

Milfoil Meeting Minutes - February 11, 2025

Attendees: Barry Cahoon, Joe Hebert, Jamie Stewart, Joanne Stewart, Sue Bouchard, Scott Burns, Pat Rubalcaba.

Barry Cahoon called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM via Zoom call hosted by Sue Bouchard. Barry asked if there were any corrections or changes to the published meeting minutes of 1/14/2025. There were none.

Updates: Barry has yet to nail down a contractor for a DASH project or hand harvesting. Neither Rob Patton nor Keith Knapp have got back to Barry. Joe Hebert asked if the early 2025 survey shows minimal growth do we bother with a DASH project. It was decided to line up the DASH and only use it if needed. Hand harvesting is intense and if the spread is aggressive how do we manage it. Rob Patton is locally based but Keith Knapp (Benson, Vt) would need a place to stay. Joe Hebert offered his son's place on Clubhouse Circle Drive and will confirm this. There are differences of opinions whether a DASH project is as effective as hand harvesting.

Barry is still trying to confirm with Kelli Merrill on ID training for JPA members. It was felt it should be offered in the Spring and ideally on the Memorial Day weekend after the Spring Meeting. Barry is still working on the ANR and FOVLAP/Chemical Treatment attachment for the JPA Website.

Barry asked for input on his second draft for the newsletter article. The committee said the draft was great. Discussion occurred whether to use the word Milfoil or EWM in our printouts. It was decided to use the EWM label (Eurasian Water Milfoil).

Grants: Joe Hebert stated that he and Pat were waiting for the grant application from Kim Jensen. Joe asked for projected expenses from the members and said that it was better to overestimate. Danville will ask for \$5,000 for EWM eradication at the Town Meeting and Cabot will ask for \$2,000 at their Town meeting. Joe stated that Cabot was very receptive to give more money if asked later in the year. Jim Bernotas said that compressed air is free but will look at other expenses. Joe stated that Jack is looking at a JPA credit card so that committee members and Directors do not have to use personal credit cards and then get reimbursed.

Joe Hebert suggested that 30 buoys be prepared, and discussion centered on whether the 30 are enough. The buoys should be the same color. It was thought that in the beginning of the summer, with campers diligently looking for the EWM would generate an outsized demand for these buoys but would taper off during the summer. Scott suggested that a picture of these buoys be put on the educational brochures to show what they will look like and for boaters to stay away. Barry said he will work on the bricks. 50 buoys will be created with 10 feet of rope attached to the brick.

Education: Sue Bouchard and Joanne Stewart had sent around to the committee the draft educational document to be reviewed. It was felt that the ANR logo should not be front and center. We need to give them credit as a resource, but it is not an ANR document. Discussion occurred about using UV protected paper for the handout to camp owners but for the greeters; they will have the normal copy paper. Also, each job (section coordinator, divers, harvesters, etc.) will have their own version in a document along with instructions on how to use their phone to geolocate. It was

agreed that it is OK to snip a sample of the EWM for identification purposes only, but it must be disposed of properly.

Barry stated that the Danville Conservation Commission asked if a display could be set up about the EWM infestation at the Town Meeting in March. This would be a tabletop display type with educational material with bulleted list and informative material. The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP) has loads of information. Sue and Joanne will put something together quickly. The audience for this information is Danville residents and we need to show how Milfoil threatens property values on Joe's Pond and will help get the community involved. Barry will meet with Jo Oliver of the Danville CC and see what size of table and Board needed

Barry stated that the State of Vermont per Chapter 50, is responsible for putting up the Milfoil sign at the Fishing Access to tell boaters to "Stay away from buoyed areas". The committee will come up with the sign since the State will not do so.

EWM Plan. Barry is chasing down Henretta Splain with respect to this plan and will inquire as to how much she wants to be involved.

Regulatory: Barry is communicating with Olin Reed (DEC) to better understand the state regulatory constraints on herbicide application for control of aquatic nuisance species. Barry questions whether by not allowing herbicide treatment on a small EWM infestation soon after its initial establishment, when there is a good chance to achieve eradication, that the consequence of such restriction appears to result in much greater herbicide use in the long term after the infestation has proliferated out of control around the lake. Lots of discussion around the interpretation of 'reasonable and effective' as used in statute as the basis for the regulatory restriction noted previously. Barry will keep going on the policy discussions and, only if, after engagement with the membership and approval by the Board of Directors, might consideration of preparing and filing an application for herbicide treatment be made. In such a case, Scott will take responsibility for the permit application process. It was suggested that Scott be involved in the policy discussions also.

Barry asked why the JPA went away from using Solitude to do the surveys. Joe said they chose to use a local contractor and thus we used Arrowood last year.

Geo Mapping: Rob Stewart is still working on the data layers, and it is a work in process.

