

**Lake Ripley Management District
Meeting Minutes
October 15, 2011**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Lake Ripley Management District Board of Directors met at the Oakland Town Hall on October 15, 2011. Molinaro called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present: Jane Jacobsen-Brown, Mike Sabella, Georgia Gomez-Ibanez, John Molinaro and Walt Christensen. Gene Kapsner and Dennis McCarthy were absent. Also in attendance: Paul Dearlove (Lake Manager), Rick Kutz, Shirley Teske, Kent Brown, 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 09-17-11 meeting were previously distributed for Board review. *Gomez-Ibanez moved to approve the minutes without additions or corrections. Motion seconded by Christensen. Motion carried 5-0.*

IV. Treasurer's Report

Sabella presented financial statements for the third-quarter period ending September 30, 2011. Handouts included: Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Equity; Statement of Revenues and Expenses; Actual-to-Budget/Budget Remaining; General Ledger; and Transaction Listing. Total current assets at the end of the period were \$156,477.60, consisting of \$200.00 in petty cash and the remainder in the bank checking account. Total liabilities of \$2,655.21 consisted of 1,338.71 in accrued federal and state payroll taxes and \$1,316.49 in accrued pension. Total equity of \$153,822.39 consisted of \$54,444.00 in restricted funds, a \$58,186.62 general fund balance, and \$41,191.77 in revenue over expenses. For the nine months ended September 30, 2011, actual revenues and expenses were fairly consistent with budgeted amounts. Molinaro commended Sabella for presenting the financials in a succinct and understandable manner that was accessible to the public. *Gomez-Ibanez moved to accept the treasurer's report and enter it into the record. Motion seconded by Christensen. Motion carried 5-0.*

V. Lake Manager's Report

Dearlove distributed and reviewed a summary report of Lake District activities since the last meeting. Phone logs and other supporting documents were previously disseminated. In regards to the weed-harvesting program, three new crew members were hired at the Board's direction following a labor dispute. All harvesting equipment was pulled from the lake, cleaned/winterized, and returned to off-season storage. Operational policies are now being reviewed and updated as needed. Proposed changes to the aquatic plant management plan, operational procedures, and/or DNR harvesting permit will be forwarded to the weed-harvesting oversight committee for consideration. Summary information was distributed showing year-to-year comparisons of different programmatic components.

Reports on water quality, aquatic plants and fishery conditions were provided. Water quality findings included above-average clarity readings, average to slightly above-average total phosphorus concentrations, and no recent bacteria concerns. Although plant growth was unusually robust this past summer, the overall plant community remains healthy and exhibits positive long-term trends. A fall electrofishing survey was just completed by DNR with no unusual or concerning findings reported. The resident carp population remains small and inconsequential.

The status of active landowner projects was reviewed, including the start of rain garden construction and shoreline plantings at the Hoiby property. Grant-funded work at the scout camp is scheduled to wrap up later this month with a final round of native shoreland plantings. Establishment of bulrush beds along the camp shoreline is being met with mixed results.

Preserve-related activities included: a second spot spraying of the 4.5-acre prairie west of Highway A; the completion of the RFP for forestry mowing; the start of long-range management planning; production of a new kiosk display; and planning related to a Citizen Science educational event scheduled for October 27th.

Other planned or proposed activities included: producing a winter edition of the Ripples newsletter; hosting another plant sale and rain garden workshop in partnership with LJ Reas Environmental Consulting; hosting an aquatic plant management seminar in partnership with Jefferson County LWCD; and accepting an invitation to do a Lake Ripley poster presentation at the 2012 Wisconsin Lakes Convention.

VI. Old Business

A. Review bids and approve cost-share amount for Mar-Pohl shoreline project located at W9172 Ripley Rd.

The participating landowner was not in attendance and had not submitted the required contractor bids. Dearlove noted that the project-implementation deadline was December of 2011. He expected that bids would be available by the November meeting, but that a project extension was probably going to be requested. The agenda item was tabled until the November meeting.

