

CLAM LAKE PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION DISTRICT  
ANNUAL MEETING

August 28, 2010 at Moose Lodge, Siren, WI

Chair Debbie Schoepke called the August 28, 2010 meeting to order at 10 a.m. at the Moose Lodge on State Road 70, Siren. Board members present were: Dave Clements, John Carlson, Dave Hauan and Tom Stoffel, Secretary/Treasurer. Also present were Rod Johnson, (working foreman), Bob Gideo, Dave Goranson and Jon Schoepke, (machine operators), Dave Blumer from SEH Engineering and Tony Havranek, Water Resource Manager, St. Croix Tribal Environmental Services. 73 landowners were also present.

Tony Havranek presented a slide presentation regarding rice monitoring and water quality since 2001. Because of the carp issue, the Tribe decided to “ramp up” the survey work for the rice and the water quality and the fish. To give a little background to the problem, there has been a significant decrease in the rice acreage and aquatic plants with the increase of the carp population. The mapping of the wild rice that was done in 2001 showed 290 acres of dense rice mainly in Lone Star Bay on the Upper Lake. In 2007 the same mapping showed 210 acres and in 2009 the rice in Lone Star Bay was basically gone. In years past the Clam Lakes has been a powerhouse for harvesting rice year after year. We do have wild rice in Clam Lakes and it’s a sizeable amount, the inlet river into the lake on south end of Upper Clam does have wild rice. Tony showed some slides of the scarcity now of wild rice in Upper Clam; he showed different points where they sampled even down into the sediment and there was virtually no rice. Dave Blumer indicated there is rice still in Clam Lakes so hopefully it will rebound; he also stated the rice in Clam Lake is some of the best rice in all of the State of Wisconsin. Tony stated we do want to reseed with Clam Lake seed because of the quality of the rice we currently have. The rice that was used in the exclosures was actually from Long Lake. Tony will collect the seed from the exclosures thereby keeping the rice in our lakes of the same quality.

In 2009 a carp survey was done on Clam Lakes; of 130 carp surveyed, 42% were of the four-year old class. These fish were spawned in 2005 and they returned in 2007 to spawn themselves. On April 5, 2010, with the assistance of a few volunteers from PRD, and the St. Croix Tribe installed three sets of exclosures on Upper Clam Lake. The first location was in Lone Star Bay, the 2nd was in the “south bay” and the third was adjacent to the river. Each set consisted of two approximately 12 x 12 fenced areas;

two other approximately 12 x 12 areas marked but unfenced. One of the 12 x 12 fenced areas was planted with wild rice seed and the other fenced area was to protect the wild rice if it grew naturally. One of the 12 x 12 unfenced areas was seeded with wild rice. The other unfenced area was just marked. The purpose of the experiment was to determine if we protected the rice from the carp, if it would grow; if the rice that was there and was unprotected, if it would grow by itself. Tony Havranek showed slide pictures taken in May where rice could be seen just to the surface of the water; in July the results were dramatic the way the rice was growing in the protected enclosures. The net result of the experiment was that the carp were causing the damage to the rice and there was virtually no rice that regenerated itself. At this point Dave Blumer of SEH Engineering stated that as part of Phase II Turion Survey was done in the fall of 2009 for curly leaf pondweed. Because of the scarcity of curly leaf pondweed they decided to add a sampling of wild rice turion. As part of this sampling they went down to 30 centimeters to try and find the turion and there was a non-existent seed bank.

This spring, on May 19 and 20, the St. Croix Tribal Environmental Services, did a carp collection to determine the age of some carp. This was not a good year, they only got 132; last year they got 300 carp; in 2009 they conducted the collection three to four weeks earlier than this year and got the 300 carp. Question was asked how large a five-year carp is and Tony stated it was about 30 inches long. Tony indicated that 99% of the carp collected were five years old and they dominate the carp population. One of the important issues is they don't see a lot of 3-4 year old carp coming behind the 5 year old carp class. A year old carp is 12-14 inches in length. Carp are 15-20 inches at the end of the first growing season. The key is to get the pan fish population back up because they feed on the carp fry and eggs.

The agencies involved in this study are: WI State DNR, DNR Spooner office, GLIFWC (Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission), Burnett County Land and Water Resources, SEH Engineering, and St. Croix Tribal Environmental Services.

