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5-YEAR APM (Aquatic Plant Management) PLAN

The "Proposed Draft" of our 2015 - 2019 APM plan can be found on the MFA's website: www.MinongFlowage.org via the tabs "Lake Management", then "Reports", then "**2015-2019 Aquatic Plant Management Plan**", or by using this link: [2015-APM-Plan-05-25-2015](#)

The 5-year APM Plan lays out all of the factors to be considered when making our annual "action-plan". **IT IS NOT "THE" ACTION PLAN.** However, this plan is the basis for our annual action plans. The MFA formally approved the plan at the June 13th MFA Annual Meeting. It was then submitted to the DNR for their approval. The DNR wants to make some revisions to the plan, which will be discussed in a meeting set for November 5th. Once the MFA board and the DNR approve the final verbiage for the document, it will be offered to the public for comment and then the MFA membership will need to approve the revised version via vote.

It is important to note that this plan approval process has been a tedious and frustrating project. However, we are confident that we can complete the project by clarifying the verbiage in a few key areas.

In summary, the plans focus is to:

1. Increase stakeholder education & involvement in our lake planning activities.
2. Protect and enhance the native aquatic plants.
3. Minimize the encroachment of AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species), which threaten native plants, wildlife and general lake health.

CRANBERRY FLOWAGE ASPECT OF THE 5-YEAR AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Cranberry Lake is roughly 1 mile directly north of the Minong Flowage. The Cranberry Flowage is the section of water from Cranberry Lake's outlet to the County Road "T" bridge near Pogo's restaurant. The APM plan refers to the channel from County Road "T" southward as "the Cranberry Channel", which leads into the main body of the Minong Flowage. Cranberry Lake has it's own APM plan and EWM control efforts. The Cranberry Flowage does not have a formal AIS control plan, but it has significant amounts of EWM, which causes the typical problems for that water body. Therefore, the Cranberry Flowage is a significant source of the EWM "shoots" moving into the Minong Flowage and taking root in shallow locations downstream.

The MFA and the DNR agree that our APM plan should address these factors by monitoring EWM and native plant activity in the Cranberry Flowage and maintain communications between interested parties in this relationship.

2013/2014 DRAWDOWN SURVEY

Drawing the lake's water level down during the winter months as an AIS management tool (milfoil dies when it freezes) has been discussed at many junctures over recent years. The concept was never pursued in-depth because of a variety of mitigating and un-predictable factors (environmental damage, property damage, lost electrical production capacity, public safety, etc.). The condemnation of the original dam by the State of Wisconsin bowled over all those factors and led to the drawdown of 2013/2014. The 2013/2014 drawdown "re-opened the door" to considering winter drawdowns as a realistic option to AIS control. **WE WANT TO BE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR: THERE IS NO CURRENT PLAN IN PLACE TO DRAWDOWN THE LAKE!**

The MFA board had planned to conduct a survey of property owners during the coming winter months (2015/2016) regarding the 2013/14 drawdown. Our goal would be to capture a variety of information while it was still "fresh in everyone's mind". That timetable was thrust forward when the DNR announced a "Drawdown Case Study Workshop" set for mid-September. Thus, I (Dan Maxwell: thus comments and complaints should be directed towards me...) ram-rodged the survey through the MFA board and it resulted in the survey that was issued on September 4th to about 440 property owners on Cranberry Lake, the Cranberry Flowage and the Minong Flowage.

I gotta tell ya I had modest hopes for responses. Everyone is over-whelmed by survey requests these days. I hoped to get 25 responses (6%), 7 of which I'd coerce from the MFA board members. The other 18 would likely only come from folks who were really upset and "just looking for someone to vent to..." and those were the folks we had hoped would respond.

To my complete surprise, 145 folks responded (33%). Hummmm, I wonder if this is a controversial topic... If I had suspected that degree of a response, I would have spent more "quality time" in the crafting of the survey!

