

December 16, 2013

TO: Keegan Lund
Sean Sisler

FROM: Lake Johanna Improvement Society (LJIS)

RE: Comments on the Preliminary Draft Lake Vegetation Management Plan

We've reviewed the preliminary draft Plan and have the following comments and questions:

- 1) The State of Minnesota classifies Lake Johanna as a "Recreational Development" lake. The lake has a public beach and public access point at Ramsey County's Tony Schmidt Park.

Given its close proximity to the Minneapolis and St. Paul population concentrations and their first-ring northern suburbs, it's a popular destination for fishing, water-skiing, jet-skiing, general purpose boating, and swimming. However, the Plan narrowly focuses only on lake vegetation, despite the significant impact that the vegetation has on the recreational opportunities of both resident and non-resident users. This is particularly evident in the Section 5 Goals and Measurable Objectives (page 3), where there is no mention of any goals or objectives related to sustained recreational opportunities other than a brief reference in (A)(2).

The purpose of a Lake Vegetation Management Plan is to target specific plant management. The plans are a tool to allow for targeted management of invasive plants and are accompanied by clear management goals such as increasing native plant abundance and diversity. (KL)

Why doesn't the Plan include specific goals and objectives related to recreational uses of the lake, which may be adversely affected by further reductions in the amount of the littoral zone acreage that is treated, or further infestation by invasive species? When there are conflicts between recreational and vegetation management goals, which takes precedence?

The plan specifies current APM standards throughout the state and does include CLP management for recreational access. The 15% littoral limit provided for in the plan allows for targeted control of plants to provide recreational access and invasive plant control,

while simultaneously protecting the native plant community. More information on the purpose of the APM program is available here:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/apm/index.html>. (KL)

- 2) The point-intercept survey results (page 2) summarize vegetation frequency on Lake Johanna. The lead-in paragraph refers to survey work done in 2012 and 2013. However, Table 2 only depicts 2013 survey results. Why aren't the 2012 results also shown?

This was an error. MN DNR surveys for Lake Johanna were completed in 2013. (KL)

- 3) Some Table 2 cells are missing data regarding frequency. It would seem, for example, that the missing data for Curley-leaf pondweed would be particularly important given your identification of this species as a problem. While treatment may have reduced the number of points where the species was identified by July 31 of 2013, it's difficult to believe that the species was not found at any of the 109 points surveyed, or in the areas where treatment did not occur.

CLP senescens (dies-off) in late June/early July. The table is not missing data as a dash represents no plants found upon inspection. I have updated the table to include "zeroes" rather than dashes. (KL)

- 4) The Narrative on page 4 indicates that, "Most lakes never reach the 15% limit for chemical control..." While this statement may be true, isn't it also true that prior to the imposition of the 15% limit, small, shallow lakes similar to Johanna, with significant shoreline development and organized treatment by contractors, would be very likely to exceed the limit?

No, this is not correct because the majority of shallow lakes similar to Johanna treat within the 15% littoral limit. Currently, Lake Johanna is not impaired for nutrients, but Little Johanna upstream is. A robust plant community will help preserve the water quality in this lake for the future. (KL)

The paragraph also implies that cumulative treatment of larger areas can adversely affect the lake and lead to "...no rooted aquatic plants." However, Lake Johanna has been treating a larger area for decades, and we have yet to identify dead zones or areas without rooted aquatic plants, especially in the very areas that are regularly treated each year. It's also our understanding, based on discussions with our treatment contractor, that the applied chemicals do not kill the rooted plants, but temporarily knock back the vegetation above the lake bottom. We can readily attest to the resilience of the vegetation, which is the primary reason that Association members pay for two treatments annually.

- 5) The Narrative on page 4 also indicates that a treatment variance for more than 15% of the littoral area for Curley-leaf pondweed would consequentially result in reduced treatment areas for property-owners on the lake. This approach penalizes our Association members, who in all likelihood would be paying for the additional treatment area covered by the variance and subsidizing the non-resident recreational users of the lake.

If such a variance is justified, why does DNR want to discourage us from addressing the Curley-leaf pondweed problem by further reducing our individual property treatment areas? This is particularly puzzling because the Plan identifies control of Curley-leaf pondweed as a goal and measurable objective and, on page 5, states that “no action” with regard to Curly-leaf pondweed could result in displacement of native vegetation and further contribute to poor water quality.

Near-shore treatment reductions with a CLP variance are intended to limit the damage to native plants. Variances for CLP treatment (which generally occurs on a lakewide or baywide basis and includes off-shore areas) are granted only with a comprehensive management program that also takes into account other factors contributing to a turbid water state such as carp management. In this case, Lake Johanna has relatively good water quality and a healthy native plant community. A healthy native plant community may assist in keeping CLP density low and may prevent the need for more aggressive CLP management in the future. (KL)

- 6) It's unclear how the third paragraph on page 5 would be implemented in the case of our Association. Would DNR have to conduct inspections of all 90+ Association property owners post lake-wide treatment and prior to permitting treatment of their lakeshore? How could this be completed in time for our contractor to prepare a permit application and treat our properties at the beginning of the summer?

Lakewide or baywide treatments for CLP would require an annual inspection. Near-shore, APM treatments would only require inspection if the area of treatment requested was larger than the past year. (KL)

- 7) We have three large institutional uses on Lake Johanna – Presbyterian Homes, University of Northwestern, and Ramsey County Tony Schmidt Park. All have significant shorelines that far exceed privately-owned shoreline. Are each of these subject to the same treatment area restrictions as all other private property owners (i.e., shoreline and outward distances)?

No...see MN rule below

6280.0350 Subpart 1B. control may be allowed on more than 100 feet of shoreline owned or leased by resorts, commercial campgrounds, apartments, condominium complexes, townhouse associations, government units, and marinas;

- 8) As part of the immediate Plan implementation, will all properties included in our Association permit application for 2014 need to be inspected before the permit is granted?
FOR APM PERMITS: Not necessarily – assuming home ownership has not changed, and if they are not asking for more than they received in the past, they would not need to be inspected.

FOR IAPM PERMITS (Invasive Aquatic Plant Management permits – CLP control) for lakewide or baywide control of CLP; this will be inspected annually by the invasive species program. (KL)

- 9) The number of independent and Association properties that receive permits for treatment varies each year. How will the total number be factored into the area approved for the Association permit?
There will now be one CLP treatment for lake-wide CLP control which is normally coordinated by the lake association or some governmental partner. This is the Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Permit. All other permits (i.e for near shore control around docks, swimmers itch, etc) will fall under the APM program as in the past. These get issued as they are received based off historical treatment.

Will we able to extend treatment distance outward beyond 100 feet if the number of treated properties declines over time and we are treating less than 15% of the littoral area?

Possibly, but the standard for shoreline treatment is 100 feet max lakeward. If conditions exist, such as water depth of riparian (shoreland) area is extremely shallow, this may be extended but is determined upon inspection from the APM specialist. (KL)

- 10) If our Association suspends or halts treatment of vegetation on Lake Johanna, which could occur due to attrition of members who no longer want to foot the bill for more limited treatment, will DNR fill the treatment void and address the Curley-leaf pondweed problem to ensure that the lake continues to provide recreational opportunities to resident and non-residents?

The MNDNR has a grant program which helps recover the cost of invasive plant control (IAPM permits); however, we do not treat directly but rather cooperate with stakeholders of the lake to help them manage invasive aquatic plants. (KL)