

**MCCARRONS LAKEFRONT ALLIANCE
MEETING MINUTES FOR INFORMATIONAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25, 7 p.m., VILLA PARK BUILDING**

1) WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS

2) SPEAKER 1: JUSTIN TOWNSEND, AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES COORDINATOR FOR RAMSEY COUNTY

Townsend presented information about AIS and the zebra mussels infestation in Lake McCarrons.

Ramsey County has 115 bodies of water, including 17 lakes with public boat launches. Legislation approved in 2014 gives counties with AIS prevention programs funding from the Minnesota Department of Revenue. Ramsey County received \$97,641 in state funding in 2019 for AIS prevention. The goals of the county's program are to prevent new infestations, detect new infestations early and respond, and minimize existing infestations. This is done through watercraft inspections and other efforts. Future options could be eDNA (where the DNA of zebra mussels can be analyzed to determine where they came from), scuba surveys and volunteer detection programs. Minnesota's economy is based on lakes, so prevention is important.

Townsend provided a timeline for the discovery of zebra mussels in Lake McCarrons. On July 26, 2019 a citizen AIS detector reported a zebra mussels sighting at the public access. The volunteer found six zebra mussels attached to muskgrass. The DNR surveyed the area on Aug. 5, 2019 and found six more zebra mussels north and south of the public landing, as well as signs that they had been reproducing in the lake. They were attached to rocks and muskgrass in 1 to 3 feet of water. On Aug. 6, 2019, Ramsey County and the Capitol Region Watershed District confirmed lakewide zebra mussel presence. Townsend said he found zebra mussels on roughly every 10th item he picked up, including a pop can, a beer bottle, and rocks.

Now, the county will focus on monitoring zebra mussels on Lake McCarrons. Treatment is not an option for a lakewide infestation _ copper treatment would kill everything in the lake and be too costly. The University of Minnesota is conducting research in areas of treatment. It's not clear what we can expect for Lake McCarrons, but Townsend is hopeful that the lake will act like another similar body of water, in which the zebra mussels appeared in different parts of the lake each year and did not become a nuisance. Monitoring will be key.

The county is continuing education efforts, boat inspections, and has provided a tool station at one launch for boaters to clean their boats. More enforcement is needed to ensure compliance with state laws.

3) SPEAKER 2: MARK DONEUX, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CAPITOL REGION WATERSHED DISTRICT

Doneux gave a brief history of the Capitol Region Watershed District.

The CRWD has been around for 20 years, and was formed because residents around Como Lake wanted to improve and protect the lake. The CRWD formed its first Lake McCarrons management plan in 2003, and did an alum treatment the next year due to a decline in the lake's water quality. The alum grabs the phosphorus, which is the primary food source for algae. Doneux said McCarrons is the cleanest lake in the CRWD, and notes that once a lake becomes polluted, it's hard to clean it up. He spoke about the various work the CRWD has done for Lake McCarrons and the surrounding watershed, including sheet pile weirs in Villa Park in 2004, cleaning out the Villa Park ponds in 2013, and a project at upper Villa Park at the B-Dale Club in 2016.

Doneux said the 2019 beach closure due to E. coli was like a double kick in the gut for Lake McCarrons. 2019 was the wettest year on record, and bacteria from the shoreline can wash into the lake. The geese congregated on the public beach are the prime suspect for the E. coli contamination. The CRWD plans to work with the county to eliminate or greatly minimize future outbreaks. Some possibilities include DNA testing on the E. coli to see if it's human or animal. There is also the possibility for E. coli testing in other areas of the lake. This discussion prompted several questions from residents who expressed an interest in more lakewide testing options.

Doneux said the CRWD is not working on a new management plan for Lake McCarrons, which will look ahead to the next 10 years. The CRWD is planning a meeting on Monday, Oct. 21. Time and place are TBD.

E. coli is on the CRWD's radar, and efforts to control it such as a geese roundup, egg oiling, and other possibilities are being explored.

4) SPEAKERS TAKE TIME FOR QUESTIONS

5) MCCARRONS LAKEFRONT ALLIANCE

Introductions by steering committee members Amy Forliti, Chris Sluis and Frank Hess.

Forliti and Sluis spoke about the reasons for forming McCarrons Lakefront Alliance _ to organize lakefront property owners to be empowered to be advocates for the lake, and to create a more united effort to connect with various public entities and communicate information to neighbors. Plans are to work with the county, DNR, CRWD, U of M researchers, and others.

Steps taken so far include reaching out to neighbors to announce the Lakefront Alliance, creating website to start means of communication, filling Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State's Office, starting connections with public agencies, raising awareness.

Future steps will be to file for 501(c)3 status, complete additional paperwork required by the state and federal government, create by-laws, create a framework for elections and a schedule for meetings, figure out membership issues and dues, and continue introducing the group to public and private entities. The steering committee will also consult with other lake associations to determine best practices. Fundraising will also be a part of future work, pointing to success of lake associations like Lake Josephine, which has raised money for possible lakewide treatments and recently purchased zebra mussel plates for all lakeshore residents as that lake focused on early detection.

Questions came up about fundraising, membership, dues and how often there would be board meetings. Those issues, and many others, are being researched by the steering committee. The plan is to have much of the future work completed in coming months and provide an update after the first of the year.

Sluis and Forliti said McCarrons Lakefront Alliance meetings will always be open to the public and recorded for those who cannot attend. Once the Lakefront Alliance is established and known by neighbors, it does not intend to use NextDoor as a main way to communicate and will be providing updates on its website and through emails.

Website is www.mccarronslakefront.org. Questions may be sent to info@mccarronslakefront.org.

Meeting attendees were encouraged to fill out the survey, and volunteers help is welcomed.

6) MEETING ENDS