

Lower Bolton Lake Informational Update Meeting

February 28, 2013

Bolton Town Hall

Present: Bob Morra, Bob Neil and Bob Lessard, Bolton Board of Selectmen; Joyce Stille, Town Administrator; George Knoecklein, Lake Consultant; Mark Bellow, Aquatic Control Technology (ACT); Chuck Lee, DEEP; Justin Davis and Brian Murphy, CT Fisheries Dept.

Financial Concerns:

Bob Morra began the meeting noting that during this fiscal year, approximately \$80,000 in funds were shifted in the town budget to test and assess Lower Bolton Lake, hire the lake consultant, develop an intervention and maintenance plan for a healthy, useable lake, and treat the lake to reduce the naiad, fanwort and if necessary, an algae bloom. Due to the amount of money requested from the town of Bolton budget, the Board of Finance will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 at Bolton Town Hall, where there will be a vote to approve the transfer of funds. **It is important that town residents attend this very short meeting to voice support of these expenditures.** It is anticipated that the meeting will last only about 15-30 minutes. It is anticipated that during FY '14, additional funds will be allocated for lake maintenance.

Restoration Plans:

Based upon George Knoecklein's research and recommendations, the town has issued a contract to ACT to apply an herbicide, "Sonar" (fluridone), to the entire lower lake. It has been safely used aquatically since 1986 and has a very favorable toxicology profile to humans and animals. It specifically affects plants. To ensure a safe process, Sonar will be applied at a low rate and is slow acting. Monitoring will begin in early spring for emergence of the naiad and it is anticipated that the first application will be in mid-May. There will be a second booster application approximately 4-6 weeks later, as the Sonar will be absorbed by the plants and sunlight. The Sonar will be applied below the surface of the water with a spray tank from a boat. EPA indicates that there are NO USE RESTRICTIONS following application, but recommends that the lake be closed for the one day of application in May and likely one day in late June (no swimming or using water to irrigate plants). Notification of lake residents will occur.

Sonar essentially prohibits photosynthesis in the naiad and fanwort. We may be able to see a visible change of color in the plants—the naiad will lose its intense green color and the fanwort tips will be white or pink. Chuck Lee from DEEP commented that ACT has a great deal of experience in the northeast U.S. and confirmed that DEEP agrees with the recommended approach.

If there is an algae bloom later in the summer, copper sulfate will be applied to knock it out and improve water clarity. Copper sulfate is used throughout CT in drinking water reservoirs and is considered safe and effective. Neither Sonar nor copper sulfate should impact lake fish.

Several questions were raised regarding channel catfish by members of the Friends of Bolton Lakes (FBL) Science Committee, whose research has indicated that the heavy stocking of catfish may be contributing to the issues in the lake. A copy of Massachusetts' Practical *Guide to Lake Management*, which recommends that bottom feeders are related to the increased prevalence of the naiad was submitted to George Knoecklein. At this meeting, FBL has made the specific request that the department of fisheries avoid stocking the lake with channel catfish this year as we try to get the lake back to a healthy state. Fisheries has not yet made a final decision but indicated that they are receptive to reviewing research submitted by FBL and taking the concerns raised quite seriously.

The permit to apply SONAR and copper sulfate has not yet been received by DEEP, but is expected to be submitted very soon. There is a 30-day turnaround to issue the permit.

There was a brief discussion about coordinating drawdowns in Middle and Lower Bolton Lake, including asking Vernon to forego lowering the drawdown in Middle lake this year, as we attempt to restore the Lower Lake.

CT State Legislative Bill:

Pam Sawyer, our State Representative, working with other legislators from our region, and after consulting with DEEP for cost estimates, submitted a bill which is currently residing with the budget and finance committees. Included in the request are funds to improve the dam between Middle and Lower Lake. Because the pipe is situated very low in the water, when Middle Lake is lowered, Lower Lake gets water from the bottom of the lake which is nutrient dense, and the experts believe that this has exacerbated plant growth. Representative Sawyer recommended that we write letters once again to the State Finance Committee that does the state bonding. Letters only need to be one to two paragraphs that passionately indicate why funding to support restoration of the lake is so important. We will also want to send a very similar letter to the Governor, who sets the bonding agenda. Detailed information regarding letters will be sent separately.

Closing:

Dr. Don Les from UConn was present in the audience and indicated that the naiad could emerge sooner than late spring. He cautioned that eliminating the naiad could expose the lake to introduction of new plant growth. George Knoecklein agreed, but still believes strongly that the proposed approach is the best strategy at this time. Lake maintenance will need to be a multi-year plan and we will continue to monitor the lake and any changes to be better prepared at each step.

Members of the audience and FBL thanked the speakers, town and state for their support.