

Lake Gaston Stakeholders Board Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2020

Attendance (17 voting members):

Glenn Barbour (Mecklenburg County supervisor), West Bishop (SePRO), Don Carson (President, Lake Gaston Association), Corey Chamberlain (Dominion), Bob Crnkovic (USCGAUX), Pete Deschenes (Chairman, RWF Fire Tax Board), Charla Duncan (Assistant to the County Manager, Warren County), Rob Emens (NC DEQ), Mark Fowlkes (NCWRC), Brian Goldsworthy (LGSB), Ted Griner (Lake Gaston Striper Club), *Rob Richardson (NCSU)*, Wally Sayko (Brunswick County), Tracy Thompson (PLM), Barney Watson (Lake Gaston Realtors), Christina Wells (Lake Gaston Regional Chamber), Jeff Zimmer (Lake Gaston Weed Control Council), John Zubrod (Brunswick County Supervisor)

Also present:

Jessica Baumann (NCSU), Andrew Gay (NCDWR), Will Miller (Dominion Reservoir Supervisor), Al Potter (LGA), Peter Sturke (Dominion), Moira Underwood (LGA)

Italicized names indicate attendance via conference call.

Agenda

- Welcome & Attendee Introduction.....All
- Review LGSB Membership.....All
- Lake Overview.....Dominion
- NC Weed Council Budget.....Rob Emens
- Re-Vegetation.....Mark Fowlkes
- Fall Survey.....NCSU
- TAG Recommendations.....NCSU
- Update LGSB Management Plan Update.....All

The 15th meeting of the Stakeholders Board was held on February 27, 2020 at Dominion's Roanoke Rapids Station. The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pete Deschenes at 9:00 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 17 voting organizations represented.

Pete thanked Dominion for hosting the meeting and controlling the water level of the lake in 2019.

Wally Sayko was presented a well-deserved award by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for his hard work and dedication to managing vegetation on Lake Gaston. Corey Oakley, Piedmont Regional Supervisor, traveled from Raleigh to make the presentation.

Lake Overview....Will Miller and Corey Chamberlain

A five-year review of the Shoreline Management Plan will be held at a public meeting on April 14, 2020 at 9:30 at Dominion's Roanoke Rapids Station. The Stake Holders will review the Plan for possible revisions in the afternoon. The equipment is on site for replacing the Mile Markers, which will begin in March. This year the anchors will be held by stainless cables and the cables will be longer to adjust for the current and rough water.

The lake levels and river flows were pretty quiet in 2019. There was one death, no reported injuries and no reported boat accidents. This year a number of outages due to maintenance will occur so the spillway gates will be open. Corey Chamberlain gave a report of the lake levels for 2019 and gave a report on the eel capture program on both Roanoke Rapides Lake and Lake Gaston.

*Corey's presentation can be found as an attachment to these minutes

NC Weed Council 2020 Budget...Rob Emens and Pete Deschenes

The state's Aquatic Weed Program has been allocating \$50K annually for Lake Gaston. The 2020 budget (work plan) also includes \$50K for Lake Gaston. The 2020 work plan estimates the total cost for all projects (state-wide) at \$531K. This money is for hydrilla work and must be matched by local funds. The use of Roundup was discussed – although there are several lawsuits, it is reducing the use of herbicides that have greater toxicity.

Revegetation ... Mark Fowlkes

2019 Summary

- Most vegetation doing well
- Hydrilla increased at Beachwoods Flats, I-85, Great Creek
- Expansion outside of exclosures
 - Spatterdock in Beachwoods Flats, Great Creek, Lower Poplar
 - Spatterdock, watersheild, lily, etc. in Big Stone House
- Coontail established in many exclosures
- Plants in coves without exclosures did not fare as well as ones with exclosures.

Proposed 2020 Re-vegetation

- Spring Survey
 - Revegetation effort June 8th–12th
 - Maintenance at existing re-vegetation sites
 - Including increasing height of existing exclosures
 - Plant outside of cages (Little Stone House, Still House, Kings Branch, Great Creek, Upper Poplar, Upper Flats)
 - Expand existing sites (Beachwood Flats)
 - New Sites -Eelgrass in lower lake
 - Consider LGWCC treat exclosures at Beachwood to reduce competition with Hydrilla
 - Fall Survey
- *Mark's presentation can be found as an attachment to these minutes

Fall Survey... Jessica Baumann

In 2018, 200 acres of hydrilla were treated using sonar and contact herbicides as compared to 163 acres in Lizard Creek treated in 2019 using sonar only from June through August. It was determined that contact treatments of boat ramps and water hydrant sites were not needed. 7554 grass carp were put into the lake at Lizard Creek and Hawtree Creek.

The Fall Survey began with three training sessions, involving 60+ volunteers. The actual survey took place from September 1st to October 31st and involved over 500 volunteer hours. 6041 rake tosses were made with a goal of collection points every 200 feet. The sonar survey was done from September 19th to October 23rd on the entire shoreline with dual track sonar. The tuber survey took place in December and January with 18 total creeks selected based on hydrilla presence. There were 3-6 sample sites per creek. Based on the survey results, no grass carp are recommended and Sonar Treatment is recommended from June through August of 80 acres in Lizard Creek and Peahill Creek (with a maximum treatment of 160 acres)

The treatment of Lyngbya began in early June and was completed on October. UPL treatment areas (Hawtree Creek N, E, & W) increased over the treatment period. SePRO (Pretty Creek) and Applied Biochemist (Lee Creek) produced varied results. There were significant differences for changes in biomass between UPL and SePRO/Applied Biochemist. The proposed treatment for 2020 is to move forward with SePRO and Applied Biochemist, retain some current sites to evaluate long-term treatment, expand into operational treatment (20+acres), work with product companies and applicators to determine the most appropriate sites, and to begin treatments in March.

*Jessica's presentation can be found as an attachment to these minutes

TAG Recommendations

- Hydrilla
 - 1) Treat No More than 160 acres
 - *Plan to treat 80 acres
 - * Lizard / Pea Hill
 - 2) Stock Zero Grass Carp
- Lyngbya
 - 1) Move forward with operational applications of SePRO and Applied Biochemist Products
 - *Expand into operational treatments (20+ acres)
 - 2) Retain some current sites for long-term evaluation
 - 3) Begin treatments in March
 - 4) Evaluate Lake drawdown

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

The question arose of whether the objective was to eliminate or maintain a hydrilla presence in the lake. Pete and Rob Richardson will re-examine the objective and report back to the Board next year.

A concern about water quality from construction run-off was brought before the council by Will Miller. He is having difficulty finding which government group is responsible for enforcing building codes that address water quality

Rob Emens made a motion to adjourn, seconded, passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:40

Respectfully submitted

Susan Deschenes, Secretary