

# HALF MOON LAKE IMPLEMENTATION TASKFORCE

## Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2016

**Persons Present:** Bill James – UW-Stout; Russ Kaul, Susan Kaul, Penny Von Haden, Christine Schaaf – Friends of Half Moon Lake; Kathy Mitchell, Bob Von Haden – Eau Claire City Council; KT Gallagher, Savanna Bergman – Eau Claire Health Dept.; Jason Mikelson - Citizen; Phil Fieber, Todd Chwala – City of Eau Claire; Buzz Sorge, Jodi Lepsch – WDNR; Anna Sizer – Mayo Health System; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension.

**Update on Half Moon Lake Water Quality Planning Process:** Dan described the 2010 document that many of the people present had worked on; “Update on the Half Moon Lake Water Quality Improvements”, which was an update from a previous document written in 2002 focusing on work needed at the lake in order to meet TMDL requirements. Buzz and Phil then described a new planning document being worked on by Barr Engineering, contracted by the City of Eau Claire. The new plan will work to update many aspects of the TMDL, and will meet DNR and EPA guidelines for a “9-Key Element” plan. This will make the Lake more attractive for certain grant programs through the state. The Plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of summer 2016.

*Outcomes:* The Taskforce suggested that its work and input be considered by Barr Engineering in the completion of this Plan. Buzz and Phil said they would work with Barr to provide the Taskforce’s input. Dan suggested someone pass minutes from this meeting on to Barr Engineering. Buzz and Phil suggested that Barr would have a representative at the next meeting of the Taskforce.

**Update on Water Quality Monitoring:** Bill James provided a report of water quality and sediment data collected in 2015.

It appears that the alum treatment done in 2011 is beginning to lose some of its efficacy. The alum was assumed to sink into the lake bottom sediment upon application, but has instead remained in a layer on top of the sediment. Sediment phosphorus is diffusing into the alum, and while some is being bound, some is also making its way to the water column where it can be used by algae. This diffusion was minimal in 2012 and 2013, but has increased since. The problem seems to be more pronounced in the west arm of the lake versus the east arm.

Phosphorus and chlorophyll concentrations in the lake were fairly low in 2012 and 2013, but increased in 2014 and 2015. There was also a more intense algae bloom in September of 2015.

*Outcomes:* The Taskforce discussed the possible need for periodic alum treatments of the lake, rather than the original idea with the 2011 treatment that it would be a “one and done” operation, with a lifespan considerably longer than what has occurred. It may be that treatments are needed every 5 years or so. An alum treatment will likely be planned for 2017, contingent upon the Plan mentioned above, being completed and approved before then, making the lake eligible for grants needed to pay for the treatment (estimated to be perhaps \$125,000).

**Update on Aquatic Plant Distribution:** Jodi Lepsch of WDNR provided an update on the aquatic plant communities in the lake.

Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) continues to be present in the lake. There was a spike in its presence in 2014 due to know chemical treatment. Treatment occurred in 2015 and the occurrence of this invasive aquatic plant again declined. However, the native community is mostly dominated by Elodea, or common water weed. This plant is desirable, but as part of a community rather than as a dominant. The likely reason this plant has become so dominant is that other native species are having a hard time recovering from the treatment that was undertaken in the recent past for Eurasian water milfoil (EWM). These treatments more or less removed EWM from the lake, but Elodea has filled most of the empty spaces left by the decline in population of CLP.

Jason had some anecdotal stories regarding fish. He and others have been catching more perch and in larger sizes than what the lake is known for. This could be due to the increased Elodea populations providing more spawning ground for these fish.

*Outcomes:* It will be necessary to continue to treat for CLP, and the City has agreed to continue this. It may also be necessary to do some limited harvesting of aquatic plants. While harvesting hasn't occurred in several years, the City has a harvester that is ready for use when needed.

**Update on Geese Issues on the Lake:** Savannah and KT from Eau Claire County Health Department talked about beach closing issues related to E. coli counts in the lake. While it's hard to make a perfect correlation, E. coli counts tend to be higher with the presence of more geese. The Health Dept will issue an advisory if bacterial counts are over 235, and will close the beach if counts are over 1,000. Anna also discussed Mayo's concern over health issues regarding the beach and water quality. Mayo helps sponsor dragon boat races at the lake, and there is a race coming up this year in early August.

*Outcomes:* The Taskforce brainstormed several ideas for goose control. Buzz and Phil mentioned that Barr Engineering will be exploring goose control options in the Plan. Anna and Phil agreed to discuss ways that Mayo can help the City with efforts to improve water quality.

**Other Items from the City:** Phil mentioned that the City did a number of tree drops at the lake over the last few years. This should be providing increased habitat for fish populations. Phil also mentioned that Barr Engineering is looking at options for plugging the leak in the lake that necessitates the pumping in of water from Owen Park. Barr will make recommendations in the Plan. Also the City is continuing with street sweeping and other general storm water controls to keep nutrients and sediment from the lake. The City's storm water management plan is currently being updated.

**Friends of Half Moon Lake:** Friends of Half Moon Lake voiced their concerns over some issues at the lake, and submitted a hard-copy report, a copy of which has been attached below.

