Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District
Onalaska Lake District Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 17, 2020
3:00 p.m. CT
Teleconference (ZOOM)

PRESENT: Marc Schultz, Ellen Voss, Ron Kind, Tim Miller, David Heath, Shawn Giblin, Ben Lachecki, Fritz Funk, Mark Tierney, Vicki Burke and Barbara Friell

Item 1: Call to Order
Meeting called to Order at 3:02 p.m. CT by Marc Schultz.

Item 2: Approve Minutes
A motion to approve the Minutes was made by Vicki Burke and seconded by Ben Lachecki. Minutes were approved.

Item 3: Approve Treasurer’s Report
A motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report was made by Barbara Friell and seconded by Ben Lachecki. Treasurer’s Report was approved. Mark reported that the following information regarding Donations can be found on the Lake District Website www.Lakeonalaska.org

Donations Requested for Weed-Cutting Lanes

The LOPRD is requesting donations to cut weeds in "travel corridor" lanes to improve access from shore areas to deeper waters of Lake Onalaska. The funds will be used to pay a contractor to cut and remove vegetation. Donations can be made by Paypal:

or checks may be mailed to:

BMO Harris Bank   attn: Maggie Kanz
1300 Rose Street
La Crosse, WI 54603
Reference: "Lake Onalaska Weed Cutting Donation", account# xxxxx3889

Cutting vegetation to improve access was approved by a USFWS Compatibility Determination in 2019, for travel corridors within certain mapped areas of Lake Onalaska.

Item 4: Commissioner comment
Discussion with Ron Kind - the need for a more comprehensive approach involving collaboration. Ron’s resume can be found on his website – https://kind.house.gov/about/full-biography
Item 5: **Update on Vegetation cutting for summer of 2020**  
Tim shared that the cutting of vegetation to improve access was approved by a USFWS Compatibility Determination. Tim also shared with us that the channel markers are ready; however the channel will need to be cut first. Tim was working on the permit and felt the permit would be ready to go by the end of this week.

Item 6: **Update from by-law committee**  
No updates to report. Will be working on this for the annual meeting.

Item 7: **Discussion of sedimentation impacts on access**  
Discussed the concern of the loss of a route and the increasing lack of navigation.

Item 8: **Grant application timetable and need for ad hoc committee**  
Several people expressed interest and willingness to get involved – Ellen Voss (River Alliance), Shawn Giblin (WI DNR), Fritz Funk (LD Commissioner) and BP Conservation (per Marc). Ellen will send us the meeting link for next Tuesday’s meeting at 10 a.m. She stated that one can apply through La Crosse – Citizen Lake Monitoring Network and is willing to help the LD with this. She can offer us some training and send us some information regarding this. USFWS, DNR, COE, Town of Onalaska and the Town of Campbell were all mentioned as potential committee participants.

Item 9: **Invasive species**  
Refer to Item 8.

Item 10: **Discuss annual meeting**  
Marc will be looking into this for discussion at our July meeting. At this time we did not set a date for our July meeting. Marc will send out an email regarding a potential meeting date for July.

Item 11: **Discuss potential for a lake tour**  
No discussion on this item.

Item 12: **Agency Reports**  
David Heath, Shawn Giblin and Tim Miller reported on their perspective areas of responsibility.

David Heath (WI DNR) provided the following notes from his discussion at the meeting on June 17th:

- Water quality monitoring in the Mississippi River has been impacted by Covid-19. Water quality monitoring funded by the US Army Corps of Engineers under the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program has been performed by WI DNR since 1993, providing a unique, high-quality record of Mississippi River conditions and trends. Monitoring includes nutrient and dissolved oxygen concentrations, plankton abundance and measures of water clarity, all of which can impact fish, wildlife and recreation. To date, four bi-weekly smaller-scale sampling episodes of key points on the river, and one large-scale spring sampling episode of Navigation Pool 8 near La Crosse have been cancelled.

- Water quality projects funded by the state of Wisconsin was cancelled in March but is starting up again. Water quality projects include: long-term sediment trap monitoring, long-term trend metals sampling, long-term trend water quality sampling, zebra mussel trend monitoring, long-term subsurface light environment monitoring, and water quality monitoring at two habitat restoration sites (McGregor Lake near Prairie du Chien, and Reno Bottoms near La Crosse). Additionally, two planned (new) projects are starting up after 2.5 months of delay. La Crosse County chloride monitoring, and a study of connectivity and water residence time in targeted backwaters. These monitoring projects allow us to track and understand pollutants and invasive species that degrade the Mississippi River ecosystem and that potentially threaten users of the resource. Potential dissolved oxygen monitoring on Lake Onalaska this year.

