

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE  
BOARD OF MANAGERS  
OF THE  
NINE MILE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2019**

**Call to Order**

Chair Peterson called the meeting of the Board of Managers of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District to order at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 30, 2019, at the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District Office, 12800 Gerard Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55346.

Managers Present: Bob Cutshall, Erin Hunker, Grace Sheely and Jodi Peterson

Managers Absent: Steve Kloiber

Advisors Present: Randy Anhorn, Janna Kieffer, Meg Rattei, Gael Zembal, Erica Sniegowski, and Lauren Foley

**AIS Management Roles and Strategies**

Administrator Anhorn mentioned that the District has identified the need to formalize a aquatic invasive species (AIS) strategy in its fifth generation plan and highlighted the areas in the plan where the goals/objectives/policies and action items were located. He then gave a quick overview of what AIS was and what AIS species were known to be in the District's waterbodies. He said that the majority of District lakes have curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil has been found in Arrowhead Lake, Bryant Lake, Bush Lake, Lake Edina, Normandale Lake, SE Anderson Lake and Shady Oak Lake, and zebra mussels have been found in Bryant Lake.

Administrator Anhorn went through the roles the District has played in AIS management which has included the identification of AIS on District waterbodies through the District's lake monitoring and vegetation survey, through the funding of early detection training and its Adopt-a-Dock program. He said that the District also emphasizes the identification and harmfulness of AIS and has worked with partners in distributing communications on current and newly found AIS issues within its waterbodies and has managed curly-leaf pond weed on District lakes when it has been when identified as causing a water quality problem.

Administrator Anhorn said that an AIS management strategy would identify partners and establish roles in current AIS populations and potential rapid response strategies when AIS is newly identified on a waterbody. He said that the development of strategy would include the participation of the various stakeholders within the watershed including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the cities within the District, Hennepin County, Three Rivers

Park District and other interested groups such as the Bush Lake Chapter of the Isaak Walton League.

Administrator Anhorn said the Bassett Creek Water Management Commission recently went through a similar process and stated that he had invited their administrator, Laura Jester, to give a presentation on their process and outcomes. He said that he hoped it could help the managers get a sense of the process and maybe result in our using their experience to provide a more focus process for us.

Administrator Anhorn introduced Laura Jester.

Laura Jester provided details on Bassett Creek watershed. She explained that there is widespread concern about AIS, but the issue can be complicated because of the number of agencies and entities involved. She explained that the watershed was unsure where the gaps were and what the role of the watershed should be. She stated that in 2016 the watershed created an AIS committee and reviewed the different members of the committee, which met eight times during the one-year period with an engineering cost of \$17,000. She highlighted the information the committee gathered and reviewed during that time. She stated that the group then determined when the watershed should be involved on projects, how the watershed should be involved, and where the watershed should be involved. She noted that this work led to the development of an AIS rapid response plan and provided additional details on the different elements of the plan. She stated that since that time a lot of the elements have been implemented including an AIS line item in the budget, implementation of the rapid response plan, receipt of Hennepin County grants for AIS activities, and other ongoing activities. She stated that early detection of AIS is the key and reviewed some of the lessons they have learned thus far.

Administrator Anhorn stated that his goal would be not to have to start at the bottom rung of the ladder and perhaps the Board could come to a decision on where the watershed should be involved. He noted that other groups, such as the CAC and Master Water Stewards could provide additional assistance. He stated that the TAC could then be hand picked to include key stakeholders that the District would hope would partner.

Meg Rattei stated that they really pinpointed each lake and who would partner on projects for each specific lake activity. She stated that in every case someone wanted to take the lead, with the exception of Parkers Lake which the watershed then took the lead for. She stated that she was very particular in identifying the AIS rapid response work tasks to be completed for the particular lake, which helped that partner want to take the lead.

Laura Jester confirmed that the Bassett Creek rapid response plan only includes priority one lakes. She noted that Bassett Creek only has priority one and priority two lakes.

Administrator Anhorn noted that the District has priority levels one through four and advised that the District would need to determine when it would want to be involved and develop a matrix. He noted that there are some lakes that are unspecified, using Cornelia as an example, that have public/park land around it.

Manager Hunker asked how the group determined which AIS to focus on.

Administrator Anhorn identified the three known AIS within the District boundaries.

Meg Rattei replied the known AIS within the watershed boundaries that existed when the study began. She highlighted two additional AIS that she felt could be a risk and were included. She noted that additional work was done on certain AIS to provide detail on what should occur if those AIS are identified. She stated that when the two additional AIS were identified within the watershed, they already had the information necessary to handle those problems. She noted that when the plankton samples are taken as part of routine monitoring, Barr Engineering is watching carefully to identify any AIS.

Administrator Anhorn noted that there are funds included in the budget for 2020 to begin this process. He noted that going through this process will help the District determine the other necessary steps and the budget that will be needed.

Meg Rattei provided additional details on the potential cost of a rapid response plan, noting that the cost would be determined based on the number of lakes and the necessary labor and effort.

