

Rollin Township Board of Trustees
Special meeting – Round Lake treatment
June 20, 2012

Supervisor Jenkins called the meeting to order at 7 PM. Members present were Supervisor Jenkins, Clerk Gust, Treasurer Willett, and Trustees McGrath and Wilson.

Jenkins introduced Rebecca from Envirosience, and John, Matt, and Guy from Savin Lake Services. Each board member and consultant will have 5 minutes to speak, then the public comment will begin. Public comment will be limited to an hour, and then the board will enter into a business session to discuss available options. After business session is closed, comments will be heard from board, consultants, and residents.

Jenkins stated the sole purpose of this meeting is to discuss treatment options on Round Lake only. Some residents feel that the board has been negligent in communication with public. The township board is willing to take telephone calls, visits or e mails from anyone, but a monthly newsletter would be unnecessary and too costly.

There are instances where the consultants have been contacted by the public. This is unacceptable. They are temporary employees, and contact must be initiated by a board member. At a public hearing in 2009 the decision was to treat Round Lake with weevils. The language governing the assessment district has been written with that treatment in mind. We cannot deviate from that plan within this special assessment district. The LPL has demonstrated suction harvesting by clearing some small areas in the lake. No changes may be made in this district until another hearing is held. Willett and Wilson did not realize that we cannot change treatment. Gust requested that special assessment hearings be initiated in August 2012 which will allow other treatment options to be used starting in 2013. The first hearing can be held in August, and language will be less restrictive. All board members have toured the lake in the past week. McGrath commented on areas of weeds that are extremely thick, with new areas coming up. Although beds that were planted with weevils in the past, have greatly improved. Residents are requesting more treatment now. There are many clear areas in the lake, but even native weeds are terrible this year.

Savin stated the current 2012 survey shows 61.2 acres of native weeds and 54.4 acres of milfoil. Milfoil in every lake is growing rapidly this year due to the very warm spring. Round Lake has about 1/3 to 1/2 of lake with depths of 0 to 10 feet which will support vegetation growth. The weevil has been successful in programs where it has been launched, but it takes three to five years for successful treatment. The milfoil can never be eradicated, just managed. While not a perfect solution, Savin recommends we stay with the weevil program this year as they have seen much evidence of damage on the lake. At this time, there is no reason to discuss treatment with herbicides due to the lengthy process required for DEQ permits. Guy Savin recommends continuing with weevils and re-evaluating in a year or two. Rebecca was on the lake today, and stated that there is a weed problem. The weather this year has created the “Perfect storm” with areas topped out near Bullhead point and near the sandbar. The areas that are very dense have not been stocked with weevils. This years plan was to stock weevils in these areas. In the areas previously treated, there is bottom cover of natives keeping out the milfoil. The native weeds will come back and crowd out the milfoil if the plan is followed. The survey last fall showed a major decrease in the beds where the weevils were planted. Large populations of weevils were seen in the other beds. If we could stock weevils in larger quantities this year, we could see more damage. Envirosience will add 10000 extra weevils to whatever quantity is ordered. They are very confident that the program is working.

Resident's comments will be limited to three minutes. At end of any question, the Chairman will indicate the person to answer. The open meetings act does not require stating your name, but the newspaper has requested that speakers identify themselves. Please indicate if you are in the special assessment district. Please try not to repeat questions.

Citizen's comments were taken for 1 ½ hours (see attached summary).

Motion by Willett, support by Gust to sign the contract with Enviroscience in the amount of \$60,000 for weevils stocking. Wilson – no, McGrath – yes, Willett – yes, Gust – yes, and Jenkins – yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Wilson, support by Willett to hold a new SAD hearing in August. Wilson – yes, McGrath – yes, Willett – yes, Gust – yes, and Jenkins – yes. Motion carried.

Jenkins recommends setting up an ad-hoc committee with 2 board members and 3 riparians. Motion by Wilson, support by Gust to establish a 6 member ad-hoc committee, comprised of two board members and four members of the Round Lake assessment district. All aye, motion carried.

Is it possible to suction harvest in the small areas that are too small to support a colony of weevils? It is possible; however, treatment will not include dock zone areas. Each resident is responsible for their area. Motion by McGrath, support by Gust to authorize the removal by suction harvesting of small outcroppings of milfoil to be determined by Enviroscience and Savin Lake Service. Four aye, one nay, motion carried.

Comments were heard regarding a possible closing of the public access for 24 to 48 hours, or even keeping residents off the lake for 24 to 48 hours. Savin will witness stocking to guarantee stocking takes place as per contract.

Motion by McGrath, support by Willett to adjourn at 9:30 pm. All aye, motion carried.

Sharon M. Gust
Rollin Township Clerk

Comments regarding Round Lake

The following is a summary of comments made by the approximately 70 citizens present at the meeting.

