

Clam Lake PRD Fall Meeting

August 25, 2018

Prior to the start of the board meeting Craig Roberts, from the Wisconsin DNR, presented a power point presentation (the presentation is posted on the Clam Lake PRD website titled "Craig Roberts Fish Survey 2018.pdf"). The purpose of the presentation was to give an overview of the current condition of the lake related to fish populations, wild rice growth and management options. In addition, Craig fielded many questions about the presentation and the plan for moving forward.

Mark Sundeen, also from the DNR, spoke about how this year was an anomaly due to the late ice out and the early warm up. Many lakes in the area have had some of the same problems.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jon Schoepke, Board members present: Bob Gideo, Jim Lang, and Tom Stoffel. Missing board member John Carlson

Questions for the DNR –

Rick Peterson – Who is the ultimate decision maker? Ultimately it should be a cooperative decision. Stakeholders are the St. Croix Tribe, DNR and Clam Lake PRD. We (CLPRD) are looking for balance. The Carp removal had never been done before so no one knew what the result would be. Plus, this year was a unique weather year with late ice out, quick warm up and dry Spring. The quick warm up led to plant growth. Clam Lake does better with more rain because it can push some of the nutrients down river.

Why did we intercede with the Carp explosion? Carp are non-native species. The lake was known for Bluegills and Wild Rice. The Carp changed the lake so that the Wild Rice went from one of the highest producing lake to almost non-existent. The Bluegill population crashed.

Point of Order raised by Bob Gustin – Why hasn't the meeting being called to order? Because this was a general presentation. All question and comments will be part of minutes.

Rhonda Pierce - If the Carp have been here for 40 years why are they considered non-native? DNR will never manage a non-native species. DNR's job is to manage game fish. Carp are not game fish.

When the DNR made the decision to harvest Carp, did they go overboard? Can they harvest 50% of the Carp population instead of 85%? When they remove Carp, the commercial fishermen want to take as many as possible. It is all or nothing.

Rob Anderson? - We are living with the decision made 7 years ago can we update that? We need to discuss management options. That is something we need to talk about. Today Craig Roberts is here to discuss the Carp population. Mark Sundeen, DNR water resource specialist from Spooner, spoke to this question. The previous two years was more typical of the lake. This year is an anomaly. Many lakes throughout a 9-county area is experiencing lake conditions they have never seen before. There is a tremendous amount of plant growth. Many of the plants on the lake this year are lightly rooted plants so they get uprooted and float to the surface causing large mats

of plants. The harvesting operation was overwhelmed this year. Plant growth was on the extreme side.

Troy - Is there any way to get all the studies done posted on the website? The studies done by the DNR are on the DNR website. (The Clam Lake PRD website has been updated so these studies, as well as many others, are now posted)

??? - Is there any concern about lack of oxygen stunting the fish, fish kill, mosquitos or swimmer itch? No, Clam Lake is resistant to winter kill due to the river.

Rick Peterson – Doesn't taking the bio mass from 398 lbs./acre to 29 lbs./acre has to have an effect? Numbers may or may not be accurate. The estimate was not done by the DNR but by a private company.

??? – What impact do bigger motors, water skiers, tubers and more jet skis have on the lake? Because many of the plants are lightly rooted and it is a shallow lake, any movement will uproot plants that will float to the top. This can be winds and/or boat motors as well as the harvesters themselves.

Dan Mitchell – A slide in the presentation stated the St. Croix Tribe would target young Carp, what does that mean? They wanted to get an idea of how many young Carp are in the lake. They found 129 fish per net.

Jon Schoepke – Had the Carp not been removed from the lake, what would have happened to Clam Lake? The density was getting so high it probably would have started to affect all fish species. The way they feed they can fundamentally change the lake.

Ken Schwabach – If the weed cutters only go down 3 feet how does it affect the fish population? Why were we only allowed to cut 17 acres of area of weeds? Clam Lake has a lake plant management plan. It is updated every 5 years. Historically that acreage was adequate to address navigation. A lot has changed. Next year there should be an updated plan. Increasing the acreage to be cut is a possibility.

Lori Bergstrom – Why don't we know what kind of weeds we are dealing with? Every time you update your Plant Management Plan, you get a list of plants in the lake and their approximately density. (That information is now posted on the Clam Lake PRD website under the Aquatic Plant Management Plan 2014) The only invasive plant in Clam Lake is Curly Leaf Pond Weed.

Gregory – Has there ever been a consideration of changing the way we harvest weeds? We are looking to improve our efficiency of harvesting weeds.

Tim Hickey – Did that take all the fish out in one pull or was it over several pulls? Can they take less pulls? It was in one pull. The commercial fishermen are working several lakes and are trying to get as many fish as possible to make it worth their while. Carp are not the most lucrative fish so they have to make their pulls count.

??? – Is stocking Walleye an option and is controlling the dam more efficiently an option? The Walleye being caught are not native. Years ago, stocking was tried and was unsuccessful. The reason the Walleye are here is because the Carp have made lake conditions conducive. In an ideal world we could have Walleye and Bluegill but that won't happen because they thrive in opposite lake conditions. The dam is controlled by Burnett County.