**Next Meeting:** The next Taskforce meeting will likely be held in late summer, and Barr Engineering will likely participate in conjunction with their work on the 9-Key Element Plan for the lake.

*Compiled by Dan Zerr, 3/3/16*

**Half Moon Lake Implementation Report Task Force Meeting March 1, 2016**  
**Friends of Half Moon Lake**  
**Susan Kaul**

Runoff. Delta -Taskforce Document

In 1997 three concerned citizens reported to the WDNR and the City of Eau Claire with concerns about run off that includes large amounts of sand and environmental debris

\*Many goals have been achieved. One of the first complaints still exists and needs to be addressed

\*North end of the lake, bluffs, and soil from and around the storm sewer itself continue to carry run off with each sizeable rainfall or runoff incident that are increasing the size of delta (or sandbar).

\*Video from the '90s was taken during storm, and it was very noticeable that sand was being carried to near middle of lake. There is a definite line between green/blue and sand-colored break on lake during this rain event. (See last point) Dredging possibilities should be considered.)

Shoreline, Bayview Park. HML Beach areas - Taskforce Document Observations

\*Bayview Park's Shoreline continues to wash out, losing trees along shore. Lake levels seem to be responsible for this problem. Lake levels are close to the same level as the bottom of storm sewer. Displacement from sand...

\*Loss of accessibility from fishers and lake users - Shoreline plans need to be developed to stabilize the shoreline and to improve accessibility for users and fishers.

\*Year 2014 FHML planted 6 different hardy, native to Wisconsin fodder species shrubs to encourage winter feeding for birds. Species included Black Chokeberry, Gray Dogwood, Red Osier Dogwood, Witch Hazel, Ilex, and American Hazelnut. Quantity "n" All photos of these species are accessible using google images. Monitored. Areas have been monitored periodically to check on viability

\*Fifteen to twenty Friends worked in Bayview Park and along north end of Sand Flats, hillside near beach parking lot. Roots from other plants are growing right at soil line making planting extremely difficult. The men did the grunt work digging holes.

\*Beach hillside and Sand Flats wildflower plantings are progressing very well. L.Jupinus seed was broadcast late summer (2015). Coreopsis is spreading on hillside. Lake visitors do pay attention to signage placed at beach and use the pathways. Thanks to the Parks and Recreation and Cemetery division for supplying the plant/shrub material for the past

years. (Work and plantings on hillside began in 2009 - currently.) Already!!! Wisconsin indigenous species were planted to match environment and hardiness on hillside and S.F.

\*Consider planting ferns at base of bluffs in Bayview Park, need to know possible bike path- many invasive plants need removal first from City.

\*Buckthorn! Between Sand Flats and Bayview Park- status: attack now!! Invasive is growing heavily in the isthmus

#### Education and Communication

\*"Half Moon Beach is not closed, ... but there is no life guard." Notion from some who are not in the know. Dog signage ... Good place to educate is on "Facebook," which I have spent time on periodically, using two groups: "You Know You're From Eau Claire When...," and "Old Eau Claire." Many "experts" on these groups ...and a lot of bad information... And the myth still exists about running Chippewa River through Lake for weed control. ...(Party time discussion)

#### Work Needed and Concerns

\*How are the Causeway's shorelines to be finished off (materials used) on the new north and south boundaries - safety issue with depth of lake - see HMLTaskforce Maps ("touch the water")

\*When will the city complete their Rod and Gun Park work, making the pathway finally ADA Compliant with necessary handrails at Location: North of large parking lot to lower, accessible pathway to pavilion. As it is today, it is not compliant with American Disabilities Act. It should also be straightened out. Again check the pathway at Lake Wissota near Wissota View tavern. (Discussion with Ms. LaVane Hessler, ADA advisor 2008-notes)

#### South West End of Half Moon Lake (Personal Notes from Susan Kaul)

\*The City of Eau Claire acquired this land for "public use in 1979" with the intent that this space would complement the two parks, a conduit between Rod and Gun and Carson Parks.

(Also, discussion at one of the HML's Taskforce Meetings required input from former Parks and Rec Director Mr. KVE. The question was asked by Mr. Jim Olson about the intent and future use of this acreage. The answer seemed to satisfy those in attendance that "this space would always? be used for City of EC and its future.)

This past year per news releases but only for a short time, John Menard's gift is to provide dollars for a tennis center, that "Plans for this space. ? . . The current status is that this area is a good location for tennis courts from the generosity of Mr. John Menard." Facebook members began to cite issues... and the announcement was quickly deleted from Facebook.

A reminder. That HML's shorelines are very limited for public events i.e. fishing, throwing stones, photography - accessibility to the lake would be compromised if any sizable building is built in or close to this vicinity. It's against "state statutes and Wisconsin Public Trust rulings" to inhibit persons from having access to shorelines, even obstruct visual events of shorelines, for those who wish to view or partake of a lake's natural amenities. (State of Wisconsin Supreme Court Ruling - Public Trust. That the public's rights supersede those of businesses and/or other owned companies. The rulings were made that public rights come first.)

I am not in opposition to tennis courts being built in this vicinity of Eau Claire, but not on the very south end of Half Moon Lake or near the Westburne building or close to the sidewalk. A better site would be where the warehouses are sited on the northeast

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