

BLPRD Harvest Committee Meeting Agenda Notes
Thursday, July 16, 2020 – 9:00 AM
Packwaukee Park Pavilion

Present: Gary Kershaw, Linda Huggett, Larry Haygood, Joe Dion, Bill Lewis, Ed Schams

Absent: Jim Barton

Meeting started at 9:00 am by Harvest Chair, Gary Kershaw.

Equipment Review

- a. Major repairs
- b. Minor repairs and service
- c. New transporter

6 2014 cutter planetary gear box gave out on one side, Wed, July 1. It was towed to the district site by the transporter Thurs, July 2, repaired Fri, July 3, and was put back in service Mon, July 6.

#4 cutter hydraulic hose leaks and side cutter pilman arm was repaired. #5 cutter had water in the fuel system, was repaired, and is in service.

New transporter was brought in July 2 for break-in 100 hr service and was completed July 3.

Joe Dion stated the final payment of the grant was received on the transporter. Grant process is complete and file is closed.

Site Maintenance

- a. Repairs and improvements
- b. Tool storage and workshop building

Ruts were filled in at site and reseeded June 18 and the grass is growing .

Gary stated his opinion to form a committee to assess what we need as far as a structure on the site. It should then be presented to the district board at the annual meeting. First we need to check with county zoning for what we can actually do.

Weed Harvest

- a. Progress and updates
- b. Weekly breakdown of costs

Cutting 6-1 to 7-9 - approximately half of season - 24 work days.

Verified from truck drivers' log books:

248 truckloads = 496 cutter loads

This is just over 20 cutter loads per day.

2019 season per annual meeting. 49 workdays. No log books to verify as they are lost.

423 truckloads = 826 cutter loads

This is just over 17 cutter loads per day. Mother nature and DNR were good to us.

2018 season per annual meeting.

1,490 truckloads. 470 on the west side, 1020 on the east side.

I questioned the numbers at the annual meeting and then got involved with the harvest committee. 7' cut on the blue machine sat at Freedom Rd landing for two weeks broken down yet cut 470 truckloads of weeds. Plus the tornado had shut down operations early.

2017 season per annual meeting.

1,200 truckloads.

2016 season per annual meeting.

939 truckloads.

Breakdown of weekly costs:

Week 3 – 6/15 to 6/18 – Labor 275 hrs, \$1,760 for parts, \$537 for fuel

Week 4 – 6/21 to 6/24 – Labor 272 hrs, \$107 for parts, \$600 for fuel

Week 5 – 6/27 to 7/2 – Labor 287 hrs, no parts, \$350 for fuel

Week 6 – 7/6 to 7/10 – Labor 270 hrs, \$76 for parts, \$319 for fuel

Ed Schams asked how this compares to the budget. Joe and Larry Haygood stated that it is right on budget.

Buoys

Several buoys have shifted due to wind and water flow and were repositioned yesterday, July 15. Question was asked if buoys were put in the lake by GPS. Joe stated the crew put the buoys in the lake by memory. We are working on something to improve on GPS. Needs to be done in this timeframe while the buoys are still in the water.

Someone asked if we could use solar buoys. Bill stated the Call of the Wild campground wanted to pay for solar buoys in their area in the past and DNR said all or nothing.

Joe stated there are 18 buoys on the east side and 13 buoys on the west side.

5-Year Plan

- a. Suggestions and ideas

Many people interested in joining. Joe is planning on getting members to work on this incentive.

Operations

- a. Lake segment division
- b. New employee handbook review

Joe stated concerning the harvesting plan, getting together a group willing to work on segmenting the lake by real numbers and calculate where that magic number is to turn around and go back the other way and have that done by next harvesting season so that we have an actual map where the cutters are supposed to be.

Linda stated the new employee handbook was approved at the district board meeting on Sat, July 11.

The new employee handbook is policies and procedures, etc. Bill Lewis asked if this can be posted on the website? Gary stated that they were looking at creating a job site location on the website and include this information. Joe also stated that they are looking at email blasts and Facebook.

Gary Oderkircher stated that he applied for a position and never got called. Linda stated to Gary that he had been interviewed and was on the list.