It is important to note that survey responses are "indicators", not "facts". Here are some snippets of the responses:

- Water Wells - 16 respondents (11%) incurred some financial cost regarding their wells. 7 of those were in the +\$2,500 category.
- Shoreline Issues - 87 respondents (60%) had a least 1 tree die. 15 reported that more than 15 trees died on their shoreline. The survey didn't seek information about the cost of removing dead trees, but many folks noted substantial expenditures.
- Woody Debris - 84 respondents (58%) had problems with **debris on their shoreline**. 145 respondents (52%) had problems with debris in the main body of the lake.
- Personal Injuries - Only 1 respondent reported experiencing a personal injury, but it was substantial. I really expected to hear about more injuries. It is important to note that the campground has a high turnover of folks who may not have been aware of such hazards (thus more likely to encounter them), and are not noted in the survey's tally.
- Fishing Quality - Better = 9% / Worse = 28% / About the same = 37% / Don't fish = 26%
- Future Drawdowns (winter only) - Yes = 51% / No = 23% / Not Sure = 26%

Conclusion: We already knew that the 2013/2014 drawdown was controversial and many of the responses in the "Comments" sections of the survey confirmed that notion. It accomplished our goal of "capturing information while it is still fresh in everyone's mind". It also spawned an assortment of lake-related comments and questions that we hope to pursue as time permits. Most importantly, it enabled us to influence discussions in the DNR Drawdown Case Study meeting that was attended by many key people in the DNR, tribal, government and public domains.

It is important to note that the "summer portion" of the 2013/2014 drawdown led to most of the tree loss and water-well issues and certainly contributed to the woody debris problems. Discussion about future drawdowns are extraordinarily complex and only focus on winter drawdowns, NOT summer.

Survey details can be found on our website (<http://www.minongflowage.org/>) under the Lake Management tab, or use the following link:

- [2013 / 2014 Post Drawdown Survey Summary and Comments](#)

MAY 19TH HERBICIDE TREATMENT OF EMERGING EURASIAN-WATER-MILFOIL (EWM) BEDS

The MFA'S permit request to treat several emerging EWM beds with herbicide was approved and the treatments took place on May 19th. The goal for this set of treatment efforts was to address the EWM growth identified in the 2015 spring plant survey and curtail expansion of the beds during the coming season. The treatment locations can be viewed on the MFA website (www.MinongFlowage.org) via the "Lake Management" tab, or by clicking this link: [2015-05-19 Herbicide Treatment Map](#)

The fall plant survey that assessed the success of the spring treatments is not yet ready for publication, but the preliminary information reports that several EWM beds showed little, if any EWM resurgence this summer, while others did. The survey noted significant expansion of EWM in areas that were not treated, most notably in the channel leading away from the DNR public landing on the east side of the lake and the northern half of Serenity Bay.

Plans for possible 2016 herbicide treatments will be evaluated over the winter months.

EWM REMOVAL DEMONSTRATION: D.A.S.H. & "HAND-PULLING"

Through the course of the Minong Flowage Association's battle with EWM (Eurasian Water Milfoil), the option of hiring "hand-pulling" contractors has been repeatedly discussed, but not pursued. Since other Wisconsin lake associations have, and are using hand-pulling EWM harvest methods, we decided that it was necessary for us to have a first-hand evaluation of the process in our waters. The anticipated high cost per acre, diver safety in our stump infested waters and process-visibility in our darkly stained waters was always a perceived barrier to such an effort. However, when unspent funds in our Education grant number AEPP-431-14 became available we sought and received DNR approval for the project. The demonstrations occurred on Cranberry Lake, the Cranberry Flowage and the Minong Flowage on June 29th & 30th.

The full report and photos can be found on our website (MinongFlowage.org) under the Lake Management tab, or use this link: [2015-8-18 DASH & APM demo summary](#)

Although the entire effort was very interesting and informative, our concerns were validated. Either form of hand-pulling effort is slow, tedious and expensive. In addition, many areas that were served by the demonstration had significant amounts of EWM identified during the fall plant survey so their long-term effectiveness is debatable. However, they may yet be a viable option in isolated instances.

MEET THE RESEARCH BIOLOGIST - AIS EDUCATION EVENT

This event was held on August 29th at the Totogatic Campground Pavilion. Matt Berg is the contractor who performs all of our statistical research regarding plant life on the lake. It is from this data that we make most of our decisions for nurturing the aquatic plant health of the lake.

About 25 people attended this casual event. Matt offered a broad overview of his impressions of our lake as it compares to others with which he works. Most notably, the limited light transmission allowed by the dark-stained water and how this constricts the areas for aquatic plants to grow and therefore intensifies the battle between "good" aquatic plants to thrive. Matt had gleaned assorted plants from the lake earlier in the day and described their assorted characteristics. The final portion of the event was a question-and-answer session that touched a broad range of subjects.

CLEAN BOATS / CLEAN WATERS PROGRAM: 2015

Clean Boats/Clean Waters is a DNR endorsed program to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. This year, we again partnered with the local Boy Scouts of America troop for monitoring the DNR landing (on

East Flowage Rd) while the Minong Town Lakes Committee sponsors the monitoring of the Totogatic campground landing.

