 6 skids/ramps, and dock placement as diagramed in the application was made by Ganz, seconded and passed. Meredith Walburg questioned why the dock that was shortened last year is now 300 ft. Chris Churchill explained that that dock will now be abutted to the Docks of White Bear Lake northerly dock and, for safety reasons, should be the same length as their neighbor.

It was discussed that if the lake level goes below 922 ft in the spring, that marina operators would need to submit a variance should they want to change their permitted dock lengths.

- Docks of White Bear Lake (WBL)-commercial permit renewal (revised from last year) – Motion to approve 250 slips, and that slips and watercraft stay within their 300 ft ADUA was made by Ganz was seconded, and passed with Susie Mahoney opposing. Bryan DeSmet expressed concern that some of the docks appeared to be outside or right on the 300 ft ADUA. Chris Churchill stated that Docks of WBL is aware that any watercraft at the end of the docks must be within the 300 ft ADUA.
- **Lake Education Committee**
 - Educational outreach update – Scott Costello reported that copy is being written for the last issue of *The Laker*. One topic is the use of salt to de-ice roads and walkways in the winter and how it impacts the lake. Meredith Walburg reached out to the Rice Creek Watershed District who put together a graph showing trends of chloride concentration in White Bear Lake. The publication will start up again next year buoys will be the one of the first topics.
 - Social media update – In the next few months, Meredith Walburg will post about the lake temperature and level, the chloride graph, the ice-in date and ice thickness guidelines to remind people about safety ice, the day our office will be closed, and some information from the Steve McComas presentation.

9. Treasurer Reports

- Approval of November 2023 Treasurer's Report – Motion to approve debit card 18 and checks 4909 through 4919 was made by Mike Parenteau, seconded and passed. A suggestion was made on numbering debit cards to include the year.
- Approval of December 2023 (estimated) Treasurer's Report – Motion to pay \$5,687.08 minimum for December, and any other expense that comes in December, and in January receive an official December 2023 Treasurer's Report with the actual income and expenses was made by Mike Parenteau, seconded and passed.

10. Board Council Report

- Alan Kantrud reported that there were no enforcement issues on the lake reported by Ramsey County or the DNR conservation officer in the last month.
- The Ramsey County Sheriff Office will be speaking at the Board meeting in February about the enforcement year.

11. Announcements

- Cheri Howe reported that carpet will be installed in the office on Dec. 4, and needs some help moving furniture on the Friday or Saturday before that
- The dates for the 2024 Board meetings are set and listed in the Board packet, and the first Board meeting of the year will be on Jan. 16, 2024
- The office will be closed on Dec 12.

12. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn at 8:39 was made by Bryan DeSmet seconded and passed.

ATTEST:

Mike Parenteau (acting Chair)		Date	<u>1-16-24</u>
Cheri Howe, Administrator		Date	<u>1/16/24</u>