

**CLAM LAKE PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING
August 27, 2011 at Moose Lodge, Siren, WI**

Chair Deb Schoepke called the August 27, 2011 Annual 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. Deb introduced machine operators, Bob Gideo, Dave Goranson and Jon Schoepke. Also present was Tony Havranek, Biologist for St. Croix Tribal and Environmental Services. Sixty land owners were present.

Tony gave a recap of the late fall and winter activities in relation to the carp removal.

FOOT NOTE FROM AUGUST 28, 2010 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES.“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.

In late January an attempt was made to removal a large number of carp from the Clam Lakes. Based on telemetry information from the tags of the carp that had been previously tagged, the fish were found to be in Sun Fish Bay. The nets were put in the lake and brought back to the take out hole; the whole process was aborted when the commercial fisherman realized they could not pull the nets out of the lake. He thought the nets had hit an obstruction or possibly even the net was being pulled through the muck on the bottom. He said this has never happened before and he would build a new net to be used the winter of 2012. We only netted 54 fish and 3 were recaps. Tony continued to track the carp until April when most of the batteries in the tagged fish went dead.

Just before the ice went out in April, the commercial fisherman again came over and did another pull on April 12 with 2,344 carp being netted; of those 480 were again marked and returned to the lake. 1,844 carp were removed for a total of 12,880 pounds. 43 of the 2,344 were recaps (previously marked carp). Based on these numbers he figures

the carp population is very large. They also did shocking on the southeast shoreline of Upper Clam; they found catfish to be the 2nd most to carp.

In spring and early summer, Tony spent a week and a half on the lakes; at that point they found the carp to be concentrated in Lower Clam in the bay east of the landing and the west shoreline. At that time they shocked and marked an additional 1,300 carp in those areas. Tony stated we have 2,773 marked carp in Clam Lakes. This puts us close to the goal of 5,000 marked carp. We want to come back this fall and mark an additional 2,000 carp so when we come back this winter to capture the carp we could get a good estimate. Tony hopes to have the recaps be in the 5-10 percent of the total carp captured. Tony, DNR, and GLIFWC feel this is going to be an ongoing process with the carp. Tony gave a rough estimate of 250,000 carp in the lakes.

This summer they put "a cut off net" on the south end of Upper Clam. They had to use a really small mesh net so game fish wouldn't get in and die in the net. Shortly after Tony installed the nets they went into the area and used their shocker to see what kind of game fish or carp had been cut off and found very few of either. The purpose of the net was to exclude the carp from the area to see if any wild rice or aquatic plants would come back and he thought they had. Tony plans on continuing to put the cut off net in the new few summers.

The DNR did some fisheries assessment this year in conjunction with this project. They were doing their shocking runs for the game fish, walleyes, northerns, bluegills and crappies. In relation to the fisheries assessment when we did the carp removal on the southeast side of the lake where the river comes in the species we caught the most of was catfish.

In late spring when the WI DNR had their fyke nets in Clam Lake they did catch a number of adult bluegills in our lakes. Two weeks before the meeting Tony talked with the DNR in regard if they had accessed the spawning this past spring, the DNR indicated it was a good run, they got a lot of "young of the year" fish; now the question is if they survived from spawn until fall and are they able to make it to adulthood. We will be back this fall to do some water assessment to see if the fish make it thru the summer. DNR indicated there has been an increase in the walleye population and the black crappies are doing well. Bluegills are the focus of this study because they're the key to controlling the carp population. The carp spawn and frye are the food of choice for the bluegills. Tony wants to do "tree drops" along the shoreline this winter; this would amount to a recently felled tree being brought in and anchored on your shoreline, with the top of the tree remaining in the shallow water. The purpose of this would be to provide shelter and habitat for young fish. If you want to be involved, a signup sheet will be in the back of the room.

Waterfowl count on Clam Lakes and Long Lake was conducted this spring; the population count on Long Lake was 20 times that of Clam. Clam is 4 times the size of Long Lake so it gives you an idea of our lack of water fowl.

We still have 4 carp with tracking devices in our lakes. The DNR plane has been flying over once a week to track the carp to see if they go to other areas, the river to spawn and come back but that doesn't seem to be the case.

The game plan is to put tags in 20-25 more carp this summer and constantly tracking the tagged carp. Right now there is no specific plan beyond the winter nettings. Tony is completing a proposed plan for funds with the Fish and Wildlife Commission for 2012-2014. We will take an approach of continually to hammer these carp, removal and to check and see if what we are doing is working. Are we going to see a decrease in the population of the carp and continue to do population estimates for the bluegills to see if habitat restoration is working? In 2014 look back to see what we have done and look for more funding to keep it up. Tony feels we need to do this annually. “

At this point Tony took questions from land owners.

1st question: should we be looking at stocking bluegills? We have a decent number of bluegills in the lake now so our main focus should be on habitat restoration to allow the population to grow on its own.