Survey and Equipment/Materials: Jim Bernotas sent out an email to all the known diver volunteers. Only 5 responded, which was disappointing. The respondents are Tom and Jane Segale, Todd and Paxton Smith, Bob Dimick plus Jim himself. Jim felt that he could do the first pond and second pond himself, but we need more volunteers for the big lake. The email to Chris Hebert bounced back and Joe will find out his personal email and not work email. We also need more snorkelers and eyes in the water. We need to be vigilant and keep looking. Jim also discussed the equipment required by the volunteers and has no worry that he can get the equipment.

Section Coordinators: Barry outlined his vision of what this position is. They do not need to be a diver but just make sure their section is being looked at. The big pond is a concern. Jim Bernotas suggests we identify what the placed buoys are (Milfoil present?). He is concerned about going north of the present patch and on his dives, he felt the density of stalks was increasing. It is

difficult to survey underwater. On a good day one can see only 10 feet and you lose compass bearing very easily and if a plant is pulled the visibility is down to 2 feet. One can travel in a circle under water very easily.

Scott mentioned that underwater drones could be a tool to cover ground and get geo reference in real time. An advantage of a drone is that they can search for a grid pattern easily. Barry said he will accompany Michael Lew-Smith from Arrowood during all phases of the contracted EWM survey including underwater drone search. The cost of these drones can be from \$1000 up to \$6000. Everyone agreed that this may be a good tool to consider. Jim also mentioned that for the mesh bags we need a smaller opening so no pieces can escape once they are put in the bag.

Chemical Treatment. *(In the following discussion it was understood that it is the responsibility of the JPA Board of Directors to make any decision related to an application for any chemical treatment and control of EWM and that any such decision can be made only after the full engagement and discussion and vote with the JPA membership. This discussion by the EWM Management Committee reflects no decisions or position of the Committee nor any of its members regarding herbicide treatments but rather is intended to learn the facts about this as a treatment option and to contribute to an informed discussion and consideration by the membership and the Board.)*

Barry discussed the evolution of his personal opinion on using chemical treatment. Barry agrees with the ANR that aquatic invasive species management should absolutely minimize the use of herbicides. The issue is that ANR prohibits lake associations from utilizing herbicide treatment soon after discovery when there is a window of opportunity for eradication with a very small dose of chemicals. Instead, the ANR forces a delay, typically by years, until the infestation is far beyond the control of non-chemical means. Worse, by that point, eradication even by large and periodic doses of herbicide becomes highly unlikely, if not impossible, as demonstrated by virtually all other VT lakes struggling with EWM infestations.

Prior to this meeting Barry shared with the committee members two documents by VT ANR and FOVLAP relating to the use of the herbicide ProcettaCOR (PC) which is the only herbicide approved by VT ANR for control of EWM. Barry described the highly targeted nature of PC (extremely limited toxicity to non-target species), the minimal dosage concentration required to achieve EWM mortality (5-9 parts per Billion), its rapid dissipation to undetectable levels within 48 hours, and no reported adverse effects to public health or the environment after 81 EWM treatments using PC in VT since 2018. The committee encouraged Barry to continue conversations with VT ANR to determine if this treatment option will be open to the JPA, should the Board encourage and the membership agrees to pursue ANR approval for such treatment. The Spring Newsletter water quality report will provide greater detail. The concept of herbicide treatments in the lake is potentially a hot button and divisive issue to the membership.

A question came up as to the effectiveness of PC with just scattered plants. Barry learned that the dosage is predicated on the volume of water encompassing the area of EWM establishment to be treated. Whether the infestation is single stalks or a jungle makes no difference. It takes up to 2 weeks to see the effects. Scott's opinion is that PC is a tool in the toolbox and if we provide members with information and details on what is involved the members will better understand the EWM management choices that will eventually have to be made. He suggests that more granularity

in the draft article in the newsletter will help. Education is the key to informed discussion. There is a wealth of information available on the ANR website and it will be selected to be available on the JPA website. Joe mentioned that we can do a mass email to all members with a link to this ANR information prior to the Spring Meeting.

Barry said that Olin Reed indicated that the argument for early treatment with PC in order to reduce herbicide use in the long term has merit, but the years of precedent and ANR's application and interpretation of state statute resulting in prohibition of EWM treatment with PC only after massive and extremely expensive attempts of non-chemical methods have failed, will be difficult to overcome. Only 1 lake in VT has successfully contained or eradicated EWM by non-chemical means.

Neither the JPA Board of Directors nor the EWM Committee has made any commitment to the management of EWM by herbicide treatment. The purpose of these on-going interactions and discussions with ANR and the internal discussions of the JPA EWM Management Committee is to determine the EWM management options available to the JPA at an early stage of infestation.

The next EWM Committee meeting was scheduled for 3/11/2025 at 3:00 pm EST via zoom hosted by Sue Bouchard.

There being no other discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 4:52.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Stewart