Manager Cutshall asked if Barr would have a template that could be used going forward for rapid response plans and the individual details could be put in for each watershed.

Meg Rattei replied that a prescriptive template would not be advised because each group wants to have a different role so allocation of responsibilities between the different partners changes. But a general format template could be used and tailored.

Administrator Anhorn asked the role that Plymouth is taking.

Laura Jester replied that Three Rivers Park District has taken the lead on Medicine Lake and the watershed has taken the lead on Parkers Lake as Plymouth did not want to take the lead on either lake. She explained that currently the DNR is funding starry stonewort treatment on Medicine Lake.

Manager Sheely stated that she found a lot of the information very applicable to the District as well, simply changing some of the language. She noted that she would also like to identify partners that could take the lead on different projects.

Administrator Anhorn reviewed examples of water bodies in the District and potential partners. He agreed that a lot of the information could be kept the same but noted that he perhaps would not want the District to be involved in recreational control of AIS.

Meg Rattei stated that in her conversations with the member cities, some cities stated that they would prefer to take the lead and communication with lake associations rather than having the lake associations take the lead.

Manager Cutshall asked if this is ultimately a losing battle with AIS, that this activity will just slow the spread down and eventually AIS will spread.

Manager Sheely used an example of bees. She explained that you just do not know whether the species will survive, whether the work you are doing is helping, or whether the species would be better without assistance.

Manager Cutshall commented that it almost seems like an overwhelming task.

Meg Rattei explained that Lake Minnetonka has never effectively managed for AIS on a lake wide basis. She provided an example of a large lake in Wisconsin that had AIS throughout 75 percent of the lake. She stated that when the AIS is treated effectively, a huge difference can be made. She noted that a whole lake treatment occurred in 2015 and smaller treatments in 2016 through 2019. This year there are only a few patches of AIS that remain. She stated that there are two different water bodies in the nation that have treated with lake-wide lethal doses to kill zebra mussels and that AIS is no longer in the water body. She stated that if you are not going to take AIS management to the finish line, you might as well not spend the money at all because it will not make a difference.

Engineer Kieffer asked if the role changes depending on when the issue is identified through the rapid response plan.

Laura Jester explained that they only monitor every three years in lakes but noted that early detection can also be provided through volunteers. She explained that they provide funding to Three Rivers Park District to hire people to manage their accesses for lakes.

Project and Program Manager Sniegowski asked how often Bassett Creek will update and reassess roles.

Meg Rattei replied that in the ideal world, if the city said it is going to take the lead that should be the case and the watershed should not ask that city again if they still want to take the lead.

Laura Jester noted the year that this was created and noted that in 2025 they would most likely review again. She noted that some partners would most likely remain stable in their roles, while the makeup of city staff and councils will change and therefore that will be the partner they will need to recheck with.

Engineer Kieffer provided examples of AIS being detected when it would have been helpful to have a rapid response plan to provide details to member cities that have asked what to do.

Manager Hunker noted that one of the hardest elements will be for the District to determine which lakes should be included, using the example of Cornelia which is unspecified.

Engineer Kieffer stated that the classification of the District lakes could be used as a starting point for the discussion.

Administrator Anhorn stated that the Board will need to think of the document and where the District should play a role, and then how the District would want to tackle the rapid response. He stated that the role of the other agency partners (Hennepin County, DNR, Three Rivers Park District) will not be likely to change and therefore most of the discussion with partners will focus on the member cities.

Engineer Kieffer stated that Bassett Creek is a WMO whereas Nine Mile is a District and perhaps that will change the desire of the member cities and their roles.

Laura Jester confirmed that could make a difference as the District can levy.

Administrator Anhorn stated that the Board can start by reviewing the Bassett Creek rapid response as a guide and determine the role the District would want to take.

Manager Hunker asked if it would be easy for staff to put together a summary of the activities that the District is already doing.

Administrator Anhorn confirmed that staff could do that.

Manager Hunker noted that would help to determine where the gaps exist.

Administrator Anhorn noted that they would also need to determine what the cities are doing to determine the real gaps.

Engineer Kieffer stated that the plan would identify the goals, what is being done, when it is being done, and who is doing it.

Laura Jester stated that they did include prioritization, but some of those activities are dependent upon available funding such as Hennepin County grants.

Administrator Anhorn noted that this would be a stepped process. He explained that the rapid response plan is currently not budgeted at this time. He stated that the Bassett Creek information could be used as guide in attempt to streamline the process.

Engineer Kieffer confirmed that there seems to be a general comfort level among board members present at the special meeting with the document from Bassett Creek which can be used as a guide to begin the District discussions.

Administrator Anhorn stated that he would like to meet with the Managers to determine their position before speaking with city staff members to gain their input. He explained that would give the cities something to react to. He noted that as a starting point, staff will begin to put the information together for the Board to review and identify gaps. He asked the Board to review the table and determine where the District should fall.

**Adjournment**

**It was moved by Sheely, seconded by Cutshall, to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. p.m. Upon a vote, the motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Erin Hunker, Secretary