- We’re developing return to work plans based on the phased approach of the Bounce-back plan. Will start June 19. The first work that will be done is anything that can be accomplished by one person or can be done with social distancing. We are factored-in, but the health component decisions are being done at an agency level with DHS. PHASE
I: State office buildings partially reopen, but only for employees who do not have the ability to work from home and/or are providing services that Agency heads determine have limited alternatives in service delivery for the general public. **PHASE II:** State office buildings are fully open for public-facing government services and general business, but remote work continues to be encouraged. **PHASE III:** The state workforce fully returns to normal work locations and restrictions on large gatherings are lifted.

- In the interim, we have been doing data analyses and writing reports
- The Pierce County islands Habitat project at head of lake Pepin is wrapping up feasibility and public comment phase. WI cost-share will be nearly $5M; roughly $1.5 M has been pledged so far and a budget proposal for the next biennial Governors budget has been submitted, requesting $3 M.
- McGregor Lake and Conway Lake HREP projects are beginning construction phases. The Pool 8 pool-wide forestry HREP fact sheet was endorsed as priority #5 in the list of HREP projects to consider in Fiscal Years 2021-2025. The final prioritized list is shown below:
  1. Lower Pool 4 – Big Lake, Robinson Lake, and Tank Pond
  2. Bank Stabilization and Natural Levee
  3. Lower Pool 5 and Weaver Bottoms
  4. Black River Bottoms Forest Restoration (see attached).
  5. Pool 8 Poolwide Floodplain Forest (endorsed by UMRR CC 5/20).
- The following fish sampling was canceled or will likely be cancelled or postponed: summer 2020 Lake Onalaska; summer HREP sampling (Stoddard Islands, Long Lake near Trempealeau); spring, summer and fall Pettibone; fall sampling in Lake Onalaska, lower Pool 6 and Raft Channel area in lower Pool 8; and fall tailwater sampling for walleye and sauger.
  - It's likely that summer goose and duck banding will not happen.

The following link will take you to the

**Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program**  
**Black River Bottoms Forest Restoration**  
**Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project**  
**Upper Mississippi River, Pool 7**  
**Trempealeau and La Crosse Counties, Wisconsin**  
**US Army Corps of Engineers - Saint Paul District**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IHjizin2Ewoffa9MSxijDjHhYDODkJF4LbfJKe1I1v1g/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IHjizin2Ewoffa9MSxijDjHhYDODkJF4LbfJKe1I1v1g/edit)

**Item 13: Adjourn**
A motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:09 p.m. CT was made by Barbara Friell and seconded by Mark Tierney.
**LD Purpose:**
To preserve and protect the Water depth, Water Quality and Public Access

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

*Shore protection of vulnerable shoreline (>50% accomplished). Work in this area has been performed, privately funded by homeowners.
  - Public education campaign with Realtors/Homeowners
  - Google map review/shoreline protection of vulnerable shorelines
  - TMDL for Black River

Google Map Review
Financial Assistance for shoreline protection

*Public Education Campaign:
  - Contact real estate organization (LARA) regarding benefits/responsibility of owning residential property. Request rights of owners
  - Contact county regarding real estate property lister – ownership transfer
  - Develop welcome packer for new homeowners (water quality and invasive species)

Identify and connect with “friends of” groups
TMDL for Black River
Issue annual letter to the Town of Onalaska/Town of Campbell regarding storm water efforts

* Indicates the two areas identified as priority areas during the meeting

**ACCESS**

Ease of boat launching and connections to travel corridors
Landing Improvement
Aquatic Vegetation
Sedimentation Challenges
Movement within the lake (travel corridors – Planning, Management & Maintenance
Continue Communication between USFWS and Public

*Travel Corridor Fund
  - Approach Town of Onalaska, Town of Campbell, La Crosse County, City of Onalaska, LCCVB and local businesses to support travel corridors, maintenance

*Request review of the 500 square foot rule (through A.C.E.)
Dredge Project of “Pinch Points”

* Indicates the two areas identified as priority areas during the meeting

Lake District Website [www.Lakeonalaska.org](http://www.Lakeonalaska.org)