2nd question: does the DNR or the St. Croix Chippewa have any control of the dam to prohibit fish from moving up from the St. Croix River up river into the lake? Tony's plan is to tag fish within the system, the river, Clam, Bashaw, etc., to see if they move between water bodies. Something happened in 2005 to cause the imbalance that was not documented. Once this is corrected he feels the sunfish population will again be able to control the carp population.

3rd question: do we need to worry about Asian carp in Clam Lakes? Tony explained that we have enough barriers to prevent the carp from making it to Clam Lakes.

4th question: how is the carp and wild rice program related: The aquatic plants, decrease population, increase in the carp and the disappearance of the wild rice are all intertwined.

5th question: if we are going to have weeds are their better weeds to have than others? The plan is to first of all get rid of the carp, hopefully have an increase in the native plants that may still be in the lakes, introduce other native plants in the shallows to increase our water quality. When the carp are dislodging the weeds on the bottom of the lake it creates a situation where the light is prevented from penetrating to the bottom of the lake to promote weed growth.

6th question: what eradicated the weeds and why aren't we cutting the weeds? The combination of the carp and water quality.

7th question: what is the DNR doing and are they involved? The DNR has been a very good partner and they have allowed the tribe to take the lead.

8th question: would it be advantageous not to lower the lake if we have a problem with the water depth for netting in the winter? Yes.

9th question: does the commercial fisherman utilize the carp that are brought in? Yes, different times of the year they go to different markets.

10th question: are you planning to put tree drops in both lakes? Yes, contact Tony. Any species of tree will work. You may have to get a DNR permit. Add your name to the list in back of room.

11th question: we know the carp are affecting the blue gills, are they also affecting the black crappies? Tony responded the crappies are doing very well. When we get cover back into the lake to protect the young of the year blue gills, their population will increase.

Tony asked that if anyone happens to catch one of the 6 carp still in the lake with a transmitter in it, please make sure he gets the transmitter back.

12th question: is anybody checking the water quality? The St. Croix Chippewa Tribe tests the water monthly as part of their water quality program. They are also going to now start doing winter sampling also.

Tony stated for the winter netting the carp are very spooky so please stay away from the netting area, especially with vehicles.

Secretary/Treasurer Report:

Before the meeting copies of the Secretary/Treasurer Reports were available for land owners. Tom Bergstrom made a motion to accept the Secretary Report as printed and John Carlson 2nd motion. Motion carried. Question in regard to the Treasurer Report: question regarding the dollars spent for the plant management, Tom responded the expense was for SEH Engineering, the company that is working with us for our Plant Management Program. Another question regarding treasurer report was the \$5000 expense for the commercial fisherman. Tom explained it was for the work done so the carp could be "marked" and returned to the lake in October/November 2010. Also the carp netting failed attempt in January of 2011.

No further discussion on Treasurer Report. Jon Schoepke made a motion to accept Treasurer Report as printed. Bill Johnson 2nd motion. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Dave Clements stated our water quality hasn't changed in 3 years with clarity being 2 feet 6 inches. Jon Schoepke and Dave Clements have been doing the testing for three years and are looking for volunteer help to assist them. All volunteer hours help in that they get counted as time towards money for our grant. See Dave or Jon if you are willing to help.

At last years' meeting the idea of building a new shed was proposed. The board has discussed this, the total for the shed was estimated at about \$30,000; at this time the board has tabled the building of a new shed.

Chair Deb has asked if anyone has spent any hours toward lake monitoring, whether checking for weeds or working at the boat landing, be sure and submit these hours to her.

As part of our partnership with the St. Croix Chippewa Tribe the board voted last year to authorize an expenditure of \$5000 for the nettings that have and are taking place regarding the carp removal from Clam Lakes.

We received a letter from Tony Havranek, Biologist for the St. Croix Chippewa Tribe, requesting PRD to continue this partnership. The letter will be sent to Native American Liaison Fish and Wildlife Service indicating we will continue our partnership.

Jean Brown-Hauan made a motion to continue our \$5000 yearly commitment to 2014. Bruce Stafford 2nd motion. Motion carried.

BUDGET: Tom stated our budget is currently at ½ mil; discussion held in regard to the mil rate to levy for 2012. Statement made we should just spend some of the money we have to get rid of the carp ourselves. Dave Blumer from SEH Engineering said we would still have to go through the process of getting permits and buy sunfish to restock the lake. We would be better off doing what we are doing and save the money. Jon Schoepke made a motion to leave the mil rate at ½ percent. Motion 2nd by Tom Wallace. Motion made to change to ¼ mil by unidentified person. Motion 2nd by Carol Bihner. Hands were counted and motion to change to a ¼ mil prevailed, 28 to 27.

Elections: Bob Gideo made motion to nominate Dave Hauan and Deb Schoepke to remain on the board. Bruce Stafford 2nd motion. Barb Grueschow made a motion that a white ballot be cast. Motion carried.

2012 meeting will be held August 25.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Stoffel, Secretary/Treasurer