

LAKE REDSTONE PROTECTION DISTRICT PARTNERS MEETING
Tuesday, October 29, 2024 @ 9:00 am
Room 213 West Square Building, 505 Broadway, Baraboo, WI

Minutes

1. Call meeting to order, verify compliance with the Open Meeting Law

Chairman Mike Mittelstadt called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. He verified the meeting complied with open meeting laws.

2. Approval of agenda

Keegstra moved approval of the agenda, seconded by Mittelstadt. The motion carried.

3. Introductions

Participants in the room and on the virtual link identified themselves. In the room, they included: Mike Mittelstadt (LRPD), Jon Field (Juneau), Ken Keegstra (LRPD), Andrew Craig (WDNR), Melissa Schlupp (Sauk), Mike Sorge (WDNR), Serge Koenig (Sauk), Jenn Schneidermann (Sauk), Richard Lathrop (WDNR-retired), Arthur Watkinson (WDNR), Brad Horner (LRPD), Mitch McCarthy (Sauk), Al Baade (LRPD), Dustin Ladd (Juneau), Ashley Bell (Juneau). Joining virtually via MS Teams were: Paul Burke (LRPD), Dave Crockett (LRPD), Cary Dudczak (LRPD), Keegan Johnson (USGS), Dale Robertson (USGS), Nate Nye (WDNR), Pat Oldenburg (WDNR), Sara Hatleli (Aquatic Plant Habitat Services), Tim Hoyman (Onterra), Paul Garrison (Onterra). Because of technical issues, Pat Sullivan (LRPD) joined the meeting via a cell phone.

4. Discussion with representatives from LRPD, WDNR, USGS, Juneau Co., and Sauk Co. regarding the following issues (but not limited to them):

A. Status of 9-key Element Plan Implementation (10 minutes)-Mittelstadt

Mittelstadt provided a high-level overview of the main objectives of the 9-key element plan and listed the partners who are cooperating in pursuing its activities. He then provided a brief description of the 7 key accomplishments that were achieved during the past year. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to short presentations and discussions regarding the activities assigned to each committee

B. Reports/discussion of activities proposed during plan implementation (~80 minutes)

1. Activities assigned to the Plan Integration Committee-Mittelstadt

Mitch McCarthy from Sauk County made a short presentation describing the transect surveys that have been performed and the preliminary results that have been obtained. A route through the Lake Redstone watershed visits 95 specific sites to record observations on the crops grown on the field, the methods of tillage, and whether cover crops are present. The survey is completed by LRPD volunteers every spring and fall with assistance from McCarthy.

McCarthy also provided a brief update on the level of adoption of various BMPs (best management practices) by producers in the watershed. Based on the results of the transect surveys and input from county staff, he concluded that conversion of cropland to pasture was occurring and that use of no-till practices was increasing. There was a brief discussion of how to estimate the reductions in sediment and phosphorus entry into the lake based on the observed changes in agricultural practices.

Finally, Mittelstadt gave a brief report on district efforts to work with the Town of La Valle to regulate the activities of wake boats on Lake Redstone.

2. Sediment Control Committee activities-Sullivan

Sullivan gave a report on efforts to control sediment and nutrient entry into the lake from gullies that flow directly into the lake. He also reported on the program to monitor the status of sediment control devices around the lake so that maintenance can be performed when needed.

Mitch McCarthy described plans to repeat a shoreline assessment survey that was first done in 2018 when the 9KE plan was being prepared. Sauk County has developed an app that makes gathering and recording the data on each lakeside parcel much easier. The app was used on Dutch Hollow Lake last year and will be used by a county intern in 2025 to perform the survey on Lake Redstone. A brief discussion focused on how best to use the data to inform lake residents and encourage property owners to improve their shorelines.

McCarthy and Horner provided a summary of the shoreline improvement projects that happened in the past year and that are planned for the coming year. They concluded that the combination of Sauk County funding, WDNR healthy lakes grants, and the LRPD reimbursement program are providing incentives for property owners to make improvements on their shorelines.

3. Water Quality Projects Committee-Keegstra

Keegan Johnson from the USGS used slides to explain the tributary monitoring program that was performed during the past year and to present the major results. He first summarized the results of the stream monitoring program performed over the past 3 years, which provided high-quality information about sediment and phosphorus coming into the lake from the northern parts of the watershed. The data regarding nutrients and sediment coming in via the tributaries is not the same quality and is still preliminary because not all the data is back from the lab. Preliminary estimates are that they 3 tributaries combined contribute about 20% of the water flow, sediment load, and phosphorus load as the west branch of Big Creek.

Sara Hatleli from Aquatic Plant and Habitat Services summarized the results of the 2024 aquatic plant surveys. The data from 2024 demonstrate that the abundance of both native species of plants and Eurasian Watermilfoil continue to decline in Lake Redstone. She commented that the decreases in plant abundance were likely caused by the low water clarity because sunlight cannot penetrate deep into the water. A question was raised about weevils and Sara reported that assays performed in 2023 revealed that weevils were present at relatively low abundance.

Keegstra summarized the results of the expanded water monitoring program that was performed in 2024 based on the recommendations from Richard Lathrop. He reported that water clarity was poor all year. This was likely caused in part by the high levels of algal growth. Chlorophyll readings taken in August were the highest that have been seen since records have been kept. This was likely caused by the high levels of phosphorus in the surface water. In addition, phosphorus levels near the bottom were very high, especially late in the summer. He concluded that this phosphorus was likely coming from sediment accumulated over the years, indicating that internal loading of phosphorus from the sediment may be occurring in Lake Redstone. He posed 4 possible explanations for the poor water clarity in 2024 and asked for comments on how to evaluate these possibilities. This led to a brief discussion about what could be done to understand and eventually to improve water quality in Lake Redstone with no clear answers.

4. Education and Outreach activities-Horner

Horner reported on activities from the past year. He mentioned the very successful field day/conservation event that was held in July at the McWilliams Heritage Farm. Staff from both Juneau County and Sauk County helped organize the event which was attended by about 160 people, including both lake residents and producers from the watershed. It is hoped that similar events can be held in future years.

He also reviewed the shoreline improvement projects that were performed in the past year and that are planned for the coming year. He emphasized the importance of the multiple financial support programs that encourage property owners to improve their shorelines.

Plans are being made to hold a shared event with other lakes in Sauk County. The goal is that people from the different lakes can share both common issues and possible solutions. Sauk County staff will be an important driver in organizing the event.

C. Other topics of mutual interest

None were raised, possibly because of the late hour.

5. Next LRPD board meeting: November 12, 2024, 6 pm at La Valle Town Hall

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

KK 10/31/2024