

Wixom Lake Improvement Board (WLIB)  
Meeting Minutes  
April 19, 2023

**Meeting called to order** - Billings Township Hall by Joe Sova at 6:00 PM

**Pledge of allegiance recited.**

**Roll call of board members** - Board members present: Carol Ayers, Joe Sova, Ray Drumright, Robert Kelley, Jeanette Snyder, Don Zakett, Terry Walters, Larry Woodard  
Board Members Absent: Karen Moore

**Others in Attendance** - Norma Stuart (Midland County Drain Commission), Lucy Zeestraten (Gladwin County Drain Commission), Paul Hausler (Progressive AE), Casey Shoaff (PLM Lake & Land Management Corp.), and approximately 25 members of the public

**Election of officers for 2023** - Jeanette Snyder made a motion to nominate Joe Sova as chairman and the motion was seconded by Robert Kelley. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Don Zakett made a motion to nominate Ray Drumright as secretary and the motion was seconded by Larry Woodard. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Joe Sova made a motion to nominate Terry Walters as treasurer and the motion was seconded by Larry Woodard. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of agenda** - Agenda was presented and there was a request to add an item for purpose of giving an overview of the experimental herbicide treatments from last year and discuss implications on future treatments. Carol Ayers made a motion to amend and accept the agenda and the motion was seconded by Larry Woodard. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of 12/14/22 WLIB meeting minutes** - Bob Kelley made a motion to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Jeanette Snyder. Voice vote. Motion carried with Ray Drumright abstaining due to absence from the 12/14/22 meeting.

**Financial Matters** - Joe Sova presented the financial statement showing a balance of \$288,306.98. There was brief discussion of likely need to reinstate assessment soon to have the necessary resources to have the lake bottom ready for re-flooding upon dam repair and the management of invasive and nuisance aquatic species upon return of Wixom Lake. Terry Walters made a motion to receive and file the financial report which was seconded by Carol Ayers. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously. Two invoices from Progressive AE were presented: Invoice 00191380 dated Feb 6, 2023 for \$565.44 and invoice 00190997 dated January 9, 2023 for \$2,399.33. Larry Woodard made a motion to pay the invoices and it was seconded by Robert Kelley. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Casey Shoaff spoke about an amendment to the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit allowing use of a second herbicide (Imazapyr) which will be blended with the original herbicide (VASTLAN, a formulated Triclopyr). The blend is synergistic providing effective kill of a broad range of woody species. Paul Hausler indicated that the ANC (Aquatic Nuisance Control) permit has also been updated to cover spot application of the herbicide blend for trees growing in some of the channels or areas with standing water. Paul also shared that he has had informal discussions with EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) representatives where they indicated desire for leaving some woody vegetation for fish habitat. Paul will identify some deeper parts of the lake where leaving trees would not interfere with boating with intent to leave those areas untreated. Paul shared a handout which describes the benefits of leaving some woody vegetation in the lake ecosystem. Chairman Joe Sova reflected on the need for good communication between the DNR, Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) and lake improvement boards such that treatments made in good faith to control woody vegetation do not end up interfering with obtaining fill permits.

Discussion of results of treatment of experimental plots last year. Based upon inspection during the week of 4/17/2023 by Don Zakett and Paul Hausler, locust and willow trees in treated areas appear to be dead. Cottonwood and poplar trees show significant damage (dead on top) but the lower trunks still appear viable. The helicopter treatment of the experimental plots was very precise with no noticeable drift outside of application areas. The mixture of herbicides now approved is expected to provide a broader spectrum kill. It is expected to take 6-8 weeks for the herbicide to migrate from leaves to root and provide complete kill. During this interval, the vegetation should NOT be mowed. After the 6-8 week period mowing is necessary but the duration of time until mowing occurs is not critical. There are 2 windows for treatment for maximum effectiveness (spring and fall). Due to higher metabolism in the spring that is the most desirable time. Mid to late June when trees are just fully leafed out is expected to be the ideal time for treatment.

