

Lake Manitoba Stewardship Board

Draft Minutes 17 April 2008

Meeting Location: St. Martin, Manitoba

Present: Gordon Goldsborough (Chair), Donald Smith, Allan Gaudry, Gary Morlock, Dan Coyle, Bill Finney, David Milani, Linda Schroedter, Randy Helgason, Norman Tarverse, Tracy Filion, Harold Flemming, Bob Harrison

Invited Guests: Fairford Fishway Working Group, North-South Consultants (Richard Remnant, Mark Gillespie), Joel Hunt and Derek Kroeker of the Manitoba Fisheries Branch.

Gordon Goldsborough welcomed the Fairford Fishway Working Group and several commercial fishers to the meeting and provided an overview of the Board's role. Attendees introduced themselves with their affiliation.

1. **Approval of Agenda:** The draft agenda was approved with the addition of Hydrologic Update under New Business.
2. **Approval of March 17, 2008 Minutes:** The draft minutes of the March 17, 2008 meeting were approved with several minor edits/ changes including location of meeting and addition of Tracy Filion to list of attendance. The revised minutes are to be circulated.

Action: Laura Mason

3. Business arising from the minutes

- a. **Oath of Office:** The Chair would like all LMSB members to submit the province's oath of office form. The oath of office form can be notarized for free at any Rural Municipality Office.
- b. **Conflict of Interest Policy:** The Manitoba Water Council Conflict of Interest Policy was distributed at the March 17, 2008 meeting to provide some guidance to LMSB members. The Board felt there had been enough discussion on this topic and accepted the Board's current policy.
- c. **Science Summit:** The meeting had to be rescheduled because of a conflict with the Lake Winnipeg Basin Science Sub-Committee. The meeting was tentatively rescheduled for May 12 or 13, 2008 at the Delta Marsh Field Station. The purpose of the one-day meeting is to discuss the state of scientific knowledge about the lake, its physical, chemical, and biological characteristics. The chair will contact members of the science community, who are knowledgeable on Lake Manitoba issues, about participation in the workshop.

4. Report from the Chair

- a. **Lake Manitoba Research proposal:** Gordon Goldsborough has not heard from the province on funding of his research proposal. Gordon agreed to distribute the proposal (in PDF form) to Board members.
- b. **Website Update:** The chair has been unable to contact J the website designer. It appears no work has been done by the consultant Intrinsic on the website. The Board agreed to provide Intrinsic with additional time, but would like to know if there are provisions to terminate the contract with Intrinsic if the website work does not proceed in a timely fashion.

There is still a need for pictures of activities around the Lake. The Steeprock Cottage Road Owner's Association offered pictures that are available on the Association's website.

5. Presentation on Fairford Fish Ladder

The joint meeting of the Fairford Fishway Working Group (FFWG) and the Board commenced. Joel Hunt described two projects the Fairford Fishway Working Group are involved with:

- North/South Consultants Inc. October 2007 fish passage study and
- Hydraulic modelling study of the Fairford Fishway by Martin Hunt a University of Manitoba student. (The hydraulic modelling study is scheduled to be completed by April 28, 2008.)

A copy of the April 17, 2008 FFWB agenda was distributed and approved along with the minutes of their September 27, 2007 meeting. This was followed by two presentations.

Joel Hunt on the History of Fairford Fish ladder

In 1961 a fish ladder was constructed as a component of the Fairford Dam. In 1963 Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg Fishers expressed concerns about its effectiveness. A Denil fish ladder with two entrances was installed in 1983. Fishers continued to express concerns that channel froze to bottom in the winter causing a barrier, trash collected on fishway exit impeding fish movement, hundreds of suckers, fewer walleye used the fish ladder. A 1987 fish passage assessment, conducted from May 6 to June 12 found 8,871 fish used the fishway with 93% being white sucker. Fishway velocities were in the range of 0.7 to 1.0 metres per second. The conclusion was that the ladder provided effective passage for most species and size (sauger, walleyes, white suckers, and other resident fish species).

