

Buffalo Lake P&R District Harvesting Committee meeting minutes

June 10, 2023

Held at District Property

Meeting Called to order at 9AM

Roll Call: Bob, Tim, Darrel & Brad present

Absent: Gary & Sara

Changes/Additions to Agenda: Bob brought up people fishing from the bridge in Packwaukee. Discussion was held. It's really a safety issue for us. People set up lawn chairs and pay no attention to our trucks that cross the bridge. There used to be a no fishing from bridge sign, but it was taken down. Mike M. is going to attend the next town board meeting and will bring up our concerns and report back to the committee.

Equipment update: Bob gave a thorough update on the equipment. We've had a few hiccups this spring as reported in Bobs weekly updates. Had a problem with the conveyor trailer early on. Bob called Inland and they came down, picked it up & worked on it overnight & had it back right away. Excellent customer Service from Inland. Purchasing that conveyor trailer is turning out to be a good decision. It offers the crew some mobility because we aren't tied into leaving a conveyor at a launch and having to move the conveyor around. The White F250 that we bought was updated with a flat bed to replace the bad truck bed. It was the cheapest and easiest route to go and makes it easier to see to back up the trailer conveyor. The PTO on the Ford Dump truck had to be adjusted and it needed some fuel line work. Repairs were done. Green 1 ton tranny overheated and caused a small fire. Took it over to Jimmy's where he serviced the tranny cooler and checked everything out. That truck is getting tired. We will have to keep an eye on it. We had to replace a hydraulic pump on a harvester. It's worth noting that supply chain issues is making it difficult to find replacements. Inland had a rebuilt pump in their inventory so we got lucky and were able to get that one and change it out. All equipment is up and running.

Hez Pez well point: Discussion on his lack of service. Although we were #6 on his list for this spring, he keeps pushing us back and has not shown up yet. Bob and I have both spoken to him or attempted to reach him. When we are lucky enough to speak to him, he tells us other people are a higher priority. Bob will try to contact him one more time and if he doesn't commit to doing our well, we will ask for our deposit back and rent the equipment necessary to put the sand-point in ourselves. This is a safety issue for our crew and we can't keep waiting on this guy.

Pier Herbicide: Discussion held. I hadn't received an update from Wisconsin Lakes and Ponds on their progress as of this meeting. I sent them an email late in the day on Friday and asked for an update. Once I have an update I will post to our members. One of the members present expressed his concern about the pier treatment and said he won't do it again. Bob asked folks to give the process time and see how it turns out before deciding. Darrel to reach out the WP&P and let them know of the concern. Brief Discussion on the denial by WDNR to the District's application for treatment of some navigational paths and laterals. Basically, comes down to our current mechanical harvesting permit that is valid through December of 2024.

Harvesting update: Bob gave a thorough update on the progress of harvesting and is updating everyone weekly as he did last year. Those weekly reports help reduce the phone calls and questions that would

otherwise come in. The 2 harvester operators on the east side of the lake are return employees. The West side operator is new so there will be a learning curve. People are asked to be patient. Bob mentioned that with the low lake level and the dry hot weather the weeds are as bad as they would normally be in July and August. All present agreed with that assessment. The flags that were installed are working well. We are still tweaking the location of a few. But the crew can use them as a target for the laterals. GPS units were brought up. Now that we have the flags, we don't need the GPS for the laterals, however Bob agreed that he would use GPS coordinates to mark the buoys when they pick them up at the end of the season so that they are in the same place each year. They made larger weights for the buoys which should keep them from being blown around by the wind. Bernie helped the crew with the placement of the buoys and used a fish locator with depth finder so that the buoys could be placed at the deepest part of the channel. The crew on the east side made one pass from Segment 3 down to Segment 1 on each lateral and navigational path so that each one was hit once. When they reached Segment 1 they did a complete normal cutting and have since moved back to Segment 3 & will proceed down the lake as they normally would. The harvester on the west side got a late start because of staffing issues. We were able to hire 2 new people in a short period of time and that machine is up and running. He will be finishing up in segment 5 soon and moving down to Segment 6. It's a slow process because of the severity of the weeds. We had a discussion on the ramp at the district site. I was there when they put the last harvester in the water. The low water levels and the steep incline of the launch make it very difficult to launch the machines. There are grants that are available for launch work, so the committee will need to do some research to find out how much it would cost to change the launch and reduce the incline. This would make it safer and easier for the crew to get our machines in the water. The committee will need to do its homework on this so that we can report our findings to the board.

Next harvesting application: Although our current permit is good through December 2024 I am not a procrastinator. I shared with everyone that I added this to the agenda because this process will be long. There is much to consider, so it's better to open the dialog now. Given the denial we received for our herbicide this spring we will need to discuss on how much if any herbicide treatment we want to add to our next harvesting application or, if we even want to do it? Adding more laterals was mentioned. It then becomes an issue of whether we have the capacity to cut more. If we cut more, how will it impact conditions. Do we even need more. Would more staffing and equipment be needed. Will the WDNR even allow more? There are many questions that need to be discussed. I believe we will have a better understanding of how this will unfold as the season progresses and at the end of this season.

Additional comments questions: One of our members present mentioned harvesters traveling through weeds to meet up with the transporter. Bob and I explained that they should not be doing that and actually no one should be passing through weed areas that are not cut. Bob will discuss with the crew. Traveling through the weeds encourages more weed growth and causes more floaters that end up getting caught on docks. Positive comments were made about the communication that Bob and I put out to our membership. We appreciate hearing those things. And finally, a big THANK YOU goes out to the members that participated in our meeting today. We really appreciate it when folks come and join us.

Your input is important!

Meeting adjourned at 10:40AM

Respectfully submitted, Darrel Unsinn Harvesting Committee Chair.