B. Request for Proposals for forestry mowing at Preserve

A draft RFP was prepared by SetterTech and previously distributed for Board review. Jay Settersten responded to questions. Gomez-Ibanez asked how larger buckthorn and any standing dead wood would be handled, and whether grants were available to help defray project costs. She also promoted working cooperatively with the adjoining landowner to the south to control woodland invasives. Settersten replied that most buckthorn would be cut and shredded by the forestry mower. Large trees would need to be cut down by hand or chemically girdled. The follow-up burn process would involve canvassing the area for any problem trees (dead wood) so they could be avoided. Settersten said some grants may be available, and that the long-range planning work now underway could prove useful for grant-eligibility purposes. He then reminded the Board of the various preparatory activities and decisions that needed to be made before forestry mowing could begin. These tasks included removing debris and surveying/marketing the southwest corner of the woodlot.

Board discussion ensued as to what work the budget would allow in 2011. There was general agreement that priorities were to complete the survey and debris removal. Molinaro felt it was important to communicate with the Oakland Conservation Club before doing any survey work. Sabella noted that the budget was already set for 2012, and that forestry mowing or any other significant, non-budgeted work should be planned accordingly. *Jacobsen-Brown moved to obtain quotes and proceed with the survey and debris removal at a cost not to exceed \$2,600 for 2011. Motion seconded by Christensen. Motion approved 5-0.*

C. Update by SetterTech on 20-year plan for Preserve

Settersten previously posed several questions for Board consideration. Input sought from the Board included: purpose of the Preserve; management vision; public uses to be encouraged or discouraged; plans for future land purchases; degree of restoration desired; and budgeting implications. There was general agreement that the main purpose of the Preserve was to protect Lake Ripley, namely by protecting the inlet and serving as a water quality filter. Christensen cautioned that District taxpayers and supporters living off the lake might have a different perspective on the value of the resource. In such cases, wildlife habitat or opportunities for outdoor recreation may be considered equally or even more important. Sabella recalled that the original reason for getting grants and purchasing the land was to protect wetland areas and water quality. He felt the property has since developed into an educational asset. In light of staffing and financial constraints, he suggested that future management priority be given to maintenance, with a focus on controlling invasive species and extending the trail. He advocated it be managed to serve multiple purposes. Jacobsen-Brown concurred, indicating she wanted to see more public use of the Preserve. Gomez-Ibanez supported the need to control invasive species before they further encroach into the wetlands and reduce their function. She also felt volunteers would be important in carrying out much of the work. Discussion ended with Settersten explaining how the final plan will aid the District in realizing its various goals. His intention was to have a draft plan prepared by March.

D. Future role, function and composition of weed harvesting committee

Dearlove requested clarification regarding the committee's charge, function and current status. He suggested a need for the committee to meet to discuss proposed operational changes to the harvesting program (i.e., staffing levels, operational protocols, etc.). He also sought clarity on who would make decisions on when meetings and boat tours are held, and what role the public would have in these discussions.

Jacobsen-Brown and Sabella said they were willing to continue serving on the committee, and agreed on the need to meet. McCarthy, who was absent, represented the third member of the committee. Sabella wondered about the

possibility of eventually including citizen members on the committee. Jacobsen-Brown volunteered to serve as chair. She proposed to meet immediately following the November board meeting to set goals and schedules.

Debate ensued as to whether the committee meetings were to be noticed and made open to the public. Dearlove said he had been operating under that assumption in the past. He offered that the committee meetings could be used to involve the public in aquatic plant management planning. Public input is a DNR requirement to getting our harvesting permit renewed. Molinaro was of the opinion that the committee meetings did not have to be noticed. He pointed out that they did not involve a quorum of board members, and that the committee did not have authority to make decisions or take action without board approval. It was agreed that the matter would be further investigated to ensure compliance with Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law.

VII. New Business

There was no new business.

VIII. Correspondence/Announcements

There was no other correspondence or announcements.

IX. Adjournment

Jacobsen-Brown moved for adjournment at 11:30 a.m. Motion seconded by Christensen. Motion carried 5-0.

Next meeting: November 19, 2011, at 9:00 a.m. at the Oakland Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Jacobsen-Brown, Secretary Date

Recorder: PDD