

Meeting 3 Minutes

Little Wall Lake Working Group

October 15, 2013 - 9:00 A.M – 12:00 P.M.

Wallace Bldg - 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines Iowa

The meeting opened with introductions. The agenda consisted of DNR presenting proposals to improve lake water quality, lake access, fishing, increasing the lake's watershed and managing adjacent state land.

Scott Grummer proposed a low dose rotenone treatment to control grass carp and yellow bass. He explained that DNR research on low dose treatments have been promising. The current lake fishery consists of 3 – 8" yellow bass, 6-8" crappie and bluegill less than 6". Northern pike stockings have not been successful because of the lack of habitat. Expected outcomes to this treatment are improved water clarity, an improved sport fishery although the low dose treatment will probably decimate the walleye fishery. Large fish killed by the treatment will be collected and disposed of; small fish will be left to decompose. Grummer will work with the lake's Walleye Club and hold a meeting to inform the public of the proposal and to get their input. In the event that a low dose treatment is not effective in controlling grass carp an alternative would be to hire a commercial fisher to remove grass carp by seining.

- Jeff Knutson asked what happens to the rotenone. Grummer explained that it breaks down naturally and may take several weeks before it is not toxic to fish.
- Jane Todey asked about any rotenone impacts to waterfowl. Grummer explained rotenone affects aquatic organisms that breathe dissolved oxygen contained in the water and waterfowl are not affected.
- Russ Teig commented that timing may be important so not to deter waterfowl use. Mike McGhee mentioned a case in Benton County where a rotenone treatment attracted eagles.
- Jeff Knutson stated his concern that there would be too much aquatic vegetation if too few grass carp were left and if the DNR would stock grass carp if this happened. Grummer said there is no plan and would prefer the option of controlling vegetation at high use sites with herbicide.

Brian Lammers mentioned the one of the two aeration unit pumps is down and needs to be replaced. He believed the pump was too old to find replacement parts or to justify the cost to repair.

Martin Konrad said that during the second meeting in Jewell that someone brought that the boat ramps were difficult to use during low water years. The DNR will plan to extend the ramps for low water use and will include this in its fiscal year 2015 budget request. Konrad also said that the DNR will look into budgeting for a fishing jetty on the west side of the lake.

- Jeff Knutson asked if there was a way to move the courtesy docks off the boat ramp lanes so both lanes could be used. Brian Lammers said new courtesy docks are needed and explained the boat ramp design prevents dock placement in between ramp lanes. Over winter the DNR and Hamilton County will discuss available alternative to improve ramp access with dock placement.

Josh Gansen measured the lake elevation on October 14, 2013 using a laser level and found the lake 16" below crest. Gansen explained the east side of the containment site is 4 – 4.5' lower than the west site. He said it is possible to shape the containment area so surface water would drain to the west. This would increase the Little Wall Lake watershed size by approximately 60 acres. Doing this would also allow site management for hunting opportunities.

- Jane Todey asked how the containment site material will be utilized so water drains to the west. Gansen explained that dike material will be used. Mike McGhee committed Lake Restoration dollars to shape the containment dike to drain surface water westward.
- Jane Todey asked about the time frame to alter the containment site. The DNR budgeting process was explained and time for engineering design was needed. McGhee thought the minimal timeframe would be one year after being approved in DNR fiscal budget.
- Jane Todey stated that there is a need to search further for an acceptable alternated water source and suggested the sand pit north of the lake. Martin Konrad will look into its surface area and water volume size to assist in determining if this is a feasible alternative. Jim Wahl mentioned previous DNR attempts to locate a well source, with the needed water quantity, were unsuccessful.
- Jeff Knutson wondered if filter water through terrestrial vegetation could be an effective means to sequester phosphorus. Mary Skopec thought it may be feasible and will research this possibility.

Martin Konrad mentioned that the outlet tube has a rise in it and may cause artificially high lake elevation due to slow drainage. Brian Lammers said he has the outlet design plans and will make them available to the DNR. He did state that the outlet plan was designed for this rise.

Brian Lammers asked about how to initiate watershed planning for the Skunk River. Vince Sitzmann explained a watershed application must be submitted locally. It was decided that Brian and Vince would work on this independently of the working group. Vince did say in regards to the lake's watershed, local landowners can approach the NRCS at any time to determine what type of funding is available to implement best management practices.

Konrad opened up the meeting up other issues.

