

Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2023

Attendance (10 voting members):

Brian Goldsworthy (President, Lake Gaston Association), Pete Deschenes (Chairman, RWF Fire Tax Board), Rob Emens (NC DEQ), Mark Fowlkes (NCWRC), Wyatt Andrews (LGWSC), Leeann Patrick (Lake Gaston Regional Chamber of Commerce), Rob Richardson (NCSU), Cory Chamberlain (Dominion), Barney Watson (Lake Gaston Realtors), Judy Waters (Halifax County)

Also present:

Jessica Baumann (NCSU), Andrew Gay (NCDWR), Tracy Thompson (PLM), Susie Deschenes (LGSB Secretary)

The 19th annual meeting of the Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board (LGSB) was held on February 21, 2023 via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pete Deschenes at 9:00 am.

Jessica Baumann - AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT

Jessica covered the overall monitoring and treatment of hydrilla and lyngbya in 2022. This can only be done because of the Fall Vegetation Survey, which takes place from September through November by 60+ volunteers, working 400+ hours, gathering samples at 6000 points. In 2022 there were 0 acres of hydrilla treated due to the low acreage shown in the survey. This year's survey showed a slight increase in acreage and some pockets of concentration and so a minimum treatment of 166 acres is recommended. In 2022 there were 375 acres of lyngbya treated with Captain XTR and AMP. There has been a concern of the effect of the treatment to the population of the Tidewater Mucket so treatments are not done in areas of 5' or less. Sites that had been treated for 1 year showed a 16% reduction and sites that were treated for 2 years showed a 30% reduction. They are seeing fish spawning beds come back into the treated habitats. The 2022 survey showed 1285 acres of lyngbya, a slight reduction from last year. Looking at the charts of lyngbya present over the past 11 years this is one of the only years that acreage hasn't increased since 2014. The recommendation is to treat 500 acres depending on budgeting.

A drone survey was taken last year of the revegetation cages.

Upcoming research plans include Tidewater Muckets and Lyngbya cyanotoxin production.

2023 TAG Recommendations

1. Overall Monitoring Efforts

- Continue funding and supporting volunteer survey
- Reduce overall efforts to align more with NCSU monitoring protocols
- Extend survey period for area of least concern
- Promote use of kayaks to improve shallow water surveys

2. Monitoring & Treatment Efforts

- Hydrilla
 - Treat no more than 166 acres
- Do not stock Grass Carp
- Lyngbya
 - Treat no more than 500 acres
 - Explore Cold Water Applications
 - Explore New Chemical Treatment Protocols
 - Continue to minimized Impacts to Tidewater Muckets

Expand Understanding of Interactions between Lyngbya and Tidewater Muckets

3. Revegetation Efforts

- Continue funding and supporting revegetation efforts

Mark Fowlkes – Revegetation Plan

Mark presented the 5-Year Management Plan. The goal is to improve physical habitat for sport fishes by diversifying and establishing self-sustaining native aquatic macrophyte communities while helping to prevent the spread of nuisance vegetation. In 2022 they maintained and planted existing cages, worked at 9 of 14 sites, built 3 enclosures and established new planted areas, repaired 11 enclosures and removed 7 enclosures, opened 2 enclosures, and planted vegetation at 7 sites. Moving forward in 2023 they plan to explore new techniques for establishing vegetation using NCSU integrated fish attractors and NCWRC buoys and continue monitoring efforts using drones every 4-5 years.

Pete reported that the TAG recommendations were passed unanimously at the TAG meeting and there were no exceptions to present to the LGWCC at the March meeting. Brian Goldsworthy made a motion for the LGSB to accept the TAG recommendations, seconded, passed unanimously.

Brian Goldsworthy made a motion to adjourn, seconded, passed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41. Pete thanked all the people at The Zoom Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Deschenes, LGSB Secretary