

Pete Deschenes Stakeholders Board at Lake Gaston Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2024....Zoom Meeting

Attendance (11 voting members):

Wyatt Andrews (LGSWC), David Belkoski (NCWRC), West Bishop (SePRO), Cory Chamberlain (Dominion), Pete Deschenes (Chairman, RWF Fire Tax Board), Jeff Dowhan (Halifax County), Rob Emens (NC DEQ), Bill Frazier (NC B.A.S.S.), Leanne Patrick (Lake Gaston Regional Chamber of Commerce), Rob Richardson (NCSU), Jeff Zimmer (LGA)

Also present:

Jessica Baumann (NCSU), Elton Brown (LGSWC), Susie Deschenes (PDSBLG Secretary) J. J. Ferris (Cygnet Enterprises), Andrew Gay (NCDWR), Brian Goldsworthy (LGA, LGSWC), Kirk Rundle (NCWRC), Tracy Thompson (PLM),

The 20th annual meeting of the Pete Deschenes Stakeholders Board at Lake Gaston (PDSBLG) was held on February 14, 2024 via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pete Deschenes at 11:35 am.

Jessica Baumann – LAKE ENVIRONMENT MONITORS' RESULTS *

the Fall Survey was conducted by over 150 volunteers from August 19, 2023 – November 3, 2023 and was coordinated by John Franz of the LGA. 6311 points were recorded and 82% of the sites had vegetation. 4% of these sites had hydrilla (329 acres) with an increase in upper Poplar Creek. Water Willow was the most prevalent, followed by Chara and Lyngbya. 10 %- 13% of the rake throws showed Lyngbya present throughout the system (1134-1377 acres). There have been complaints about Eel Grass in Jimmie's Creek but it is native and protected by Dominion's Shoreline Management Plan.

Jessica Baumann – T.A.G. RECOMMENDATIONS *

1. Overall Monitoring Efforts
 - Continue funding and supporting volunteer survey
2. Monitoring & Treatment Efforts
 - Hydrilla
 - Treat no more than 198 acres
 - Stock 1,385 Grass Carp
 - Lyngbya
 - Treat no more than 500 acres
 - Note that treatment areas are identified based solely on detection of lyngbya
 - Continue to minimize Impacts to Tidewater Mucklets
 - Expand Understanding of Interactions between Lyngbya and Tidewater Mucklets
3. Revegetation Efforts
 - No direct control efforts will be made by collaborators towards native species that have expanded outside the planted areas. Develop educational material (brochure) that promotes the benefits of native aquatic plants and spells out Dominion's policy on managing shoreline vegetation.
 - Continue effort towards development of metrics that measure the effectiveness and success of native vegetation enhancement efforts.
 - Identify areas in which native vegetation enhancement efforts have the increased potential of plant encroachment on developed lakefront properties. Additional efforts to promote expansion of native aquatic plants should be restricted in these areas.

- Suspend enhancement efforts that utilize fish attractors and native eel grass. This is due to the increased growth displayed by Lake Gaston's eel grass population and concerns over invasive and hybrid forms of eelgrass.
- Continue to encourage partnerships and collaborations directed at habitat enhancement at Lake Gaston.

Pete asked for comments – none and exceptions – non taken. The T.A.G. Recommendations will be presented to the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council with no exceptions found.

Jeff Zimmer – RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT FUNDING LYGNBYA AND LISTAS A NOXIOUS WEED
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Jeff gave a background of the Stakeholders' Board and the money that has been spent by the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council including the funding sources. He also gave a history of the increased presence of lyngbya and the compelling arguments for the need to treat it. There have been roadblocks in attaining funding because lyngbya is an algae, not vegetation. In conclusion Jeff presented a resolution support funding and to list lyngbya as a Noxious Aquatic Weed under the NC DEQ Aquatic Weed Control Program. The PDSBLG voted to accept the resolution without exception.

Rob Emens made a motion to adjourn, seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Deschenes, LGSB Secretary

- **Presentations are attached to the minutes including Re-vegetation Efforts on Lake Gaston presented by Mark Fowlkes and David Belkoski and supporting information for the Resolution**