New Business

Statement was made that at the last board meeting, Al Rosenthal suggested appropriating money for additional labor. Al felt weeds were not being cut on the far west side of the lake. Joe stated that was true but not now. Cutter is working in the area and the conveyer is at Hollenbeck's Landing. Motion was made at the meeting to appropriate money and the board rescinded the motion. Surplus funds are in the operating fund and withdraw from the fund to exceed the labor account. Last weekend, Gary had gone fishing by the railroad bridge and was able to make it through along the shoreline on the west side from the railroad bridge to near the boating landing.

District Member Questions and Comments

Ed asked Linda how many complaints. Linda stated she had two and had responded that progress is slow this year partially due to the density of the weeds. Joe has taken 17 calls, 70+ emails that he responded to. Large number of complaints is by the south shore on the east side of the lake. Last six days, two additional calls on the west side from Lakeshore Drive. Gary stated he had emails and phone calls and responded to them.

Discussion on hours worked. Hours are 7:00 am to 3:00 pm, Mon thru Thurs, 32 hours per week with occasional Fridays if bad weather during the week per job description. Questions asked why cutters were not on the water at 7:00 and why cutters were parked well before 3:00 on the east side. Linda stated that temperatures were taken as employees entered the site in the morning. Maintenance on the machines and fueling the machines needed to be completed also. A matter of manpower is also an issue. Suggestion was made to stagger work hours to utilize eight hours cutting time and complete fueling and maintenance before or after the work hours. Everybody sees when the machines are not working in the water. Gary and Joe will talk to the crew Monday morning about working on Fridays or working an additional hour each day.

Discussion on transporters and offload sites. Ed asked if the old transporter was available for use. Bill stated if cutters are sitting idle, no reason to use 2nd transporter. Question asked in the last 20 years how many cutters and transporters have been used. Bill stated two cutters and one transporter with more laterals being cut. Gary stated there is only one truck and conveyer and it takes approximately one hour to unload the weeds. The transporter is able to transport two cutter loads of weeds to the offload site. Joe stated that it was not in the plan to use the old transporter due to purchasing the new transporter. Gary stated that the area on the south shore on the east side there are speed boats that move weeds and with the northwest winds weeds float to the south shore. Speed boats stop and go wherever they want and do not use the channels. Bill stated that it takes 2 ½ hours if the correct offload site is not being used.

Question was asked how long before getting to the Buffalo Lake Lodge. The lodge has been offered for offloading but has not been utilized yet this year. Joe stated the crew should be there shortly. It is not the cutters fault that they need to wait for the transporter while the transporter is offloading. Bill stated

that it takes 2 ½ hours if the correct offload site is not being used. Linda stated depending on the density of weeds, the cutters will fill faster or slower. The crew planned to move the conveyer down to Buffalo Lake Lodge but didn't due to road construction on Hwy C. Todd stated that C is not a busy road. Linda stated on ZZ there was a road closed flag on Hwy C. We are not going to take a new dump truck driver on C. Todd stated traffic is allowed on one lane and the road will not close.

Discussion on agenda for day, week, season. Each day between 6:30 and 7:00, the supervisor (crew foreman) discusses with the crew any cutting updates. Gary stated that this needs to be run as a business. Ed suggested getting the guys together to discuss the issues. Statement was made to offer a bonus if a good job is done. Joe stated it would not be proper for the district to be doing. The employees should be doing a good job and agrees with Todd.

Discussion on finding employees. Larry stated that the employees are in their 70s and do not want a full time job. Gary stated that the harvest weed cutting needs to be run as a business and has not in the past. Question asked who supervises the supervisor (crew foreman). Gary stated that he has suggested, discussed, encouraged many things to happen here. This is my first year as a volunteer. There needs to be some changes and shortage of help was an issue. Linda stated that one employee quit and we are working on the problem.

