

Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2017

Attendance (15 voting members):

Ken Bowman (Warren County), Corey Chamberlain (Dominion), Pete Deschenes (Chairman, RWF Fire Tax Board), *Bill Frazier* (NC BASS), Andrew Gay (NC DEQ), Brian Goldsworthy (LGA), Robert Hendrick (Mecklenburg County), Steve Hoyle (NCSU), Mike Klein (LGWSC), Rives Manning (Halifax County Commissioner), Jim Noland (Striper Club), (NC State Univ), Kirk Rundle (NC Wildlife Resources), Barney Watson (Lake Gaston Realtors), Christina Wells (Lake Gaston Regional Chamber), John Zubrod (Brunswick County Supervisor)

Also present:

Mark Fowlkes (NCWRC), Khai Hoang (The Daily Herald), Heather McKinney (Mecklenburg County), Will Miller (Dominion Reservoir Supervisor), A. J. Reyes (NCSU), Della Rose (Lake Gaston Gazette-Observer), *Wally Sayko* (Brunswick County), *Peter Sturke* (Dominion), Jeff Zimmer (Pro Lake Management),

Italicized names indicate attendance via conference call.

Agenda

Welcome and Attendee Introduction
Review LGSB Membership
NC Weed Council 2016 Work Plan...Rob Emens
Revegetation Mark Fowlkes
Fall Survey...A. J. Reyes
TAG Recommendations.....Rob Richardson
Update LGSB Management Plan.....All

The meeting of the Stakeholders Board was held on March 2, 2017 at Dominion's Roanoke Rapids Station. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pete Deschenes at 9:02 am. A Distribution List was sent around as a sign-in sheet. People were asked to make any changes to it and check voting members of the group they represent. A quorum was in attendance, with 15 voting organizations represented.

Pete thanked Dominion for hosting the meeting and gave a brief history of the LGSB Membership and Mission. It is the best group to disseminate information about the status of aquatic vegetation on Lake Gaston and is looked to by many impoundments throughout the U. S. as a model.

NC Weed Council 2015 Work Plan...Rob Emens

Rob Emens was unable to attend at the last minute and Steve Hoyle reported that the NC Weed Council did not set aside a specific amount of money for Lake Gaston but \$50k is a reasonable amount to expect for 2017. A question was asked, "since they require these funds to be matched by local groups are there enough acres of infestation to spend enough to treat, since the treatment of lyngbya cannot be funded?" Research and revegetation can be funded so this should not be a problem. It was felt that there needs to be a discussion to support the inclusion of lyngbya and A. J. Reyes asked for a letter of support from the group. Judge Manning made a motion to write a letter to DEQ to recommend lyngbya be included as a noxious product. Seconded, passed. * Pete and Steve will work on the letter.

Revegetation ... Mark Fowlkes

Mark gave an update on the re-vegetation efforts. In 2016 4000 linear feet of fencing was put out and cages

1.

were added in Great Creek. Cages with hydrilla were treated with Fluoridone. The plants that are put in these cages include eel grass, pondweed, spatterdock, white water lily, watershield.

The 2017 Proposal includes:

- Maintaining existing sites
- Removing unnecessary cages
- Treating hydrilla in the cages
- Adding new sites in areas with low to no tuber bank.

Volunteers are needed the first week in June (June 5-9) and possibly the last week in July (24-28). Mark stressed the need for more volunteers, stating there was an increase of 106 volunteer hours from 2015-2016 and Pete made a plea to the Striper Club and LG Water Safety Council. Pete thanked NC Wildlife Resource Commission for stepping up to take over this program. *Mark's presentation can be found as an attachment to these minutes.

Fall Survey... A. J. Reyes

Pete introduced A. J. Reyes to the group as the replacement for Justin Nawrocki. A. J. gave the results of the survey as follows – 433 acres were treated in June and July and only the vegetation cages were treated in August. From September 1 – October 30 there were 6168 rake throws, all done by volunteers. Only 6% of the throws showed any hydrilla with an estimate of 120 infested acres. This is a marked difference from the greater than 3000 infested acres when the 2005 plan initiated. Most of the infested acres are in the Flats, Cotton Creek, Hawtree Creek and the backs of Great Creek, Lyons Creek, Hubquarter Creek, Big Stonehouse Creek.

The Grass Carp survey showed a sharp drop in bio volume(hydrilla) which means there are 77 grass carp per invested acre. The question was asked “Will the large number of grass carp affect revegetation?” It will affect it because the fish will eat the good species.

The Lyngbva Survey showed that lyngbva has increased since 2013 when it showed up on 5.8% of the rake throws in Pretty Creek and Hawtree Creek. In following years, it has shown up in Jimmies Creek and Smith Creek was seen on 10.5% of the rake throws in 2016. It is estimated that 691 acres are infested, mostly in the Flats. There is a slow, steady increase. The question was asked “Do we know enough to predict infested acres?” As research goes forward it is hoped the predictions will be better. The link of lyngbva to nutrients is not clear – it could be wind driven or the fact that less hydrilla means more lyngbva. Pretty Creek infestation is an anomaly but A. J. is here for the long term and lyngbva is the focus of his doctoral thesis so he is invested. This has to be a cooperative effort of reporting and he is open to all input. The experimental treatment in 2016 showed little to no reduction in bio mass. Alabama Power has had success with consecutive month treatments using copper, then peroxide, then Capin XTR with an application technique using a rigid hose system that can adjust in depth to apply chemicals directly to the mat. PLM does not have this technology. * A.J.'s presentation can be found as an attachment to these minutes.

Pete introduced Andrew (Drew) Gay from DEQ who was standing in for Rob Emens. DEQ is looking at ideas to manage lyngbva. They have developed an Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) plan which covers all invasive nuisances from plants to animals – NC is one of the 5-6 states currently without a plan. The ANS could provide funding for lyngbva but they would have to add algae to the list, which could open it up to too many types of algae. *Drew was asked to send a hotlink to the plan for distribution to the membership.

TAG Recommendations..... Steve Hoyle

1. No grass carp stocking in 2017
2. Treat revegetation cage areas

3. Up to 50 acres hydrilla treatment in areas TBD
4. Continue experimental lymbya treatment and research
5. Treat 50 – 100 acres of lymbya (TBD) as demonstration
6. Continue revegetation efforts
7. Intensive monitoring including volunteer and survey efforts
8. Revisit Lake Gaston Stakeholders long term vegetation plan

Steve expanded on several points of the recommendation as follows: #1. monitor hydrilla to monitor grass carp. Mortality rate of 20-30% will continue. *A.J. will contact Dan Stich for his input; #5. Lymbya will be treated with chemicals and by harvesting - harvesting may be done by NC State and Wildlife Access property is a possible disposal site. There has been no difference seen between spring and fall treatment times so far; #6. Looking to Dominion for some funding since grass carp are not needed this year.; #7. This is aggressive monitoring which needs volunteers as someone needs to be on the water 3-4 days a week. Some if this work will be covered by A.J. These results will provide flexibility in treatment areas.

The Stakeholders Board will present the TAG recommendations to the LGWCC without any exceptions.

Update LGSB Management Plan....All

Because the 120 acres of reported hydrilla is below the end objective contained in the current management plan, there is a need to revisit revised long-term objectives. *Steve Hoyle and Pete agreed to work with interested members of the Stakeholders to develop an updated proposal for consideration during our 2018 LGSB meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 am

Respectfully submitted

Susan Deschenes, Secretary

* indicates action items