

**Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization  
Technical Commission Minutes  
June 12, 2015  
Vadnais Heights City Hall, Lakes Room**

**Attending:**

Paul Peterson	White Bear Township (WBT), Chair
Jim Grisim	White Bear Lake (WBL)
Mark Graham	Vadnais Heights (VH)
Marty Asleson	Lino Lakes (LL)
Jim Lindner	Gem Lake (GL)
Chris Mann	North Oaks (NO)

Others in attendance: Stephanie McNamara, Kristine Jenson, Brian Corcoran, Vanessa Strong, Tyler Thompson (VLAWMO); Margaret Behrens (Ramsey Conservation District – RCD); Kimberly Murray (North Oaks Homeowners Association – NOHOA); Diane Gorder (NO Natural Resources Committee); Justine Roe (St. Paul Regional Water Service – SPRWS)

I. **Call to Order** Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:30am.

II. **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved and seconded by Graham & Grisim to approve the June 12, 2015 agenda as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

It was moved and seconded by Mann & Graham to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2015 Meeting of the VLAWMO Technical Commission as presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

IV. **Administration & Operations**

A. **Water Plan Workshop**

The TEC and the Board are VLAWMO's key internal Stakeholders and very important in guiding the direction of the next 10-year water plan. We would like to hold a joint Board / TEC Workshop to kick off the process. The Agenda will include:

- Plan process and Roles of different groups
- Consider Draft Core Principals
- Consider Draft Issues & Goals (with Strategies to address the Issues & Goals)
- Consider sub-watershed prioritization
- Paired weighting analysis of Issues

If you get a chance, I encourage you to look at the existing Water Plan available on our website. As this is a 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Water Plan, some parts will only need minor updates (e.g. resource inventory and main goals). The planning focus will be on the three P's: Priorities, Programs and Projects. We need you there. Please check your calendars for what would be normal Board meeting times, June 24 or July 22.

B. **Stormwater ordinance updates is WBL & WBT**

Stephanie gave a brief update that WBL and WBT are updating their stormwater ordinances and will likely be updating their standards so we will be reviewing those as well and taking them into account as we work on our updated Water Plan.

VI. **Projects**

A. **Project Updates**

1. **Deep Lake Channel**

Kristine met with NOHOA and RCD on site to discuss the project for later this year. She will be going to the site with Joe at RCD to mark the invasive trees and shrubs that NOHOA's landscaping crew will remove for the project later

this summer. Plans are still to have a Conservation Corps crew come for a few days in September to do most of the work and then work with NOHOA volunteers to harvest willow and dogwood stakes in November and get those planted along the shoreline.

**2. Black Lake Depth Survey Review and Vegetation Survey Request**

Kristine reported on the findings of the updated depth survey which was completed at the end of April this year. RCD felt the results from last summer's survey were skewed due to the thick vegetation in the lake. Kristine showed pictures of the new findings. The deepest area of the lake is on the eastern end and is about 11.5-12 feet. The overall depth of the lake is 4 feet.

As mentioned at the May TEC meeting, VLAWMO would like to have RCD do a more robust vegetation survey of the shoreline area of Black Lake. Black Lake is surrounded by a dense layer of vegetation and wetland. The approximate total area of all this vegetation is over 27 acres. Due to limitations of time and funding, a transect survey at 16 spots around the lake which extend 20 meters (approximately 65 feet) into the vegetation will be done which would give an assessment of approximately 4 acres of the area. They would also do a survey of the wild rice growing within the lake itself. Having this information will give us a baseline from which we can compare changes over time and determine if we need to intervene in regards to invasive plant species. The total cost of this survey is estimated to be \$1072 and the survey would be done sometime in mid-July to mid-August. Staff would like approval to conduct this survey.

It was moved and seconded by Mann & Graham to approve \$1072 to hire RCD to conduct the vegetation survey as described in their proposal. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**B. Pleasant-Charley-Deep Subwatershed Assessment (SWA) request**

The upper Main chain consists of these three main lake and the drainage area around them. VLAWMO has used these SWA (Retrofit) studies to leverage over \$100,000 in grant funding for installation projects in the last 5 years. They have become an important tool as well as a fostering a critical partnership with Ramsey Conservation District. This would be the last of the SWA's to complete this assessment the whole VLAWMO area. All of these studies will build the scientific base and help direct our next generation Water Plan action items.

'The objective of the Assessment is to identify the most cost-effective locations to retrofit the stormwater conveyance system to improve water quality, reduce runoff volumes, reduce the Total Phosphorus (TP) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS), help recharge groundwater, and manage stormwater rates of discharge.'

