

Lake Gaston Weed Control Council (LGWCC) Minutes

March 15, 2024-----1pm

Lions Club 139 Stanley Road, Henrico, N.C.

Director Attendees and County designation:

Elton Brown-M, Jeff Zimmer-W, Pete Deschenes-W, John Franz-W, John Cataldo-B, Wally Sayko-B, Chris Fitts-H, Kelvin Edwards-NH, Reggie Owens-B, Tom Tanner-M, Lynn Little-H, Jay Warfel-B.

Other Attendees: Jessica Baumann-NCSU, Rob Richardson-NCSU, Rob Emmens, N.C. Susie Deschenes, Judy Waters, Patrick & Jane Caine, H.B. Moore, III-President Sunny Acres HOA. Mark Mathews-Lake Gaston News Observer.

Call to Order: President Elton Brown. 1PM. President Brown welcomed all attendees and welcomed two new directors, Reggie Owens, Supervisor Brunswick County and Tom Tanner Supervisor Mecklenburg County.

Roll Call of Attendees: Wally Sayko. Quorum Met and all counties represented.

Agenda Approval: President Elton Brown. Change to move public comments to below approval of minutes. Motion by Jeff Zimmer and 2nd by Pete Deschenes and approved.

November 16, 2023, Minutes: A motion to approve by Tom Tanner and 2nd by John Franz and approved.

Review Resident complaints/issues/concerns: Jessica, Jeff, John F. and wally S.

Jimmies Creek: Eel grass topping out and mixed with Lyngbya topping out. Patrick Cain who lives on Jimmies Creek, North Point Cove shared the impact of the Eel Grass and Lyngbya. It prevents his family from using the water for swimming and other recreation. It has become more and more a problem in the last 3 years. What can be done about it? Jessica explained research results where it is a beneficial “native” plant and protected under Dominion’s Shoreline Management Plan. She said the Eel Grass was most likely capturing floating Lyngbya rather than Lyngbya growing because of the Eel Grass. Jeff Z. further explained the approval by Dominion to clear a 10-foot-wide path to get your boat in and out. It does not state

specifically about any other clearing for jet skis and swimming. Jeff relayed that the LGA is continuing to work on this issue.

Mr. Moore of Sunny Acres shared the growing problem with Water Willow on the shoreline. It grows rapidly and is taking over the shoreline. He did say that the Lyngbya Treatments by Lgwcc were working very well and thanked the council.

Plants outside of vegetation cages: Jessica reported that the Revegetation project is being monitored closely for any issues with neighboring property owners. Currently there are no plans to eliminate growth outside of the enclosures.

Jessica will collect data and keep a Google map of all complaint locations.

Wally: several calls from property owners if they will be treated for Lyngbya and issues with leaves being blown into the lake.

John F: further commented on the Jimmies Creek Eel Grass issue and committed to continue to work the process with Dominion.

Treasurer's Report (FY 2023-2024 as of March 1): Jeff Zimmer

Jeff shared that all counties have met the request for full funding of \$116K except Halifax. Jeff outlined our status to support 500 acres of lyngbya treatments for 2024 and the next two years. He cautioned the members that over-committing could result in a shortfall of funds to continue the treatments for a minimum of three years.

Our fiscal YTD Income is \$1,406,802 vs the budget of \$1,267,500. He noted income of \$400K from the Commonwealth of Virginia and \$300K from the state of N.C., and \$339,198 from the City of Virginia Beach. (You can find this information on the website: lgwcc.org)

A motion by: John Franz and 2nd by Tom Tanner and approved.

2023 Survey/treatment schedule: Jessica Baumann

(You will find this presentation on the Lgwcc.org website)

2023 Survey Highlights: Jessica thanked the LGA volunteers for their dedication to the survey this year. 85 teams consisted of 155 volunteers who surveyed 6,311

points. Survey results showed: Water Willow as the Number 1 plant showing 40% of the survey points. Number 2 was Lyngbya and Chara. Hydrilla increased slightly to 324 acres. The acreage of Hydrilla is comprised of point intercept rake tosses and biomass detected by side scan sonar. Of note is the hydrilla increase in upper Poplar Creek. Lyngbya acreage was 1,314-1,377 acres. Jessica shared why she used a range for this year on Lyngbya. Investigations show that an algae called Cladophora looks like Lyngbya and can be mistaken for Lyngbya. She adjusted for that issue. Lyngbya accounted for 10-13% of the vegetation.

Note that relative stable Lyngbya acreage from the last 3 years indicates that treatments are working.

TAG Recommendations:

1. Continue monitoring efforts, funding and supporting volunteer surveys.
2. Hydrilla Management:
 - a. Treat no more than 198 acres
 - b. Stock 1,385 Grass Carp.
3. Lyngbya Management:
 - a. Treat no more than 500 acres.
 - b. Continue to identify treatment areas based solely on detection of Lyngbya.
 - c. Continue to minimize impacts to Tidewater Mucklets
 - d. Expand understanding of Interaction between Lyngbya and Tidewater Mucklets.

Pete Deschenes Stakeholders Board at Lake Gaston Recommendations:

Pete stated that the stakeholders agree and support the TAG recommendations as presented. **A motion was made by Jeff Zimmer to accept the TAG recommendations with Stakeholder support and 2nd by John Franz and approved.**

County Funding and 2024 Management Plans: Elton Brown and Jeff Zimmer.

Halifax County: Elton Brown shared information on efforts with the county to secure the requested \$116K full funding. Halifax had taken the position that they do not have statutory authority to fund the council. Last July 2023, the LGWCC asked Halifax to commit to full funding by end of Sept with the understanding that DEQ would provide in writing that Halifax has authority to fund hydrilla management.

Halifax received a supporting letter from DEQ in October. In November Halifax sent the LGWCC a 5-page grant agreement. It states required elements of how to spend funds and if not spent, to refund the unused amount to the county. Other agreement requirements were not found acceptable. The LGWCC “marked up” the agreement with acceptable changes and returned to Halifax at the end of January. The agreement was returned back to the LGWCC just this past Wednesday.

After extensive discussion by LGWCC directors with various opinions and data shared, a motion was reached.

Any County which does not provide its requested funding of \$116,000 by March 29, 2024, will not receive any noxious weed or algae treatments in 2024. If full funding is not provided by March 29, 2024 then no treatment will be done in Halifax County.

The motion by Lynn Little was 2nd by Pete Deschenes and approved.

Further comments supported by the directors was a proposal by Jeff Zimmer that any county not fully funded by April 1 of each year runs the risk of not being treated. This is based on the fact that plans must be finalized to begin mid-April treatments.

Other Business:

Status of LGWCC history: Dr. Brown will have a discussion with Steve Hoyle.

Explore Website Improvements: Wally Sayko

Amend budget for administrative and outreach expenses: Jeff Zimmer asked to amend the Office Operations budget line item to \$1,000. **Motion by Jeff Zimmer and 2nd by Tom Tanner and approved.**

Cost Share Opportunities: Jeff Zimmer

Memorandum of Understanding with Lake Gaston Association: John Franz presented this and asked for approval to execute.

Motion to execute MOU by Jeff Zimmer and 2nd by Lynn Little and approved.

Any further business: Action for letter by Jeff Zimmer and Wally Sayko. Letter of appreciation was sent to Delegate Michael Wray last November.

Motion to adjourn: Motion by Tom Tanner, 2nd Lynn Little and approved.

Submitted by: Wally Sayko, Secretary LGWCC March 17, 2024