The Scout's 282 hours combined with 22 "lake volunteer" hours totaled 304 for the summer. The Scouts earned \$2,850 for support of their activities. Our "lake volunteer" hours were down significantly from 2014, which is an unfortunate trend because these hours are needed for our "in-kind volunteer hours" commitment to garner maximized DNR grant money for our 2016 program. Never-the-less this years program inspected 507 watercraft (20% more than 2014) and these efforts directly protect our lake from additional AIS issues and prevent the spread of our EWM to other regional lakes.

Our sincerest thanks go out to all who assist and support this effort.

SMITH'S BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The Town of Wascott, Douglas County & the US Federal Government combined forces to replace Smith's Bridge, which crosses the inlet waters in the northeast section of the lake. Construction of the concrete structure began in July and is now complete. It was built in roughly the same location as the original bridge. Final costs will be shared as follows: 80% paid by the Federal Government, 10% paid by Douglas County and 10% paid by the Town of Wascott.

DNR's HEALTHY LAKES INITIATIVE - "FISH-STICKS"

Woody debris is important to the health of a lake. Especially it's wildlife. Unfortunately, we have way too much debris on the north end of the lake and not enough on the south end. Little can be done with the over-abundance on the north end, but the DNR's Healthy Lakes initiative offers a variety of options "mid and south-enders" can do. One such option is called "Fish Sticks", which is a simple, **but regulated** means of adding woody debris to our shorelines where logistics allow. They are constructed on the winter ice, and drop into place in the spring. The MFA has obtained a permit for the construction of pre-approved "Fish Stick" sites in the Minong Flowage. **Note: Simply cutting down a shoreline tree and letting it fall into the lake is ILLEGAL!**

The first "Fish Sticks" site as been installed and interested folks are encouraged to check it out. It is on the southern shore of the bay that precedes the sharp turn towards the dam. It is designated by a 9"x9" green/yellow sign that says, "**Fish Sticks" DNR Site**". A formal effort to organize Fish-Stick construction will begin this winter. Anyone interested in building additional "Fish Sticks" sites should contact Dan Maxwell: 612/817-8257 or MinongFlowage@gmail.com

Details at: www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/resources/healthylakes/HealthyLakesPlan.pdf

DNR 2016 FISH POPULATION STUDY PLAN

The DNR will be performing an extensive survey of the fish population in the Minong Flowage next summer. It will compare current populations of assorted species to the last such survey which was performed in 2005. The 2005 survey can be found under the Lake Management tab of our website (www.MinongFlowage.org), or click on this link: [2005 DNR - Minong Flowage Fish Survey Report](#)
The 2016 report will be issued during the winter of 2016/17 and will likely have a great deal of influence on future lake management activities.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION POLICY

The "Spring" Newsletter is the only newsletter sent to all known Minong Flowage property owners **regardless** of their membership status in our association. It announces the date of our annual meeting and offers the opportunity to participate in the care and management of our lake. Our preferred method of communication is email. We will continue to mail paper newsletters to members in good standing that don't use Email for the

time being. *Please confirm your preferred email address to Peggy Bruzda* via MinongFlowage@Gmail.com, or call Peggy: 218/466-5815. Peggy can also advise you as to your MFA membership dues status.

MFA BOARD ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

- January 23rd - AIS and general lake planning for 2016
- April 16th - MFA Annual Meeting planning and general lake planning for 2016
- June 11th - MFA Annual Meeting & Board Member voting
- October 8th - End-of-season review and 2017 planning (date subject to change)

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Dan Maxwell - 612/817-8257

Treasurer: Dave Moline - 612/859-0492

Secretary: Bill Peck - 651/226-0877

Membership: Peggy Bruzda - 715/466-5815

CB/CW: Wayne Johnson - 715/466-2098

Website: Bob Budden - 715/614-2544

Interim member: Steve Johnson - 715/466-2536

YOU CAN REGISTER FOR COUNTY EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROGRAMS AT:

Douglas County's emergency notification program at: www.DouglasCountyWi.org/NotifyMe

Washburn County's emergency notification program at: <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/BF70D44BC678>

PLEASE REPORT SUSPICIOUS AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITY DIRECTLY TO THE DNR PROMPTLY!

DNR Tip Line: 800/847-9367

Douglas County DNR Warden - Lance Burns: 715/296-8876

Washburn County DNR Warden - Dave Swanson: 715/466-5358

Douglas County Sherriff - 715/395-1371

Washburn County Sherriff - 715/468-4700

Minong Town Constable - Erik Gulbrandsen: 714/781-8566

Minong Flowage Association

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