

Beaver Dam LAKE DISTRICT

Minutes

Meeting: March 19th 2025, Wednesday 1:00 PM

Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm

Held at Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce Beaver Dam, WI 53916

Attendees: Bill Foley, Dale Maas, Nicki Hupf, Gene Mazewski.

Guests: BDLIA Karen Huber, Steve Hughes

WI DNR Fishery Group (DNR) Mark Baldock, Laura Stremick, via Zoom Todd Kalish, Shelley Allness,

BDLD Focus Group Jeff Dei, Erik Thoresen

Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm

This meeting was posted and treated as a Beaver Dam Lake District meeting as required by open meeting laws. The purpose was to continue discussion of the Fish and Habitat Plan with stakeholders of Beaver Dam Lake (BDL).

Chairman Foley began the discussion with a timeline beginning with the DNR's stopping rough fish removal in 2017 to the preparation of a DNR state wide rough fish removal plan that was set to happen in the fall of 2021 which was then delayed to 2022. The BDL Fish Biologist prepared an Experimental contract in 2023 which was stopped because of the transfer of that fisheries biologist. The currently proposed Fish and Habitat Plan has been discussed and modified a number of times but does not yet include any possibility of a rough fish removal project on the main body, 5500 Acres, of BDL. Maas stated that the District and Association feel is a necessary component of any lake improvement plan which will be supported by the Community.

Karen Huber then presented a model as a starting point using some of the data from the Trestle Bay work to predict if the components of the plan could possibly reduce the rough fish population to a target of 100 lbs. per acre, a level considered by US FW healthy for the lake. Using the initial assumptions for the model predicted it would 2030 or beyond before positive results would be seen and that was with rough fish removal from the main lake.

A very candid discussion followed. The lake groups made it clear to the DNR that we liked and would support the plan for the three large bays on the lake but strongly feel that without at least attempting to lower the rough fish population in the main lake, there was little chance of reaching the goal of minimizing the hazardous algae blooms we face every summer. DNR took the position that carp removal had been carried out for years and water quality did not improve so there is no point in doing it now. Lake Group pointed out that there are more variables than just carp that are at play in that conclusion. Weather factors, impact of high buffalo population and more. The last biomass estimate of carp in BDL was done in 2014 and was 335#/ac. With no removal of carp or buffalo for 7years, the rough fish population could easily be in the 800 to 1000#/ac. range. Foley noted that at this level our estimated 2 walleye per acre must contend with 85+ carp. The point is we require a science based starting point in order to gauge progress.

DNR pointed out again that they would be willing to issue a Conservation Cooperator Agreement removal contract. As in the past we pointed out that the cost of that approach was researched and found to be prohibitive since the fish cannot be sold to a processor and the lake groups would be responsible for disposing (wasting) 1.5 to 2 million pounds edible fish. It is only being offered because the DNR knows the lake groups can't afford to do it. Stremick questioned the accuracy of the rough fish contribution to water quality and phosphorus resuspension. Foley identified that two studies in 2017 on BDL analyzed this impact with UW CE 618 performing a fetch analysis and the UW WRM Practicum detailing the total nutrient budget to BDL. Our primary concern is the water quality which is impacted by the phosphorus, creating algal blooms which will result in health hazards for all lake users.

We asked, if the Conservation contract is offered, why can't the Experimental contract prepared in 2023 be implemented. The Experimental contract would result in a population estimate which is badly needed along with removal of rough fish from high density spawning locations. Foley noted that this would present an opportunity for outreach demonstration for the Community regarding contract fishing operations and a demonstration what this mass of rough fish looks like.

No one disagreed that none of us have a handle on the current carp and buffalo population. How can we claim to follow science and measure progress without knowing the starting point? Foley asked what measures do we need to implement to confront the challenges of the recent weather patterns, precipitation and temperature? No immediate practices were offered.

Todd Kalish made some closing comments, he specifically noted that for the future and viability of the health of the lake our groups need to collaborate. Foley provided examples of ongoing conservation support from the BDL Community that has spanned at least the past ten years. Dei and Thoresen indicated that they believe the Community will step up in support of a viable Plan. No disagreement with these statements.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm

Gene Mazewski
Secretary