

**Lake Ripley Management District
Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2012**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Lake Ripley Management District Board of Directors met at the Oakland Town Hall on January 21, 2012. Molinaro called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present: Gene Kapsner, Jane Jacobsen-Brown, Georgia Gomez-Ibanez, John Molinaro, Dennis McCarthy and Walt Christensen. Mike Sabella was absent. Also in attendance: Paul Dearlove (Lake Manager), Rick Kutz, Debbie Kutz, Kent Brown, Jody Wilke, Jay Settersten, and Cambridge Cable TV 98.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments concerning issues not already covered on the agenda.

III. Approve Minutes of Last Meeting

Draft minutes from the 11-19-11 meeting were reviewed. *Gomez-Ibanez moved to approve the minutes without additions or corrections. Motion seconded by Christensen. Motion carried 6-0.*

IV. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the fourth-quarter and year-end adjusted financial reports (ending December 31, 2011) were distributed in Sabella's absence. The reports consisted of the following: Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Equity; Statement of Revenues and Expenses; Actual-to-Budget/Budget Remaining report; General Ledger; and Transaction Listing. Total current assets of \$131,451.85 consisted of \$200.00 in petty cash and the remainder as cash in the bank checking account. Total current liabilities of \$1,349.93 consisted entirely of accrued state payroll taxes and pension. Total equity of \$130,101.92 included \$66,688.36 in restricted funds, a fund balance of \$58,186.62, and year-end adjusted revenue over expenses of \$5,226.94. *Gomez-Ibanez moved to accept the treasurer's report and enter it into the record. Motion seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried 6-0.*

V. Lake Manager's Report

Dearlove summarized Lake District activities since the last meeting. Phone logs and other supporting documents were disseminated. The following items were covered in the report:

General Programmatic Updates

- The Weed Harvesting Oversight Committee met to lay the groundwork for the 2012 cutting season. An updated Operations Plan and permit-renewal request were prepared for board consideration.
- A final report and grant-payment request was submitted to DNR to close out the Scout Camp project.
- The release of cost-share funds is still pending for the Hoiby project as no proof-of-payment receipts have been received. Only one other landowner cost-share project (Mar-Pohl) currently remains in the queue. Planning is underway to develop an outreach strategy that would target high-priority landowners and projects.

Lake District Preserve

- Two, \$5,000 grant proposals were submitted to Alliant Energy Foundation and Enbridge, Inc. to help fund forestry mowing and trail improvements. Other potential funding sources are currently being explored.
- Woodlot boundaries were surveyed and marked in preparation for future forestry mowing.
- Another abandoned pile of tires was discovered in the woodlot. Arrangements are being made to remove them in the spring.
- Three new displays were completed for the trail kiosks. Jeanne Scherer was recognized for her role in the effort.

Public Outreach

- The winter edition of the Ripples newsletter was produced and distributed.
- A poster presentation highlighting past Lake District partnership achievements was approved for the 2012 Wisconsin Lakes Convention.

- Communications remain ongoing through website updates, Facebook postings, and ‘Welcome Wagon’ mailers to new residents.

2012 Partnership Proposals

- A DNR Small-scale Lake Planning Grant proposal (~\$3,000) was prepared in partnership with Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department and Underwater Habitat Investigations, LLC. If approved, the grant request will help fund a near-shore fish community assessment.
- A community workshop series was proposed in partnership with Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department and Wisconsin DNR. The plan would be to start by offering a community workshop on aquatic plants and related management considerations. Future topics could include geese control; Lake Ripley’s fish and aquatic life; rain gardens and lakeshore buffers; and tips for planning and implementing a landowner cost-share project. Repeating last year’s bulk ordering of native plants for interested residents was also discussed.

VI. Old Business

A. Weed Harvesting Committee: discussion and possible action on recommended adjustments to the Operations Plan and permit application

Minutes from the November 19, 2011, committee meeting were distributed. Committee recommendations with respect to the Operations Plan were reviewed and discussed, including thoughts on staffing-related matters. Molinaro noted that the proposed changes were fairly minor, and that most procedures would remain the same. He said his only reservation was to approve the \$1/hour recommended wage-rate increase outside of the normal budgeting process. Potential budget impacts were discussed, as well as the information and process used to evaluate wage competitiveness. Jacobsen-Brown requested that a wage-rate decision be made no later than the March meeting so current and prospective employees can be told what to expect. *McCarthy moved to approve the updated Operations Plan, with the exception of the wage-rate adjustments, and to authorize the Lake Manager to proceed with the permit-renewal application. It was further moved that general harvesting strategies continue to follow the objectives and guidelines set forth in the 2009 Lake Ripley Improvement Plan. Motion seconded by Gomez-Ibanez. Motion carried 6-0.*