- Russ Teig is concerned about lake aesthetics along Hwy 69. Low water lake conditions with exposed woody vegetation and refuse makes the lake look bad and gives the appearance that the DNR is not doing anything. Brian Lammers explained the he maintains the west shoreline and the woody vegetation was left for fish habitat and left on the advice of Scott Grummer.

- Jeff Knutson requested a elevation gauge be installed at the outlet so the public could view current lake elevations. Gansen said he would look into it.
- Jeff Knutson asked the DNR if the water pump should be sold. Konrad said that decision should be made locally. The denial letter specifically states the five issues that must be resolved before an application to pump water is considered by the DNR. These five issues should be discussed locally in making a decision to sell or not sell the pump.

Konrad asked Hamilton County members to give their thoughts on the DNR proposals to improve Little Wall Lake and it's the recreational opportunities it provides.

- Jane Todey said the management proposals are good but believes the working group needs to continue searching for an acceptable water source for pumping purposes. She is also concern about the potential for excessive amounts of aquatic plants in the absence of grass carp.
- Mike Brandrup is appreciative of the proposals and efforts to improve lake water quality and recreational opportunities. It is important to tell the story on what is being accomplished. Brandrup suggested preparing a news release of this meeting's accomplishments. **(Note: A DNR news release was sent on October 15, see page 4).** Konrad said he would be willing to hold community meetings to explain lake issues and what progress the working group has made. The best time for this would be prior to the DNR meeting to engage the public and get their acceptance to the proposed low dose rotenone treatment.

It was decided that this would be the last working group meeting for 2013 and the next meeting would be determined once the DNR has had a chance to complete its planning and budgeting process. In the interim Konrad will send the working group members updates as progress is made. Action items for progress are:

- DNR budget planning for:
 - Containment site modification
 - Boat ramp extensions
 - Courtesy docks
 - Fishing jetty
 - Replacement aeration pump
- Scott Grummer, low dose rotenone treatment planning
- Mary Skopec, land surface filtration of pumped water as a means to improve water quality.
- Martin Konrad, look into the north sand pit as a possible alternative water source.
- Josh Gansen, look into the installation of an elevation gauge at the lake's outlet.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCTOBER 15, 2013

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LITTLE WALL LAKE WORKING GROUP MEETS IN DES MOINES

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources, residents of Little Wall Lake and Hamilton County Conservation Board members met in Des Moines on Tuesday in an effort to advance the management plan of the 256-acre lake. The two sides have been at odds over the lake's water level management.

As a shallow lake, the DNR statewide management plan sees natural drought cycles as healthy for the resource, allowing sediment to solidify on exposed lake beds and to get vegetation established that benefit fish, wildlife and help remove nutrients from the lake water.

Lake residents preferred to increase the lake level for recreation during drought years and wanted to pump water from nearby Mud Creek. Mud Creek has high levels of phosphorus that would cause additional water quality problems in Little Wall Lake.

Previous discussions occurred as part of a group created to discuss management of the lake including water level issues.

"We are not against pumping water but need to find a source that will not harm the lake," said Martin Konrad, with the Iowa DNR's Fisheries Bureau. "We presented our view of ways to improve the water quality while addressing recreation issues that come with lower water levels."

Konrad said the plan the DNR offered Tuesday includes a cool weather low dose chemical treatment to control yellow bass and grass carp to get the fishery back in balance that will improve water clarity which will increase aquatic vegetation that will remove nutrients and benefit fish.

He said boat access during low water cycles will be addressed through improved and lengthened boat ramps.

Little Wall Lake has the smallest lake to watershed ratio at less than one acre of watershed to one acre of lake. The DNR will reshape the dredge spoil site to increase the watershed by 60 acres.

Jane Todey, who lives on the lake, said the proposals sounded good, but she was concerned about the lakes' low water elevation and that improved water clarity could lead to too much aquatic vegetation.

Konrad said the working group will continue to search for an alternative outside water source that would not adversely impact the water quality of the lake, during low water years.

The group will hold public meetings to get reaction to the proposals to improve water quality and recreation opportunities.

Little Wall Lake
Working Group Meeting #3
October 15 9am - 12:00

Wallace State Office Bldg 3 E+W

Name:

Address

1) Martin Konrad
Russ Teig
Mike BRANDY

Webster City
Jewell

Brian Lammers

IDNR - Clear Lake

5) Scott Grimmer
Todd Rozendaal

Josh Gansen

IDNR - Boone

Jim Wahl

IA DNR - Fisheries

Roger Bruner

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10) Mary Skopec

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~~John Kristensen~~

Jewell

Jane Foley

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Vince Sitzmann

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15) Allen Bonini

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