

# Lake Gaston Weed Control Council (Meeting Minutes)

July 18, 2024, 7PM

Lake Gaston VFD

## Directors Attendance and County Designation:

Elton Brown-M., Jeff Zimmer-W., Pete Deschenes-W., John Zubrod-B., John Franz-W., Lynn Little-H., Reggie Owens-B., Chris Fitts-H., Jay Warfel-B., Tom Tanner-M., Glenn Barbour-M., Dia Denton-H., Kelvin Edwards-NH., Tare Davis-W., Wally Sayko-B. Guests: Will Miller- Dominion Energy, Tracy Thompson-PLM.

Call to Order: President, Elton Brown: 7pm

Roll Call of Attendees: Secretary, Wally Sayko. Reported 13 directors, Quorum Present.

Agenda presented for approval: President, Elton Brown. Motion by Jeff Zimmer and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Tanner. Approved.

March 15, 2024, Minutes presented for approval: President, Elton Brown: Motion to approve by Jeff Zimmer and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Reggie Owens. Approved.

Recognition of Pete Deschenes: President Elton Brown:

Dr. Brown expressed his appreciation for all the years of service to the Lgwcc. He was a valued director and provided leadership and direction for treatment of Hydrilla. Others shared their appreciation and gratitude for the efforts of Pete and his involvement in many organizations around the lake. All wished him the very best on his move to Long Island, N.Y.

Review of complaints/concerns reported since the March 15 meeting:

Jessica: 19 reports, 9 Lyngbya, 9 about native plants. Wally, 14 reports, 5 Lyngbya, 4 Hydrilla, 5 native plants (Chara, lilies). Jessica reported the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of Hydrilla treatment and 4<sup>th</sup> round for Lyngbya have been completed.

Discussion of native encroachment: Residents are concerned that in some areas the shoreline and boat dock area are being covered with thick Water Willow and other native plants. Will M. explained that it is unrealistic for residents to think that natives will not encroach on some 6K boat docks on the lake. These plants create a very important part of the ecosystem on the lake. He indicated there are some instances where treatment of aquatic native vegetation has been allowed for navigation and boathouse access, and it still will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. He said that Tracy with PLM was allowed to make decisions in many of these situations. He noted the next review of the shoreline plan is in 2026 for public input. Note: only 3 members of the community were present at the last review.

Treasurer's Report: Jeff Zimmer, Treasurer. (see attached reports)

Jeff reported the current financial position for Lgwcc is sound and the 2024/25 budget requirements can be met. Following are some key messages:

The only guaranteed funds are from the City of Virginia Beach. All others are dependent on the budgets of the 5 counties and Va/NC. He noted that N.C. has committed \$300K/yr for two years. Virginia has committed \$400K for 4 years. These funds are designated for the remediation of Lyngbya. Discussion on the financial contributions by Dominion Power for the control and management of invasive/noxious plants/algae has been minimal over 18 years. Currently all counties are participating at \$116K. He commented that this is the amount that was agreed to in 2006 and has not changed. Chemical costs have increased dramatically. Treatment expenses now account for 88% of all our costs. Administrative costs are minimal at 5%. The FY 25 forecast is that expenses will increase by \$202K .

Jeff also discussed the dramatic reduction in Hydrilla and the expansion of Lyngbya in recent years. These two things may be related, but at this point more analysis is needed to make that connection

County Funding: Jeff Zimmer, Elton Brown.

Currently the Lgwcc and Halifax County are working on the details of a new grant process by the county. Dia Denton spoke to this process. She indicated that it is the intent of the county to support funding of the Lgwcc in 2025.

Old Business:

Status of History of Lgwcc: Steve Hoyle.

Steve updated the members and indicated the project should be completed by November. He shared some of the findings and the difficulty in finding all the data required. He will meet with Jeff for more financial data.

The product will be a presentation that can be made to the 5 counties and states on the success of treatments for Hydrilla and status on Lyngbya.

Results of Website Research: Wally Sayko, Jeff Zimmer, John Franz.

Wally shared the request for proposal(RFP) process that was followed, and the requirements sent out to vendors. There were 3 responses. The highest bid is \$6000, middle bid \$2500, and the low bid at around \$1,000. John and Jeff covered the differences in the bids. The agreement was to go with the low bid for a website update to include enhanced security. Wally will notify all vendors of the decision.

Cost Share process for Lyngbya Treatments: Jeff Zimmer.

Jeff made an in-depth presentation of the pros and cons. While it is a good idea there were too many potential issues with the oversight, administration and financial risks to the process. The process was "Tabled" by the directors.

Public Comments: None

Further Business for the Lgwcc: Elton Brown.

Director T. Davis raised a question regarding Dominion Energy(DE) minimal funding supporting the Lgwcc. A long and very involved discussion centered around the financial support of Dominion Power. The directors agreed that Dominion should be more of a partner on the control and management of aquatic vegetation on their shoreline and provide not only direction but increase funding that they have contributed in the past (\$25K since 1985 and Grass Carp stocking expenses). Dr. Brown expressed the frustration of dealing with DE and attempting to acquire funding from them over the years. Some felt going directly to FERC with concern was a viable route to take. The final

decision was to task John Franz and Jeff Zimmer to draft a strategy to engage Dominion Energy with support of Aquatic vegetation management on the lake.

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion by Pete Deschenes and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joh Zubrod at 9pm

(farewell Pete Deschenes, best to you and Susie)