As part of the process, a population estimate of carp has to be established. To do that Tony will be doing some telemetry work this fall to see what is out there; the telemetry work will consist of capturing approximately 10 carp and inserting transmitters in them. This fall they will seine the fish and tag them then come back in the winter and, based on how many of the recaptured fish have been previously tagged, they can estimate how many carp are in the lake.\*\*\* see footnote

If anybody has kept a record of fish caught in previous years, Tony would like to know. He would like to know fish caught this year (not what you keep) versus previous years. If you know of anyone with such recording please pass this info on to Tony at St. Croix Tribal Environmental Services.

Question was asked by landowner as to why we can't get a commercial fisherman and just take the carp out. Tony explained the eventual goal is to find out what we are dealing with and get a sound management plan implemented to deal with the situation. If we go in and take out 75% of the carp population and the blue gill and crappie population is not back, then it could cause another huge vacuum thus an explosion of carp. We want to approach with a "step down" process; in other words take some carp out this year, the next year and do this in two-three years. We need to get a handle on what is out there and go from there.

Question asked by landowner if other communities have done all these studies before they took carp from lake. Tony indicated yes, they have.

Another landowner questioned how long are we going to do this survey before we take carp out of the lake? Are we going to wait five years because of all the damage a carp can do in this amount of time. Tony said no, we will do the telemetry then the recap and we will have our numbers then remove the carp next year.

Landowner question: How come the pan fish population didn't take care of the carp in the first place? Tony explained that they don't know but some event took place, whether a low oxygen in lake or affects from other fish that affected the pan fish and their population suffered. Many variables can happen with fish.

Dave Blumer stated in actuality the disappearance of the wild rice is the driving force behind the carp survey and the reduction of the fish population. Dave was hired to come in and do an aquatic management plan. This has turned into being more a carp study. Dave will still be doing the aquatic management plan.

The reason we are doing all these studies is to find out if it is more than just a cyclical event happening. Things are changing, is this first example and more complicated than just a cyclical event. Will these changes continue to happen?

In the fall of 2009 Dave Blumer, of SEH Engineering prepared a survey, PRD sent the survey to land owners/resort guests asking definite questions about Clam Lakes. Dave received 261 surveys back out of approximately 500 surveys mailed, with a large amount of information. Dave will go thru the surveys and come up with results and landowners will get the results when completed.

Prior to the meeting the Secretary/Treasurer Reports were made available to all present at the meeting. Chairman Schoepke asked for questions regarding the Secretary's Report; having none, a motion was made by Jon Schoepke to accept the report as printed and was 2nd by Bob Gideo. Motion carried. Chairman Schoepke asked for questions regarding the Treasurer's Report; having none, a motion was made by Jim Grier to accept the Treasurer's Report as printed and 2nd by Jon Schoepke. Motion carried.

Foreman's Report: Rod Johnson reported that again this year we had a short year of harvesting because of the lack of weeds. Machines were all running fine; he also reported that when they have been cutting in shallow water close to docks they aren't seeing many fish like they have in past years. The carp are in the shallow areas tearing up the lake bottom.

Old Business: Dave Huan, who with his wife Jean, are in charge of the Clean Water-Clean Boats Program; they have asked for volunteers to put in time at the landings; if anyone has volunteered Jean and Dave need to know when and how many hours they worked so PRD can get credit toward the grant for the time worked. The credit goes towards our grant for our lake management plan. They also need your email addresses. If you don't have email give Dave a phone number and he will call each of you.

Dave Blumer from SEH Engineering reported Phase One and Phase Two were done last year; Phase One and Two were collecting water quality and more water quality, aquatic plant surveys and the user survey land owners received. Phase 3, which includes the shoreline survey and more information regarding the carp and Phase Four, which includes writing a Five Year Aquatic Plant Management Plan. PRD is going to request an extension to the end of the two-year time frame because of the situation with the carp that has arisen. This involves writing a letter.

Carp Enclosures: on April 6, 2010 about 6 PRD members spent about 6-8 hours helping Tony with installing the enclosures.

Question by land owner: he would like to see an expert come in and see what is wrong with the lake and fish and what it would take to fix it as opposed to the wild rice. Why don't we just spend some of our money to do what it takes to make the fishing better as opposed to just bringing back the wild rice? Tom explained the St. Croix Tribe is responsible for the work being done on the wild rice. Dave Blumer explained that whoever that person would be will still have to get all the permits from the DNR; in order to do the work, that person is to deal with the carp situation is still yet to come somewhere down the line. The carp population affects the plants, and the plants affects the other fish but the wild rice is the driving force right now because it is such a highly protected species that makes the state and the tribe very interested in managing the system and trying to improve this system. These are two of the biggest partners that you need to have on board to be able to move forward in just what we were talking about.

