



District of Powers Lake NEWSLETTER

Published for all those who use and love Powers Lake

AUGUST

2007

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am writing this newsletter for Pat Miller, our Secretary and fellow elected Commissioner of the District of Powers Lake (DPL). And I am taking this opportunity to thank her for her dedicated service for the past seven years. We all owe Pat a debt of gratitude for writing, coordinating, addressing and mailing our newsletter five times a year; once for each of our quarterly meetings and once for our annual meeting. Without her dedication, the job probably would not get done, but she manages to get it done because of her persistence and commitment to Powers Lake and the DPL. Pat has taken several weeks off to recuperate from recent surgery performed at Edward Hospital, Naperville, Ill. So, Commissioner Judy Jooss and I are pinch hitting for her. We wish her a speedy and complete recovery and hope that she will be able to attend the annual meeting early in the month of August.

Pat is accustomed to include "news" items related to the goings on at Powers Lake. Because my wife and I do not reside at Powers Lake, we rely on her news to keep us informed about many things that we would otherwise not know about. My interest is more focused on the management aspects of Powers Lake, so please bear with me. In dealing with lake issues, we rely on "A Management Plan for Powers Lake, Kenosha and Walworth Counties, Wisconsin" which was prepared in 1991. It is hard to believe that it has been 16 years since the "Management Plan" was completed. It was prepared by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) for the Powers Lake Management District. The first commissioners authorized the Management Plan which is a comprehensive document that has provided guidance to our district for these many years. If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy of the Management Plan, please contact me and I will arrange to have the document reproduced, as it is currently out of print.

One aspect of our Management Plan which has

become more important over the last several years is the topic of Aquatic Plant Management. More specifically Eurasian water milfoil which is an invasive species (not a native species in Powers Lake) that was introduced to Wisconsin Lakes in the 1960's. A summary of the background of Aquatic Plants in Powers Lake is set out in Chapter V and Appendix B of the Management Plan. The Management Plan lists the results of three aquatic plant surveys conducted in 1967, 1986 and 1990. It recommends that the DPL should resurvey the lake every five years to monitor changes in the type and distribution of aquatic plants. The DPL did so in 1993, 1999, and 2006 with all of these recent surveys being performed by Kathy Aron of Aron and Assoc., Burlington, Wis. Kathy was our guest at the 2006 annual meeting to give us a verbal report of her findings. We have invited her to be with us again at our 2007 annual meeting to discuss the results of her survey.

There are many interesting topics related to an Aquatic Plant Management Survey which are included in her report. Needless to say new technology is being used to make things easier, more precise and more reproducible. It all begins in the lake, but is analyzed and reported in the lab or office. But our interest is in the results of her survey and how we should manage the lake (subject to approval of the DNR), so we will not discuss those topics here. The results of her survey, which was conducted in the summer of 2006, report the "good news" that there is good plant diversity as there are 19 species of aquatic plants (which is a good number), and which is representative of a healthy lake. The "bad news" is that there are approximately 84 acres of Eurasian water milfoil present and it was "...Found in only isolated small patches in 1993, the nuisance plant has spread throughout much of the lake. Eurasian water milfoil is now the dominant plant in the eight to 20 foot depths..." of the lake. This plant "crowds out" native plants that are beneficial to our lake system

How does all of this relate to the DPL? The bottom line is that we have acted responsibly to identify the problem through periodic aquatic plant surveys. And we have taken steps to "correct" the problem, by contracting with a firm to apply a chemical to the lake to "kill" the Eurasian water milfoil. We have done this for approximately seven years and have spent approximately \$40,000 to date. My opinion is that we have been proactive early in this fight, but the most recent survey indicates that we were not as aggressive as we could have been, and that we should become more aggressive in the future. Accordingly, our board has supported a proposed increase in our budget for Aquatic Plant Management, recommending an increase in spending from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year. We hope that you will support this increase at the annual meeting on Fri., Aug. 3, 2007.

There are three other important topics to discuss, namely our budget, bylaws and state statutes. First, the Powers Lake Management District, or as we call ourselves the District of Powers Lake (DPL), was formed on Feb. 19, 1985 by adoption of Resolution No. 168 by the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors. The bylaws were prepared by the original organizers and board of commissioners of the district. At that time the board consisted of three elected and two appointed commissioners until the annual meeting in 1995 at which time the number of elected commissioners was increased to five commissioners. This is the basic framework under which we work and is provided for and regulated under Wisconsin statutes, Chapter 33 "Public Inland Waters". At the time of our organization the decision was made to adopt our own bylaws which should not/cannot be in conflict with the Wisconsin statutes, both of which are subject to revision as needed.

Our bylaws provide for a fiscal year that is on a calendar year basis. However, somewhere along the line, we adopted a fiscal year from July 1 to June 30. And recent changes at the state level recommend a "zero balance budget", which means that we should spend all that we collect with some provision for carryover from one year to another. To become compliant with the state statutes, we appointed an ad hoc committee, consisting of Lorra Shimkus, Bill Lynch and Gil Kroll, to investigate our bylaws and the state statutes. They have reported back to our board and recommended that we keep our bylaws (rather than rely strictly on the state statutes as some lake districts do) subject to minor changes. These changes are summarized

on the attached exhibit and will be voted on at our upcoming annual meeting. We hope that you will support our recommendation by voting for their adoption.

As stated above, the state has recommended that organizations such as ours adopt a "zero balance budget". We have discussed this procedure at our board meetings over the last 18 months, and have prepared our budget to reflect this procedure. Essentially, rather than placing all of our excess funds into a "capital fund" for the purchase of land or equipment, we recommend increasing our spending for treatment of Eurasian water milfoil (or other important activities) and rolling the unspent funds into the next fiscal year. Since we currently have approximately \$50,000 in our capital fund with no planned projects or purchases, this seems like the prudent thing to do. In addition, we are taking this opportunity to change our fiscal year to a calendar year as provided for in our bylaws. In order to do this we have prepared a one time budget for 18 months, or Jul. 1, 2007 to Dec. 31, 2008. Next year, at our annual meeting we will submit a budget for 12 months, or Jan. 1, 2009 to Dec. 31, 2009. We hope that you agree with our proposed changes and will support passage of our budget at the annual meeting which will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Fri., Aug. 3, 2007 at the Randall Consolidated School, County Trunk Highway "O", Burlington, Wis. For reference, the proposed levy amount is still \$24,000 which has been the amount since day one, except for 2000 when we increased the levy to purchase 73.41 acres of wetlands.

There are many other items related to the DPL that can be discussed. But time and space do not permit discussion of them here. Please attend our annual meeting at which time we can answer most of the questions that you may have.

Jim Michels,

Chair, District of Powers Lake