Will there be enough time for the weevils to go thru the lifecycle? We need three to four generations per summer, with normal planting taking place from early June to mid July. We are still within the optimal range. Last year the weevils were planted just before the July 4 holiday. This year, they will be planted after the holiday to give the weevils the best chance of survival. Boats must be kept away from planting sites, which will be marked with buoys.

If boat propellers are tearing up both the native and invasive vegetation, perhaps we should use mechanical harvesting or herbicides. Savin replied that native plants are necessary for the health of the lake. Savin's job is to balance the recreational use of lake while maintaining fish habitat. As the weevils continue to work, the native plants will take over. If residents are still not happy, we can look at a harvesting method to improve quality.

The weed problem may be a combination of native weeds and grasses in addition to the milfoil. The first rule of any treatment is to do no harm. If it is necessary to forego the boating season this year to allow the weevils more time to work, or needs more funding, resident is willing. There are reports online that have pictures to help distinguish the native weeds from the invasive species.

Has any progress been made in the last few years? Documentation showing progress is available on the township's website. Before the assessment district started, Round Lake had over 150 acres of milfoil. Now it has just over 54 acres.

A beach area installed using DEQ guidelines a few years ago is now having weed issues. There is a problem getting out from the dock area for boating. The weevils must be concentrated in large numbers to be effective, and are not usually planted around dock areas.

Dye that limits the penetration of sunlight is not approved by the DEQ because it changes perception of depth due to the way it refracts the light.

When there is a good weevil population, you don't want to harvest mechanically as you will remove the beneficial weevils.

Invasive weeds will never be eradicated, the only hope is control. Harvesting may not be the best method because small particles float away and re-seed.

Is there is any correlation between the zebra mussels and all the weeds. Both consultants believe there could be.

Could chemical treatment be the best in the long run? Can the chemicals actually pollute the lake? Is there another way to fund the treatment other than the current SAD? Will the residents know when and where the weevils will be planted? Yes, a map will be provided to residents on the day of stocking. The SAD was set up for 5 years using weevils, and our consultant is working with Enviroscience. The planning is done by the main consultant, Savin. Enviroscience works with Savin to identify the areas to plant the weevil bouquets.

Where can residents dispose of the debris from the weeds? The township will allow composting at the transfer station. The weeds are very nutrient rich and many local farmers will compost them to add nutrients to fields. When raked off the beach, it is not practical to transport the weeds to the transfer station or a field.

A petition has been circulated in the last 24 hours and gathered over 100 signatures that believe the weevils are not working. These residents would like to see a different treatment method.

Why has the contract not been signed? Enviroscience did not provide the contract to the township until two weeks ago. Enviroscience believed they had a three year contract.

The weeds are getting worse. The board might need to look at how other lakes are managing their weed problems. Question if the weevils are placed in certain areas, could mechanical harvesting take place in other areas? Only a few areas would be suitable for harvesting, those that are too small to support a colony of weevils. Small scale harvesting might be appropriate but only on the two areas of the lake where water cannot flow.

Can we spend more money on the weevils this year? Yes, the fund balance will allow placement of more weevils to allow for denser planting. More biological treatment would be better, but we must stay within the budget of the district.

Could chemical treatment be the best in the long run? Some residents believe that most of the milfoil death is due to herbicides applied by other residents. How quickly can a new SAD be established? Hearings must be held prior to establishing a new district. It will take approx. 3 to 4 months to establish.

Enviroscience will not plant weevils this year if harvesting is being considered in the next year or so. It would be a waste of money to invest in more weevils.

Can a committee be set up that includes riparian owners? This committee could make recommendation to the board.

The statement was made that the plan should be continued following consultant's recommendation. The largest portion of the lake is navigable, and perhaps the two largest areas of weeds should be marked with buoys to keep traffic out of them. The residents are frustrated with the large areas of weeds topping the surface this year.

Residents were reminded of the state Aquatic Invasive Species council meeting which will be discussing funding of lake treatment in Michigan. Residents are asked to write their elected officials. ANG has removed over 350 tons of weeds from Devils Lake in the past two days.

Savin will study the older reports and ascertain what progress has been made. They plan to handle the situation more aggressively than in the past, but the best option right now is to continue stocking the weevils this year.

The initial survey will determine placement of weevils, to be followed with stocking the week of July 9. After this year's collection, there will be a fund balance of approximately \$108,000. At least six sites would benefit from stocking and Enviroscience recommends 60,000 weevil units be purchased. They will add an additional 10,000 weevil units. By the end of this year, we should see a big difference in the amount of milfoil. A follow up survey should be done in spring, not in August. If we can see a definite benefit from the weevils by spring, we could continue.

A new hearing is required to change the parameters of treatment within the district. This hearing will be held in August. Two hearings are required: a hearing of necessity and another to set the rates to fund the district. The board will schedule these hearings at the July meeting.