The Proposal for this 3250 acre area indicates a total cost of \$19,500 with \$10,000 to come from a grant from RCD. VLAWMO would be responsible for the remaining \$9,500. 283 hours of labor: field work, desk top review and modeling, GIS analysis, and final report are built into this proposal.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the Pleasant-Charley-Deep Subwatershed Retrofit Analysis Proposal at a VLAWMO cost of \$9500 with funding to come from the Technical and Engineering budget items.

Mann asked that since the waters are part of the SPRWS, shouldn't they be helping to pay for this. Stephanie said that it is possible we could pursue Upper Mississippi River Grant funding from them to put in BMPs identified in the plan. Vanessa said the study is meant to help us capture stormwater from the watershed before it enters the lakes so it makes sense that VLAWMO would head up this type of study.

It was moved and seconded by Graham & Grisim to pay RCD up to \$9500 to conduct the SWA as described. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

VII. **Programs**

A. **Grants**

1. **Landscape 1**

There are 4 applications this month:

**Application 2015-07** is for a property a property in North Oaks. The property is on Deep Lake and has steep slopes with evident erosion. The homeowners are planning to do a lot of landscaping work and are asking for cost share funds to help with the portion of the eroded hillside. The work has been designed by Urban Ecosystems which is a very knowledgeable firm when it comes to projects to help with water quality. The plan is relatively simple in that they will be planting the hillside with 2 native species – Dwarf Bush Honeysuckle and Pennsylvania Sedge – both of which will spread easily and provide good protection for the hill. **The request is for \$2000 and staff recommends approval.**

**Application 2015-08** is a continuation of a shoreline restoration on a property on Birch Lake. Leanne Benjamin worked with Natural Shore Technologies last year to redo a portion of her shoreline. This year, she'd like to do another 450 square feet. The site would have invasive plants removed, the site prepped for planting and approximately 250 plants installed. Natural Shores has also been doing maintenance for her site to ensure the restoration is successful. **The request is for \$1525 and staff recommends approval.**

**Application 2015-09** is for a restoration project along approximately 150' of Lambert Creek in Vadnais Heights. The slopes are steep here and there are many invasive plants. The plan includes removal of the invasive species, laying erosion control blanket and putting in a dense planting of native species. **The request is for \$2000 and staff recommends approval.**

**Application 2015-10** is for a property on Gilfillan Lake that is owned by NOHOA. Over the last few years some homeowners had taken it upon themselves to do work along a piece of the shore that is owned by NOHOA. They laid down tarps and layers of plastic and filled in the shoreline with woodchips. NOHOA was notified of this activity and would like to restore the shoreline. I informed NOHOA that VLAWMO's cost share program would not help pay for the removal of the plastic and woodchips but that they could qualify for a grant for the restoration aspects of the project – including treatment of the invasive reed canary grass and purchase native plant materials, along with the professional labor to install the plants. NOHOA has submitted an application which separates out these parts of the project and understands what may be submitted for reimbursement if they are awarded a grant today. They have used a company called Refugia to do other work within the City and this company has created the plan for this project as well and NOHOA will pay them for 2 years of maintenance in order to ensure the project is successful. **The request is for \$2000 and staff recommends approval.**

If all grants are approved today, we will have awarded 10 BMP grants in 2015 for a total of over \$17,000 and 8 Rainbarrel grants as well. As of today, there is only \$3,450 left in the budget for the program.

It was moved and seconded by Mann & Lindner to approve Cost Share Grant 2015-07 for \$2000, 2015-08 for \$1525, 2015-09 for \$2000, and 2015-10 for \$2000. Vote. All Aye. Motion passed.

## 2. Community Blue

There are 2 applications this month:

Application **CB-2015-01 is for the Heritage Outdoor Learning Center**. Heritage Estates Countryside Homeowners Association has an established raingarden with an area to conduct workshops and gatherings. They would like to share, in an educational way, the benefits and information for the development of watershed friendly living through community outreach with neighbors and community organizations. They hope to encourage continued educational opportunities with the focus on the environmental impact of clean water, importance of saving the bees, butterflies, birds and native plants. Their grant application includes: 1) Participatory events (“Raingarden on the Rocks”, “Art on the Rocks”, and “Reading on the Rocks”), 2) Educational tools (Little Free Library, plant signage, garden map), 3) Publicity & Messaging. **The request is for \$4950**. The applicant has \$2300 as in-kind match funding.