Discussion on harvest plan. Joe stated there is no written plan. There is a harvesting map on the cutters that was submitted to the DNR with the permit. It does not break it into any coordinates, just loosely identifies where the laterals are, the side cuts, the shoreline cuts, and the center cuts. These are color coded for width. 30' for lateral, 50' for most of the shoreline and main cuts, and 100' cuts which are at the dredge bank and by the causeway so that there is a clear path for water to go through the culverts under the causeway. There are six culverts at the causeway that assist in navigation and flow by cutting those weeds in that area. That is on the cutting map as of today. Bill Lewis stated the last few years can't predict where you are going to be. Statement made if there is a way to find out how much is covered in a day or a week. There is a need to divide up in a grid to see how much in each section instead of all happening in one area. Linda stated weeds are dense in certain areas worse than others. Question asked if it is known where you are going to be cutting ahead of time. Statement made don't know where the thicker parts will be. Joe stated that the weeds coming back more dense and appear to be more dense on south shore than north shore. Bill stated should be looking at cutter logs half way through season.

Discussion on machines. Linda stated that the cutter on east side of causeway cleans up there which is section A. Section B is by C landing and Section C is by dam. The two cutters and transporter are only doing Sections B and C. One cutter and conveyer works on the west side of the causeway. Question asked why can't we take the cutter by the causeway and move to Section B and/or C to help them out and how many transporters are there. Linda stated that there are two transporters. Joe stated that it was not in the plan to use the old transporter due to purchasing the new transporter,

Todd stated that one cutter stays on west side, one cutter by east side of causeway, and two cutters on east side. Two full cutters all season on east side. Larry stated that the causeway and west covers ½ of lake. Todd stated how about 80% of homes are on the east side of the lake and 20% of the homes are getting two cuttings all season. There are a lot more homes on the east side of the lake than the west side of the lake.

Gary stated that this is his first year volunteering as harvest chairman. To start the log process, hours on the machines were written down at the beginning of the season. These hours have not been written

down in the past. Gary was partially involved in the harvest committee last year. The log books have been lost from the 2019 harvest year. Coming into it blind, the system already started. In the past nothing was recorded. He is working on improving processes. By recording the hours on the machines, we will know how many hours that machine ran at the end of the season. In the past, nothing was recorded. By having the log, there is something to work with for improvement. Larry stated that Gary and Linda do not get paid and are volunteers. Gary stated that last year he would have been a hero. The lake was high and there were less weeds. This year, it is a different story.

Discussion on earlier start date. Linda stated big difference did not cut until June 1. DNR changed starting date from May 15 to June 1. Two weeks were lost there from the past. Question was asked if we could approach DNR and cut in the channel and start May 15. DNR changed from May 15 to June 1 and would not approve to start earlier. Statement was made about DNR's concern about not cutting earlier on the shoreline due to the spawning. Could we start in the middle and work our way out in the two weeks from May 15 to June 1. We would then have the center channels clean.

Bill stated there would be a need to apply for earlier cutting date. No one knows who applied for the earlier start date for this harvest season. You do not need to be board member to request permit. Joe stated that the permit is submitted to the lake district and if a change or amendment is required to the permit, it is a district function which ends up being the board. Todd stated if not done this year, first job on the agenda for the season is to apply and submit for a change in the permit. Joe stated that the current permit expires 2021. Question asked if the permit can still be requested for an early start. Joe stated that an early start date can be requested. No prediction what DNR will approve or not as personnel sometimes changes. We have center channels and shoreline channels. Statement made if you can request have main channel and laterals. Spawning occurs is by shorelines. If they did laterals and main channel, this would never affect the spawning. Joe stated he will take suggestion under advisement for next season. Question asked if anyone has communicated with DNR on what kind of request would be appropriate. Bill stated that the question can be asked of two people - Ted Johnson or the fish guy. Statement if you are asking the right question, can we do something. What could be do to be approved to start May 15? Maybe need to hear from new people.

Question asked how did we come out Monday morning after the board meeting. Linda stated one employee is gone and we are in the process of hiring more employees. Joe stated he is more concerned about adding more hours and will work Friday. We will meet with the employees and ask them if they would they be willing to work an extra day during the week for the rest of the season. Statement made if we are hiring someone to work as a sub. Linda stated we are in the process of adding another employee. Joe stated that we have a replacement driver and have found another employee.

Establish Next Harvest Committee Meeting

August 29, 2020 at 9:00 AM, Packwaukee Park Pavilion.

Larry made a motion to adjourn, Joe seconded.

Note: The Buffalo Lake Harvest Committee will be observing 6' social distancing and asking anyone attending the meeting to bring their own face covering as none will be provided. Please do not attend if you have had a cough or fever in the last two weeks.