Jon Schoepke – The lake is lowered in the fall in anticipation of the spring run-off. We are close to 300 square miles of area that drain into the Clam River. The commercial fishermen must get the live fish to the processing plant in Wabasha, MN.

Rick Peterson – What kind of voice do the lake property owners have in the decisions about Clam Lake? What can we do to be engaged? The fishery management team hasn't been developed. Craig wants to work with all stakeholders as we move forward. The Aquatic Plant Management Plan will be redone next year. The DNR will work with the Clam Lake PRD to develop a new Aquatic Plant Management Plan.

Jon Schoepke – The official website on Clam Lake is the Clam Lake PRD website. That is where you are going to get your information related to this meeting.

??? – Why can't we just spray for the weeds? Think about what you are putting into a lake. Typically, not done. Harvesting is the best option due to the volume of weeds that are in the lake. Herbicides are not selective. They are not used for native plants. We have such a variety of plants that multiple herbicides would have to be used.

??? – The St. Croix Tribe is a major stake holder due to the Wild Rice. How much money do they make harvesting the Wild Rice? Mark Sundeen explained it wasn't an economical issue as much as a spiritual and cultural issue. The Tribe has the right, per treaties, to control anything that affects the Wild Rice production in all ceded territory, including Clam Lake. The DNR has nothing to do with it, it's the courts.

Jon Schoepke – As we move forward on the new 2019 Aquatic Plant Management Plan, we will keep everyone informed on the Clam Lake PRD website.

??? – What can we do for next year to be ready for the weeds? Make sure we have the permits ready and the equipment ready. The previous 3 years the weed cutters weren't needed. There won't be a problem getting the permits to cut weeds next year. The permit was issued May 23rd last year but it was restricted to 17 acres. June 30th we were given permission to cut the whole lake. We weren't able to cut right away because the machines weren't back from Spooner Machine. We got the new cutter in Mid-June and the other one a few weeks later.

??? – Due to the condition of the lake, shouldn't we have a one-year plan vs. a five-year plan? It can be done but it cost thousands of dollars per plan.

Bob Gustin – Due to all the concerns should we have more meetings? Jon explained this a different lake this year. We will continue to have two meetings, Fall and Spring. The board will discuss whether more meetings are necessary.

??? – Does anyone benefit from pulling Carp? The commercial fisherman benefit, at approximately 26 cents a pound.

??? – Is it true that the Tribe wants 300 acres of Wild Rice? The Tribe would like to get back to where it was before Carp.

??? – Where do the weeds go after harvesting them? Farmers allow us to dump in their fields.

SECRETARY REPORT: was distributed to all land owners attending meeting, motion was made by ??? and seconded by Bob Grueschow to accept the Secretary's Report as printed. Motion carried.

TREASURER REPORT: was distributed to all land owners attending the meeting, motion was made by Roger Durbahn and seconded by John Hager to accept Treasurer's Report as printed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on equipment.

Bob Gideo gave a report on equipment; We got the newer cutter late so we got a late start on cutting plus the cutter broke down a few times so we had more down time. One of the trucks had a battery and brake issue that was never resolved, so we only had one truck working all summer. One of the elevators is in need of repair. A question was asked about the cost of repairing the old elevator vs. the cost of a new one. The repair cost is approximately \$16,000 and the cost of a new one is approximately \$32,000.

Jim Lang gave a report on weed cutting process. Jim explained how difficult it was this year because of the sheer volume of weeds and the wind. Our permit only allowed us to cut certain areas. It started out only allow us to cut 17 acres. As the summer went on the DNR allowed us to cut anywhere we wanted except behind the island, between the docks and where the wild rice was growing. The question was asked about hiring more people to cut weeds. It was explained that the equipment wouldn't allow for more cutting to be done so having more people wouldn't help. The goal for next year is to improve the equipment so we can hire more people to expand our cutting efforts.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jon Schoepke spoke about the need for a new truck and the need for either a new elevator or repairing the old elevator. He estimated a cost of a new (used) truck at about \$20,000-\$25,000 and a new elevator at \$32,000. The cost for rebuilding the old elevator is about \$16,000. A motion was made by Bruce ??? and Roger ??? seconded by ??? to allow the board to use their discretion to pursue buying a new truck and buying a new elevator plus the possibility of repairing the old elevator. Motion carried.

ELECTIONS:

Elections were held this year for 3 positions. Top 3 vote getters will be on the board. Point of Order; The nominees will be allowed to address the members before the vote.

Nominations: Jon Schoepke, Tim Hickey, Jim Lang, Rhonda Pierce, Bob Gustin, John Hagar, Rick Peterson. Nomination closed

Mike Moser made a motion to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Barb Grueschow, motion carried.

Elected to the board: Jim Lang, Rick Peterson and Tim Hickey
Tim Hickey was elected as Chairman by the board

MEETINGS IN 2018-2019:

Winter - TBD

Spring April 27, 2019 – location to be determined

Summer - TBD

August 24, 2019 - location to be determined

Respectfully,

Tom Stoffel, Secretary/Treasurer
(Tim Hickey assisted in creating the minutes)

* The meeting was tape recorded and the minutes were derived from the recording. Not all names, questions and comments were audible.