Question by landowner: Who is the lake association contact with the DNR? Tom explained that he is. Two years ago the DNR would not give the PRD a permit to harvest weeds until they updated the lake plan for Clam Lakes. It was at that time SEH was hired to help PRD come up with a new management plan.

Bob Gideo, questioned that if we have so much money maybe we should consider getting a new building as the current building is crowded and falling apart. All the work is done outside and everything sits out. We could probably do the work ourselves. Chair Schoepke said the board will look into constructing its own facility. Jon Schoepke made a motion the board, foreman and possible weed cutters get together and discuss. Jim Grier 2nd motion. Motion carried.

Landowner asked if we could also have a meeting earlier in the summer to find out what is going on with the carp issues. We would still need the annual meeting in August. Information can be done on web site and emails.

Question by landowner: who puts the buoys in and who controls them? Buoys and no wake areas are controlled by the DNR. Weed cutters put the buoys in/out each

year. Question: does DNR tell you where to put the buoys? Weed cutters put them on the corners of the river and river access. Rod reported one of the buoys was stolen last year. Jet skis and boats are racing the river. What can be done? Contact the DNR. Paul Marten is our Warden.

Budget: Tom Stoffel: This past year in the minutes, a motion was made to set a mil rate of ½; we operated nicely on that amount this current year. We did need to tap our reserve a small amount. I suggest we do a ½ mil rate again this year. Question was asked if we could do no mils? How many man-hours were worked this summer? Jim Grier made a motion we retain the ½ mil rate. Motion 2nd by Jon Schoepke. 1 opposed. Motion carried. Mil rate will remain at ½ mil.

Elections: Positions up this year are secretary/treasurer and 2 board members. Jim Grier nominated Tom Stoffel, John Carlson and Dave Clements to stay on the board. 2nd by Tom Knopik. Motion carried. Jon Schoepke made a motion to close nomination and Jim, Grier 2nd motion. Motion carried.

August 27, 2011 is date for annual meeting next year. Jim Grier made motion to adjourn. Tom Knopik 2nd motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Stoffel;Secretary/Treasurer

\*\*\*FOOTNOTE

St. Croix Tribal Environmental Services hired J.R. Commercial Fisheries Company to start the process of evaluating how many carp are in Upper Clam Lake. On October 29/30 and November 4/5 St. Croix Tribal Environmental Services, GLIFWC, DNR, PRD and other volunteers conducted five “pulls”. Each “pull” consisted of putting a 2000-foot net from the shore, out into the lake and back to the shore again. During the process one end of the net is pulled back into the boat working back towards the stationery end. At that point the two ends of the net are choked off forcing all the fish into a “bag” out in the lake. The process is continued by removing all the fish from the “bag”, the game fish returned to the lake, the carp put onto the boats where teams cut one of the pectoral fins off, threw back into the lake and counted. Over the course of the four days

and five “pulls”, 1,445 carp were captured, tagged and released back to the lake. Almost all of the carp were between 8 - 25 pounds. On one of the pulls, four sturgeons were included in the process, the largest being 61 inches. They were measured, tagged, chipped and released back to the lake. This January or February, when the ice is conducive to removal, J.R. Commercial Fisheries will return and the process will continue with the carp being removed. The number that will be removed will be based on a sampling of “recaps” in the net.

As part of the on-going process toward carp removal a meeting was held on December 6, 2010 at the St. Croix Tribal Center. Attendees included the St. Croix Environmental group, the WI DNR, GLIFWC, SHE Engineering, Burnett County, University of Minnesota, UW Extension, Dr. Peter Sorenson from the University of Minnesota and Tom Stoffel of the PRD Board.

One of the ideas discussed at this meeting was to fence off the entire south bay of Upper Clam Lake to protect what rice is there from the carp in an effort to help the wild rice to regenerate. Dave Ferris from Burnett County indicated that some concrete work will be done this spring as part of a reconstruction effort on the dam. Consequently the lake may be lower, for a little longer in the early spring. This may make the process of fencing off the south bay a little easier with the lower water level.

Tony with the St. Croix Tribal Environmental team has indicated in 2011 they will be working on rice mapping and density count, carp survey, carp marking, blue gill assessment and blue gill habitat. In 2012 they will continue blue gill assessment, carp assessment, wild rice assessment, possible waterfowl survey and a whole lake plant survey.