

WATER COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 8, 2004
MINUTES

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT:</u>	Chuck Watkins, Chairman Dr. George Patton, Vice Chairman Chris Cofty Tony Parrott Chris Venice
<u>NON -VOTING MEMBERS:</u>	Bill McNally
<u>STAFF PRESENT:</u>	David Jaeger
<u>GUEST:</u>	Greg Grimes, Aquatic Environmental
<u>ABSENT:</u>	Jim Mallett

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 10, 2004 MEETING.

Tony Parrott made the motion and Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton seconded, to approve the minutes from the meeting on November 10, 2004. None opposed.

II. REPORT ON CREEL SURVEY.

Greg Grimes with Aquatic Environmental reported his findings on the Creel Survey for Lake Horton. For their electro fishing, they put into the lake jon boats with rails and they generate currents which stun fish so they float to the surface and they can do their analysis . It is the best available non bias example of what is there. The ones they got were a lot of bluegill, more crappie than expected and several smaller size crappie; not a whole lot of bass numbers, but maybe they were not at that particular location. High numbers of trash fish were found. Three weed species were found, two are not a concern because they are easily controlled, and clover, which should be treated now, was found by the bigger boat ramp only. The main concern is hydrilla abundance.

Mr. Parrott indicated nothing had been done about it in the past because it just recently started. The drop of water between 8 and 10 feet last summer killed some at that time. It is one of the most problematic plants. There are control measures, it is just a matter of which would work best for us.

Mr. Grimes indicated there are three main recommendations: Reward applications in isolated areas - kills off what is there - doesn't kill roots as well but is good solution; the second option is stocking of grass carp, which he likes best. The Department of Natural Resources personnel indicated it would have to be approved but, over the long haul, even though the short term costs are significantly higher, it is some of the best money you could spend for control because they are always there and eating 3 or 4 times their body weight every day and they love hydrilla. One

of the best options is going to be to use a flouridone application. There are two products. Cipro Corporation within the last year has acquired Avast, so they now own both of them. It is about \$1,600 per gallon but requires a very low dosage. Cipro will come out here and give us an exact recommendation as to what they think is going to be required, probably at no charge. You have got to maintain a proper concentration for a 45 day period and it will kill every plant material in there, so it is more effective if you can maintain that proper concentration. Things that it will effect are soil types, mainly if you have lot of organic build up that is going to cause a higher usage of the flouridone product, and water flow. The hydrilla right now is scattered but is mainly in two places. It is in the creek arms because they are more shallow. You would apply there, as granular formulation or liquid. He is more familiar with liquid, usually a drip system, where you slowly add a little every day to maintain the concentration. A gallon can treat somewhere between 10 and 12 acres of hydrilla, for around \$20,000 versus \$29,000 for Reward. It could be a little lower than that, but Cipro can tell us more closely. Compare this cost to the grass carp because they are going to be there a long period of time. Fishermen like hydrilla but should be educated that, once it gets over 25, 30% in lake, it will get worse and fishing will go downhill in a hurry. Also, currently, hydrilla is a good explanation as to why we have so many small crappie. If the grass is there and is so thick bass can't get to them, there is a higher survival of crappie than you would have if hydrilla wasn't there. Also, research shows a strong correlation of chain pickerel and weeds, so getting rid of the hydrilla would lessen the chain pickerel (jack fish) and that will help bass growth. Several things can be done to increase size and population of the bass and size of the crappie. The bass had 88% relative weight, not too bad, but could be better. The lake seems to be very well balanced but could be better. Removing the chain pickerel, and brown bullhead catfish that compete with other species, should be encouraged. They need to be taken out, not released. He recommends keeping the smaller bass but releasing bigger bass. The crappie harvest plan now in place is fine but he thinks more crappie need to be taken out of the lake to increase the overall size but correcting hydrilla may take care of that. The fish he most encourages stocking would be thread fin shad. There are gizzard shad now and the ones they saw were pretty large, bigger than most bass can eat, and they will continue to get bigger and will eat smaller bass. The reproduction rate of gizzard shad is not as high as thread fin. He encourages stocking thread fin shad. The only fish they couldn't shock with consistency is channel cat fish. They tend to stay down rather than coming to surface when shocked. There could be more there than they thought. Consider stocking those for fishing.

The last thing in pond habitat is adding some cover. It is pretty void of cover, it seems, except for hydrilla. If that is reduced, he would encourage adding some type of fish cover, maybe Christmas trees which are easy or PVC structures. Fishermen he talked to would volunteer their time to put in those structures, so there would not be a cost associated with installing those, because that would help the fishermen.

Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton pointed out that chemicals have to be placed in a proper water temperature and Mr. Grimes recommended early in spring. It is effective spring, summer and

into fall but the plant absorbs it better in spring. It should not be used in cold weather.

Mr. Grimes emphasized that, if we want to irradiate the hydrilla completely, we should use both carp and chemical applications. Mr. Grimes feels the carp would be the best investment of our money. They live 10 - 12 years but are effective for around 4 to 5 years. At that time, maybe we could come back and put in about half the number we do now, as a maintenance program, depending on how much growth of hydrilla we see.

Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton asked how hydrilla was introduced into Lake Horton and Mr. Grimes said it was probably by other boats and could have been around awhile but just became noticeable. David Jaeger asked if there were any long term drawbacks to using the carp and Mr. Grimes did not feel there were. Regular carp can be a nuisance and he did not see any but knows they are in the creeks. Grass carp are not going to be the nuisance regular carp are.

Mr. Grimes feels our lake is 90% better than most lakes as to being able to contain the grass carp and further measures can be taken so there is very little lost. DNR wants to be sure they aren't getting out and going to other places where they might not be wanted. It will have to be approved by DNR, since this lake can be fished by anyone.

Chairman Watkins asked if there is any kind of method of trapping gizzard shad and trash fish. If gizzard shad get a lot worse, you can come in with Rotinol application. That has to be approved, also. We will probably have to live with them unless they get worse. Chairman Watkins asked about the option of stocking Kentucky bass, pointing out that, although primarily a drinking water source, we do want to make Horton a good fishing lake, also. Mr. Grimes said he would have to call to see where we can get them. Mr. Grimes would think the habitat would be good for them and he did get one red eyed bass. They do compete with the large mouth bass but a lot of people like them - they are aggressive, and grow quicker, so it might be something to look into. He indicated we should probably have a slot limit on the large mouth bass, to encourage harvesting some of the smaller bass and throwing back some of the larger ones. Of course, we can't enforce something that would require people to throw back their trophy catches. The three to five pound bass should be protected to some extent. Educating the population would be the key. Mr. Grimes said they did get one over 20 inches at Horton during their research.

Mr. Cofty asked about stocking thread fins. Mr. Grimes said do it in the Spring, and put in maybe four or five loads, maybe \$4,000 worth for a good size fish. A percentage will probably die next fall but usually in our climate it will be every seven or eight years before significant die-offs. Chairman Watkins asked about Tilapia. Mr. Grimes said it was illegal to stock them in Georgia although you can in Alabama. They die in the winter but they spawn readily and they eat weeds and algae.

Mr. Parrott mentioned the idea of putting Christmas trees in the lake, for cover. We are not

excited about that in a drinking water lake because of the organic matter. Mr. Grimes didn't think it would be a problem with a lake this size. Adding cover will be very beneficial to the fishermen but Mr. Parrott said we should not do the PVC pipe structures without State approval.

Mr. Cofty asked if Mr. Grimes could make a recommendation in summary form for the Water Committee and Board, including slot limits. Mr. Grimes once again emphasized that he recommends we call the Cipro guys out for their insight.

Mrs. Venice asked about the aquatic clover. We would still be faced with putting chemicals in the lake and wondered if it would require State approval. Mr. Grimes said it probably did but it was such a small area. Grass carp wouldn't take care of that. It would have to be the Reward. Chairman Watkins asked if he was familiar with drinking water lakes that had used chemical controls and Mr. Grimes could not think of any right off hand but that it is completely safe.

Tony Parrott made a motion and Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton seconded to have Aquatic Environmental put findings and recommendations in summary form for the Committee and the Board. None opposed.

III. BOHANNON ROAD WATER SERVICE

Mr. Parrott had a copy of the Agreement with City of Atlanta and Coweta County. Item 6.3 refers to ownership etc., pursuant to the agreement, shall be vested in Atlanta and located outside city limits of Coweta County to remain and become property of Atlanta and to be maintained by Atlanta. He still doesn't have all the answers. They were not sure which one it was and which location. Tony knew which one it was but they didn't know it went through Fayette County. Mr. McNally said the main thing is, years down the road, they want to supply water to us. There is a minimum per day and Tony said the price was different if we didn't do the minimum per day. Tony said it was cost prohibitive, under our line extension policy, for a resident to run a water line this length.

Chuck Watkins asked, if we start negotiating with City of Atlanta for another tie-in, is it going to be added to our agreement or are they going to want us to go through the exercise of having different levels? Mr. Parrott said more time is needed to answer the questions.

IV. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF LAKE MCINTOSH

Mr. Parrott said we need to do aerial photography of the Lake McIntosh area and we need to do it soon while leaves are off the trees. David Jaeger pointed out the back end of the winter would be best when shadows were not as long. They recommend the photography and surveying associated with it be done now and, once the permitting process is complete, we can complete the mapping part. He thought February would be the best time.

Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton made the motion and Tony Parrott seconded to have Mallett Consulting to do the contract work and aerial photography as part of the Lake McIntosh project. Motion carried.

FISH KILL IN LAKE PEACHTREE

Mr. Parrott noted that today's paper has a story in it about a fish kill in Lake Peachtree that happened Monday. It is in today's Citizen and will be in today's Fayette County News. It is just where a temperature change killed some fish. We had a crew out there yesterday and this morning to clean up the dead fish and put the pump station back in service. We have a good system - when we get a call, we shut down the pump station and then determine what happened and go from there. There were only 8 - 10 dozen fish involved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion was made by Tony Parrott, seconded by Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton, to go into Executive Session to discuss two legal items. The County Attorney advised the committee on these two items. No action was taken.

There being no further business, Chairman Chuck Watkins adjourned the meeting at 9:45 A.M.

Chuck Watkins

The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 12th day of January ____ 2005.

Linda White