Following the presentation the Terms of Reference of 2006 Fairford Dam Study undertaken by the Lake Winnipegosis Management Board Fairford Dam Study was distributed.

A question was raised as to whose responsibility it is to remove debris from the fish ladder. It is a Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation's regional staff's responsibility and done on an as needed basis resources permitting. It was suggested a local group be responsible but would require training. It was questioned if MIT could assist in funding the training.

North/South Consultants Inc. October 2007 Fish Passage Study

The study objectives were to assess fish species composition and abundance upstream and downstream of Fairford Dam and to document any upstream and downstream movement. The study period was the first ten days of October 2007. The sampling occurred during above average water levels and flows which affected gear and site selection. Habitat diversity was greater downstream of the dam as compared to upstream.

Survey Results:

- Hoop Nets: A total of 70 fish were captured in the downstream hoop nets. In the fishway trap upstream a total of 4 fish were captured (2 tullibee, 1 pickerel, and 1 mariah).
- Small and large mesh gill netting: Upstream one gillnet was set with 24 fish caught (perch, spottail shiner). Downstream three gillnets were set with 547 fish caught (emerald shiner, perch, spottail shiner).
- Large mesh catches: Upstream, 3 gillnets were set with 46 fish caught (pickerel, white sucker). Downstream 10 gillnets were set with 6 fish caught (jackfish, carp, pickerel).

Findings

- Catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) for large mesh gill nets was approximately 2.5 times greater upstream than downstream.
- Pickerel accounted for 50% of the upstream gillnet catch and 14.5% of the downstream catch.
- Initial inspection of the Fairford Fishway revealed an exit structure that was severely blocked with vegetation and an entrance with access likely limited by debris.
- In this state the exit was likely impassable to any fish.
- The capture of one mariah and two immature tullibee (considered poor swimmers) in the fishway suggested that water velocity was not likely limiting passage for most species.
- No tagged or clipped fish were recaptured by any sampling method.
- No whitefish were captured downstream, while two were captured upstream.
- The whitefish and tullibee captured were immature fish and not likely to spawn in 2007.

Results suggest that either few tullibee and whitefish moved up the Fairford River during fall 2007 or that these species moved upstream prior to or following the study.

North South Consultants final report will be distributed to the LMSB through Allan Gaudry, a member of Fairford Fishway Working Group.

An option to netting is acoustic tags but they cost \$40 for each Whitefish.

Linda Schroedter commented that a similar spring study is required and it should be longer than ten days. This should be included in the study's recommendations.

6. New Business

- a. Vice Chair: Bill Finney was chosen as the Vice Chair by acclamation.
- b. Annual Report to the Minister: The report will contain a statement of what the Board has done last fiscal year (including information such as date of meetings, presentations to board, guests, terms of reference). The past year the Board has met around the lake at various locations to learn about Lake Manitoba issues. A draft report will be circulated to Board members by April 25, 2008. Comments and feedback on the draft report are to be provided to the chair by May 2, 2008.
- c. Work Plan: The chair will discuss with Dwight Williamson the proposal of the LMSB offering micro-grants to schools in order to educate children about Lake Manitoba.
- d. Hydrologic Update: The current water level of Lake Manitoba is 811.85 feet and outflow from the Fairford Dam is estimated at 5,400 cfs. The water levels are forecast to remain constant for the spring. Water levels on Lake St. Martin have receded to 801.06 feet about 0.46 feet below flood stage.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for St. Laurent on June 23, 2008.

Materials distributed at meeting:

- Agenda - Fairford Fishway Working Group Meeting #8 – April 17, 2008
- Draft Minutes of Fairford Fishway Working Group Meeting #7

- Lake Winnipegosis Management Board – January 16, 2006 – Appendix 1, Terms of Reference, Fairford Dam Study

8. Fairford Dam Field Tour

Attendees met and toured the Fairford Dam and Fish Ladder following the meeting.