Herbicide treatments this June will not be applied in areas that have already been mowed since effectiveness would be poor due to lack of foliage. These areas will be reevaluated at a later date (prior to fill) and treated if needed. Don Zakett shared aerial drone maps with a strawman treatment plan for about 600 acres. All treatments would be at least 50 feet from original shoreline and at least 42 feet from the river channel. Don Zakett is in the process of doing visual inspections of treatment areas to make sure vegetation is woody and tall (~4 ft or greater) in the mapped areas. Maps will be adjusted accordingly. At some point at least two months after the herbicide treatment but before refill the dead trees will need to be cut down and chopped into small pieces such that they do not foul the new dam when the water returns. It is expected that many areas will require a forestry mulcher to achieve the necessary results. The forestry mulcher is more expensive to use than a brush hog mower.

Estimated cost for helicopter application of herbicide is \$200/acre. Estimated cost for a forestry mulcher is \$400/acre. The WLIB currently has insufficient funds for ~600 acres with both herbicide and forestry mulching. After discussion, herbicide treatment is prioritized with complete mowing/mulching sometime in the future. Mowing/mulching of some experimental

plots this year is desirable to see if there is any positive impact on prevention of reseeding of woody species. There is enough donated Triclopyr left to treat about 880 acres (this is shared between the lakes falling under FLTF). Need to purchase Imazapyr. No further donations of herbicides are anticipated. Don will seek bids for helicopter application with target for treatment in mid to late June.

Discussion of potential for dredging of canals. Dredging activity cannot be addressed by WLIB or funds it controls but it could be an activity orchestrated by other entities (e.g. county drain commissions) prior to refill. An email from Robert Kelley in the board packet contains potential contact names of people living on different canals in the WLIB jurisdiction that have expressed interest in being contact people for potential canal project(s). Using grant funds that can't be used for dam repair, FLTF has engaged Spicer Engineering to do a study on several canals for feasibility and cost estimation of dredging and establishing channels from canal mouths to the main lake. Results of this assessment are expected in the next month. Details of mechanism for executing and funding these potential projects is outside WLIB authority and is currently not defined.

Terry Walters shared that he, Don Zakett, and some members of county government recently met with people from the US Fish and Wildlife department. With dam failures sea lamprey can now access the river and tributaries. There will be a treatment to kill sea lamprey larvae that will occur in window of May 9-19. Expect lots of US Fish and Wildlife trucks and vans in the area during that time frame.

**Public Comment** - Chairman Sova formally opened the meeting for public comment.

Rick Traub – 4687 Hill Drive. He has paid to have area in front of his property mowed and expressed frustration that he won't get herbicide treatment this year because of it.

Tami O'Donnell – 5409 Grouse Ct. Lives on canal. Frustrated that WLIB funds are being used on main lake and not in canals.

Mark Kramer – 532 M-30. Seeking clarity on questions around dredging of canals and information on grant that FLTF has for activities beyond dam repair.

Frank Legacy – 5350 S. Pine St. Canal he lives on dredged about 15 years ago. Fear that dredging again would cause seawall collapse. Can the grant that FLTF has for things beyond dam repair be used for woody vegetation elimination?

Monty Wiseman – 5314 S Pine St in the Venice subdivision. Worried that his canal is being overlooked. Does not want a dredge but wants clean up of canal. Seeking assurance that Venice canals won't be left fouled when water returns.

Karen Avery – 5317 Northern Trail. Last fall they observed treatment and after discussion with crew were under the impression that the area in front of their property would be treated but it was not.

End Public Comment

After brief attempt to find a date in May for next WLIB meeting it was decided to electronically poll the board for potential dates. Once date is finalized the notice of the meeting will be posted.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Robert Kelly was seconded by Carol Ayers. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously. 8:17 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Drumright