

Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board

Meeting Minutes

Monday October 25, 2021

In Attendance : Chairman Bob Browning, Patty Manown Mash, Bob Sutton, Robert Kelly, Jim Bailey, Commissioner Paul Edwards, Larry Iden, Marta Schroyer DNR: Eric Null, Emily Vainieri, Julie Bortz

Action Agenda

Chairman Browning asked for a roll call, Mr. Null preformed the roll call at the request of the Chairman. A quorum was confirmed. Minutes were approved and posted on the DCL NRMA website in October 2021.

Old Business

Canada Geese

Mr. Null reported that the goose hunt on Deep Creek Lake will take place November 22-24 in the same areas that historically have been use for the goose hunt. He stated that interested parties should visit the Wildlife and Heritage web site to inquire about booking one of the designated areas to hunt. Mr. Kelly asked if there were any plans to extend the hunt to offer more opportunity to take more geese. Mr. Null stated that he will be working with Wildlife and Heritage to investigate more areas along the lake for hunters to utilize.

Mr. Null stated that he has observed several YouTube and Facebook videos of individuals hunting the private farms around Deep Creek Lake. He stated that these hunters are having great success taking geese from the cut fields around the lake. Mr. Null stated that these hunts have been happening for several years according to the videos. He informed the Board that he would try to gather more information on the how often these hunts were occurring. He stated that this is a positive effort in controlling the geese since the neighboring farms are allowing individuals to goose hunt their fields. Mr. Kelly agreed that it sounded like a positive prospect for controlling the population.

Lake Management Budget

Mr. Null stated the budget for this fiscal year is good. He informed the Board that the repairs to the Lake Management Office roof and air-conditioning system due to ice damage had been completed. He stated

that there was one more year in Hydrilla control funding remaining in the State Lakes Fund and that 2022 Hydrilla Control would be funded completely by the grant.

Discussion began about dock fee increases and the Lake Management Budget beyond 2022, Chairman Browning asked that the discussion be tabled until the Board came to that point of the agenda.

Wake Boats

Mr. Null stated that he had talked to NRP about the request that he was receiving about regulating wake boats, as well as all vessels that were not obeying the distance from shore and fixed object regulations. He stated that NRP has been discussing the issue and should have a report for the next meeting on some possible management tools that can be used to lessen the complaints about boaters that are not obeying the regulations. Chairman Browning stated that through flying his helicopter around the lake over the summer he noticed that where erosion control measures have been installed, turbid water had been eliminated. He suggested that while there was grant funding available that permit holders apply to install shoreline erosion control measures.

Water Quality Monitoring

Ms. Julie Bortz stated that the water quality monitoring program will continue next season. They will continue to use continuous monitoring equipment in the coves to collect seasonal baseline water quality data on each of the major coves of the lake. They will also collect data from the nearshore area of all the coves discreetly through the season. She stated that the SAV sampling may be redesigned to help facilitate management of SAV communities and assess changes due to water level if a plan for a cyclical draw is enacted.

Water Level Request

Chairman Browning stated that he received a very nice letter from Brookfield in response to the letter sent by the Board to Brookfield requesting a water level drop during the winter to aide with shoreline projects. He stated that he believes that we are heading in the right direction with our relationship with Brookfield. Mr. Sutton stated that there is a meeting scheduled with Brookfield on the topic. Mr. Null stated that he received an email from fisheries indicating that Fisheries would like to be part of the water level discussion, since they had received information that the draw down would be far greater than the lower rule band. Mr. Null stated that he replied that the drawdown would not be to the lower rule band and would only be done every two – three years. He stated that he informed fisheries that DNR and Brookfield do not want to go below the lower rule band. He stated he will be meeting with fisheries to discuss the topic.

Publicizing Deep Creek Lake Projects

Mr. Null stated the most popular project is the shoreline erosion control grants. He stated that all of year two grants have been submitted. He stated that he receives many calls about where the checks were. Mr. Null informed the Board that after he receives and submits the paperwork, the grants are reviewed in Annapolis and sent to the Comptrollers office. He stated that once it is submitted there, he

has no time frame on when the checks are issued. Mr. Null stated that they are into their third and could be final year of the project. He stated that if the State Lakes Fund is not reinstated this will be the final year of the program.

County Commissioner Update

Commissioner Paul Edwards stated that there will be a zoning hearing on November 4th at the college for the proposed solar farm on Sand Flat Road. He announced that the County hired Bruce Michael as the new Watershed Coordinator. Mr. Michael stated that the shoreline stabilization project at Silvertree is underway. He stated that this project was funded by state money for sediment prevention in Arrowhead Cove and there will be a site visit on Thursday to assess the project. He stated that the Arrowhead Cove dredging project has the money for the project. He stated that MES, the County's contractor for the project will have a meeting with the regulators for the Joint Permit Application. He stated that they are hopeful that the project will start in fall 2022, if all permits are acquired by then.

Dock Fees Increase and Budget Changes

Chairman Browning suggested the formation of a committee to evaluate the potential of dock fee increase. The Chairman asked for volunteers to serve on the committee, Mr. Kelly, Ms. Manown Mash, Mr. Sutton and the Chairman volunteered. Mr. Kelly suggested that the fee increases be levied on rental boats, this way the general public that use the lake are contributing to the budget instead of just the permit holders. Mr. Iden asked Mr. Null how his budget was broken down. Mr. Null stated that he receives approximately \$890k. Staff salary, equipment purchase and maintenance, utilities, and supplies were the main costs of his operational budget. He stated that Hydrilla treatment came from the State Lakes Fund but if that does not continue the cost will come directly from the Lake Management Budget. He stated that the County rebate came out of the budget along with the RAS contract for water quality monitoring. Mr. Null informed the Board that with the increase in seasonal staff wages that took place this year his staff bill would increase from \$140k-\$200k. He reminded the Board that he only has one classified staff member, and the rest of the staff are seasonal. Senator Edwards asked if Hydrilla control was still \$300k, Mr. Null stated that it has fallen to about \$160k due to the success of the treatment.

Correspondence to DNR

Attorney General Office Update

Ms. Vainieri stated that she has been working on pulling together bylaws and protocols for review by the Board and she would have a draft for the Board to review by the next meeting.

Public Comment

No Public Comment was received.

Ms. Manown Mash made the motion Mr. Sutton second the motion all were in favor.

The next meeting will be January 24, 2022 at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Null

Lake Manager