B. Discussion and possible action on retaining Jeanne Scherer for the budgeted internship position; and to approve an hourly compensation rate

Dearlove requested the Board’s permission to re-hire Jeanne Scherer for 2012, and advocated for an increase to her hourly internship rate to reward good performance. *Kapsner moved to re-hire Scherer at an adjusted compensation rate of \$11.00/hour, an increase of \$0.50/hour. Kapsner further moved that the use of internship hours be left to the discretion of the Lake Manager as allowed by the approved budget. Motion seconded by McCarthy. As a point of discussion, Christensen said he felt the District was getting a lot of value relative to the modest amount it pays out in hourly, part-time wages. Motion carried 6-0.*

C. Discussion and possible action on Lake District Preserve restoration methods

The Board was informed of a professional disagreement between our restoration consultant (Jay Settersten) and DNR forester (Randy Stampfl) regarding certain elements of our woodland-management approach. Dearlove distributed related email communications that summarized the points of conflict. Settersten then spoke to the issue, explaining why he felt his approach of managing the woods as an oak savannah better matched the District’s stated priorities in controlling invasive species, runoff and soil loss. The main difference was his plan called for the use of fire and relied less on herbicides to suppress invasive species, with the goal of promoting existing native groundcovers. It generally favored the development of an herbaceous understory over a stand of hardwoods for timber production. Discussion concluded with the Board agreeing that it preferred to follow the guidance outlined in the Request for Proposals (RFP). Settersten recommended that the RFP go out in March.

Settersten next provided a status report on the 20-year plan he was developing. He suggested a meeting during the first week in February to go over and discuss the draft plan. He was particularly interested in getting Board and staff feedback on his recommended tasks, timelines and budgets.

VII. New Business

A. Discussion and possible action on an authorizing resolution to pursue a \$3,000 state grant to complete a near-shore fish community assessment

Dearlove summarized the proposed fishery-assessment project, and distributed a Board authorizing resolution for grant-application purposes. He said the goal was to work with the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department to assess Lake Ripley's near-shore, nongame fish communities and habitat preferences. Findings could then be used to evaluate the status of rare and threatened "indicator" species, and more effectively guide weed harvesting and other management activities. ***Jacobsen-Brown moved to adopt Resolution #2012-1 authorizing the Lake Manager to pursue a DNR Small-scale Lake Planning Grant. Motion seconded by Gomez-Ibanez. Motion carried 6-0.***

B. Wisconsin DNR's proposed listing of Ripley Park Beach as impaired due to bacterial testing results

Molinaro and Dearlove provided background on why the Wisconsin DNR was proposing to list the Ripley Park Beach as "impaired" due to occasionally elevated *E. coli* bacterial readings. It was explained that the District was only recently informed of the proposed listing for which it had not been consulted. The determination was made based on the last five years of weekly (summer) sampling data collected and reported through the Jefferson County Health Department. It is one of only three beaches sampled in Jefferson County.

Considerable discussion ensued as to its meaning and implications. Also discussed was the suspected bacteria source (geese), the nature and significance of any potential health risks, and various strategies to discourage geese from using the park. Jody Wilke, CAP's Park, Recreation and Youth Director, was in attendance and included in the discussions. She provided information on the park's current beach-management activities, and noted that the need for closures or advisories has been random and rare. Molinaro expressed the District's willingness to partner with Wilke and the Cambridge Foundation in coming up with ways to address the geese issue. Meanwhile, he said his interest was not to tell park officials what to do, but to have people refrain from panicking over infrequent and isolated events. Wilke said she was interested in helping in any way she can. Jacobsen-Brown advocated for doing whatever it takes to get the beach off the list to avoid the misperception of the lake being unsafe.

VIII. Correspondence/Announcements

There were no other announcements or correspondence not already covered during the course of the meeting.

IX. Adjournment

Kapner moved for adjournment at 10:40 a.m. Motion seconded by McCarthy. Motion carried 6-0.

Next meeting: March 17, 2012, at 9:00 a.m. at the Oakland Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Jacobsen-Brown, Secretary

Date

Recorder: PDD