

NLFCZD Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday October 21, 2010
Spokane County Public Works Building 3:00pm-5:00pm

Present –

Board Members: Laretta Block, Lorne Burley, Jane Takai,
Via telephone: Laurie Keaton, Kim Jones
Alternate Members: Craig Aldworth, Sharon Cusic, Quincy Edmonds
Absent: None
Staff: Jane Anderson, Marianne Barrentine, Jacob McCann

News –

The lake level as 10/16/2010 is 2124.50 feet with both gates closed. This is slightly above normal, as drawdown has been delayed to allow people to get boats out of the water. The Facility inspection was completed on 10/14 and nothing appears to need immediate attention. No major flood control facility maintenance is expected for 2011. Muzzy Road Bridge is complete and a new staff gage was installed. District Staff will survey a new channel cross-section and start gathering flows to achieve a new rating curve for stage/discharge.

Two Advisory Board (AB) positions will be open in January –one voting, one alternate. Please pass notice of these openings to those that might be interested.

2011 Budget Discussion –

District Staff presented a budget with 0% assessment increase which was achieved by a combination of reduction in staff time, offset of WSU increase by spread over 3 years, elimination of Septic Issues line item, reduction in budget for NPDES permit, and drawing from Flood Control and Water Quality reserves. The budget was approved by the AB with a vote of 4 yea/1 nay. It was noted that using reserves to offset budget increases for a 0% assessment increase is unsustainable in the long term.

Lorne followed up on the request for a breakdown of staff time; for example, what percentage of staff time in a year is spent on budget, etc. Previously, staff had generated a list of duties per person and produced copies of payroll records. It was clarified that the product requested is an average year's breakdown of the percentage of time each staff member uses per item on the list of duties. Staff will follow up on this request before the next meeting.

Voluntary Assessments/ Donations Letter –

As a result of the Funding Option discussions with the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), two actions are being pursued: Asking for the “under-assessed” to voluntarily add to their current assessments, and adding an amendment to the RCW to allow for benefit map changes in the case of subdivisions.

District staff prepared a letter to property owners to address the first strategy. Overall the letter was accepted by the AB as is, but it was suggested that the letter be personalized to each individual property demonstrating their current rate of assessment vs. the amount that would be assessed if the entire

property's value was used for the calculation. It was also suggested that the issue of whether voluntary assessments are tax deductible needs to be determined. Staff will inquire upon tax deduction status, make the individual changes to the letter reflecting assessment rates, and mail out the letter.

The language change to the RCW has not been proposed yet, but Staff will work on the necessary changes and coordinate with legal. There is a possibility this can be introduced at the next legislative session in Olympia, which begins Jan 11, 2011.

Algae Update –

Some members of the AB were unhappy with an Ecology Press Release and associated media communication regarding a recent algae/cyanobacteria event at Newman Lake and Long Lake, and are requesting a written response to Ecology for this communication. Poor wording was utilized which grouped Newman Lake and Long Lake in a toxic event, though no data was available confirming toxin concentrations. It was also noted that no follow-up was reported with toxicity results.

District staff explained the reporting and sampling methodology. It was noted that per WSU sampling, cyanobacteria (the toxin producer) biovolume was much higher at this sample time than during the toxic event in 2008. It was also explained that there is no known complete correlation between cyano volume and toxicity: thick surface scums can be free from toxins and conversely events with little visible surface scum can be highly toxic. It is for this reason that the initial communication acts from the assumption of toxicity and urges the public to act accordingly in avoidance of surface scums. No follow up was reported because toxicity can change from day to day, so a low reading could potentially encourage complacency in the face of a public health threat.

At the request of the AB, Staff will prepare a letter for Ecology urging greater caution in press release wording and media communications with a greater reliance on actual data vs inference from field conditions.

Milfoil –

District Staff presented a review of the final milfoil survey of 2010 and summer 2010 treatment. Jacob presented a summary of recent communications with Kim and Laurie over problems with the current methodologies and potential ways to improve milfoil management for the future as grant funding will possibly be unavailable.

- Contact time issues: the herbicides used to treat milfoil need 48-72 hours of contact time for adequate plant uptake and mortality. This is difficult to achieve in most areas of the lake due to boat activity. Possible solution is a temporary lake closure during and after treatments to boost herbicide efficacy. This can be accomplished by BOCC resolution and enforced by the Sheriff's Marine Division. It was suggested that this can be put on the BOCC agenda after the first of the year (2011).
- Use of biocontrol: Native milfoil weevil use was discussed. The insects are native to the area, but require large concentrations of milfoil to form a viable population adequate for plant control. There is currently only one area company that provides this service at a cost of roughly \$1000 an acre. Kim is waiting for a UW expert on the weevil to return from sabbatical and will report back on findings.

- Timing of application: Herbicide, especially systemic formulations like 2, 4-D, need to be applied in the active growing season to be effective. This generally is late-May to late-October. There has been research utilizing a contact herbicide in combination with a systemic as soon as ice-off. This has not to staff's knowledge been done in WA state, but it could be a way to treat milfoil with minimum boat traffic impact.
- Cost vs Success- It was noted that several areas have been treated yearly since 2004, with few areas having complete mortality/eradication. This may not be ideal from a funding standpoint, especially if grant funds are no longer available. May need to re-assess milfoil management strategy in light of long-term cost to community.

Staff proposes treating larger concentrations of plants with herbicide, especially by the slalom course, while utilizing hand pulling around docks and in areas with smaller and less dense plant populations. The use of trained volunteers for the pulling activity may help reduce costs. Due to time constraints and the need for more research on this and other ideas from above, this discussion will be continued at the next AB meeting in Jan 2011.

Lake Level –

The current lake level was set during facility upgrades with the SCS (NRCS) in the early 80s. The curve that is currently used was deemed to be the best to balance the needs of water lines, agriculture, and recreation. In light of increased erosion and the resulting release of excess nutrients into the lake, the AB is requesting review of lake level practices. More specifically, the proposal will have the curve shift so that full pool is achieved May 1 rather than May 31, and a more rapid drop to be 6 inches lower by July 4. Jacob will submit this proposal in the Fall Newsletter to solicit public input.

Having homeowners stake their shoreline to better track erosion in reference to lake level was also discussed, as there is little to no year to year data for erosion impacts. Stakes can also be used to estimate wave height.

Newman Lake Dike- NRCS Update-

No further progress has been made on the dike repairs, as there is no more staff time available in the 2010 budget. The dike will likely be surveyed in spring 2011 to determine how much settling has occurred and how much fill will be needed to bring it back to design elevation. Hydrologic and Hydraulic modeling will likely be needed for either a fix per the O & M agreement with SCS (NRCS) or for the potential overflow structure. NRCS is aware of the status of this project.

Other –

The next Advisory Board meeting agenda will include a follow up to the milfoil and lake level discussions. The next meeting will be in late-January and will be confirmed via e-mail.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jacob McCann
NLFCZD Staff