



MINONG FLOWAGE ASSOCIATION

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Minutes of the Minong Flowage Association
Stakeholders Meeting
August 18, 2018
9-11am
Jack Link Aquatic and Athletic Center

The meeting was opened at 9am by Dave Perrin, Board Member of the Minong Flowage Association (MFA). There were 72 people in attendance including a representative of the Town Board of Wascott and representatives of Renewable World Energies (RWE). Dave gave an overview of the Minong Flowage Association and recent concerns regarding the presence of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) that led to a request for Washburn County (owner of the dam that creates the Flowage) to apply to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for a drawdown permit. Dave informed those in attendance that no decisions would be made during the meeting or votes taken, and that, the purpose was to hear attendees concerns and answer questions.

Dave Blumer reviewed the history of the management plans for the Minong Flowage going back to 2008. This included data on the multiple chemical treatments, their cost and results. Dave reviewed the aquatic plant survey completed in July of this year and the specific impacts of EWM noted in the survey. EWM has not expanded as rapidly in 2018 as it was expected to, and native plant species continue to make a comeback as noted in the survey. At this time there would NOT be enough EWM in the Flowage to meet the criteria for a chemical treatment as defined in the current aquatic management plan. However, with over 120 acres of EWM in various locations around the Flowage (but mostly in Serenity Bay and the area immediately east of Smith Bridge where the Totagatic River enters the Flowage), the MFA has requested Washburn

County to apply for a drawdown permit from the DNR on behalf of the MFA. This has been done.

Dave highlighted the following points:

- It is not known how long it will take the DNR to respond to the permit request or what the decision may be.
- There is a funding gap that will need to be addressed as Renewable World Energies has stated they will expect to be compensated for lost revenue as operators of the dam. This could exceed \$30,000.
- The results of the plant survey would indicate that a drawdown (6 months in length) could be postponed at least a year in light of native plants recovering and EWM not spreading as rapidly as predicted.

The meeting was opened up to questions and comments. Below are some of the ideas and concerns that were expressed and answers or comments made by Dave Blumer:

- A land owner on Cranberry Lake expressed concern that water clarity has been lower (in that adjoining lake) since the drawdown for the dam repair in 2013.

Water quality and water clarity are impacted by many things but the drawdown certainly could have been a contributing factor

- A concern was expressed that EWM is coming down the Totogatic River and therefore a drawdown will be of little to no use in eradicating the problem.

EWM is leaving the Minong Flowage and going downstream of the dam, but it is highly unlikely that any EWM is being carried back into the Minong Flowage by upstream waters of the Totogatic River. Water movement within the Flowage continues to spread EWM throughout the Flowage.

- A concern was raised that fishing has been negatively affected by the last drawdown (and presumably would be again).

The 2016 Fisheries Survey indicated that panfish, northern, and largemouth bass were likely impacted by the 2013 drawdown simply because spawning grounds were dewatered early in the spring (March/April) prior to spawning. This would not be the case with the current drawdown proposal.

- An observation was shared that the State of Minnesota is experimentally trying to combat EWM by planting native aquatic plants. This would need to be documented but is offered as a possible alternative to a drawdown.

Restoring native aquatic vegetation is a great thing to do, but it is very difficult. EWM outcompetes native vegetation as it is, restored vegetation would have the same competition.

- It was suggested that EWM could be a positive – as in the case of it being harvested and used for fermenting.

If it works and can be done, I'm all for it!

The meeting ended at 11am. Thanks to all who attended.