Application **CB-2015-02 is for Under the Boardwalk: Creating Access and Opportunity to help Improve Tamarack Lake Water Quality**. Tamarack Nature Center would like to build upon VLAWMO’s 2013 Floating Treatment Wetland (FTW) project. “Although it is too soon to know the impact of the FTW on improving Tamarack Lake’s water quality, the mere presence of the floating island has made a great difference in visitor’s awareness and curiosity about the lake itself. This has resulted in more requests for educational programs about the lake, its properties and the life it supports. It also creates an excellent opportunity for students and visitors to participate in long-term monitoring of the lake; collecting, recording, analyzing, reporting, comparing before and after data sets and results.” **The request is for \$5000**. They have an in-kind match of about \$4000.

Both projects were evaluated by staff for Education (30%), Collaboration/engagement (25%), Innovation (15%), Compatibility (10%), Budget (5%), and Timeline (5%). Both rank almost the same although they scored slightly differently in different categories. Both are recommended with funding to come from two areas during this pilot year.

**Recommendation:** Fund both projects with funding for one to come from the Board approved \$5000 (6.4.9) and the other to come from Project Research and Development (6.4.5.2).

It was moved and seconded by Graham & Mann to recommend to the Board to approve Community Blue Grants CB-2015-01 for \$4950 and CB-2015-02 for \$5000 with funding to come from the designated line item 6.4.9 with the additional funding to be requested from the Board from line item 6.4.5.2.

Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

### B. Education & Outreach Events

1. **Past:** Dragonfly monitoring workshop, North Oaks Community Fair, Taste of Vadnais
2. **Upcoming:** Dragonfly survey – June 27<sup>th</sup> (all ages), July 1<sup>st</sup> (kids only), WBL Marketfest – July 30<sup>th</sup>

### D. Plan Reviews/WCA

1. **De Minimis exemption recommendation – Petrulo**

Peter Petrulo, homeowner at 33 Pheasant Lane in North Oaks, has applied for a De Minimis exemption on a type 2 (PEMB/Ax) seasonal flooded basin. This is a 2003 sq ft wetland all within his parcel. Before 1992, the previous owner dug it out, put a liner in it and put chemicals in it to keep it from draining and basically make it a pond. Mr. Petrulo would like to fill and restore up to 1000 sq ft of the wetland to bring it to what it used to be. He’s working with Natural Shore Technologies. Aerials prior to 1992 show that the current wetland had been dug out and deepened to create a pond. TEP visited the site and also reviewed the delineation and agrees on the De Minimis exemption.

**Recommendation:** Ask the Board to recommend the De Minimis exemption to fill and restore up to 1000sq ft of wetland at 33 Pheasant Lane, North Oaks MN.

It was moved and seconded by Mann & Grisim to recommend approval of the De Minimis exemption as described above for 33 Pheasant Lane, North Oaks to the Board. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**2. Jan-Dec 2015 WCA sub-grant agreement with RCD**

Every year VLAWMO signs a sub-grant agreement between Vadnais Lake Area WMO and the Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) for wetland conservation. The Conservation District receives a Natural Resource Block Grant from the State of Minnesota for the purpose of implementing the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). This grant allows VLAWMO to be reimbursed for up to 50% of time spent implementing the WCA by the RCD from these grant funds.

**WCA Activity in 2015 to date:**

Location	B&T	De Minimis	No-loss
North Oaks	1	1	
Vadnais Heights	2		1
Lino Lakes	1		
White Bear Township	2		

It was moved & seconded by Graham & Mann to approve the signing of the sub-grant agreement with RCD for WCA activities in 2015.

**VIII. Reports**

**A. Financial Report for June 2015 & Authorization for Payment**

It was moved & seconded by Lindner & Mann to approve the treasurer’s report and June payment of checks. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**B. TEC Report to the Board**

It was moved & seconded by Mann & Lindner to approve the June TEC Report to the Board as prepared by staff and presented. Vote: all aye. Motion passed.

**IX. Commissioner Reports**

Graham stated he’s been out with Brian on some WCA visits and he commends Brian for how well he handles the visits and how he communicates with the people about WCA.

Linder stated that the Audubon Society has elected him President for the next two years.

**X. St. Paul Regional Water Service (SPRWS) Report**

**XI. Ramsey Conservation District (RCD) Report**

Things are busy – many people want their wells sealed, the budget for next year is being worked on, the redistricting map has been approved and the entire Board will be up for re-election in 2016. They are working on doing a tour and will invite VLAWMO to join once it is scheduled.

**XII. Public Comment**

**XIII. Next Meetings**

Technical Commission – June 12, 2015

TEC: July 10; Board: June 24

**XIV. Adjourn**

It was moved and seconded by Lindner & Graham to adjourn at 8:20 am. Vote: All aye. Motion passed.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Kristine Jenson.