The Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission

Presented by:

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In 2004, many residents along the shorelines of the Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes, part of the largest freshwater lake chain in the world, had become increasingly aware that the Eurasian Water Milfoil within the lake needed serious attention.



Individual lake associations within the chain conducted chemical treatment programs as finances allowed. It was recognized that these individual EWM control efforts were advantageous, but only in the short term.



In order for future chemical treatments to be truly effective, it was thought necessary to view the chain as one continuous and whole water body and not as a series of individual lakes to be managed separately. In this session, we hope to show you how the Unified Lake Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission faced these challenges, and today enjoys a successful EWM management program this is equitable to all, setting future standards to work cooperatively at the community level.



This presentation has been created to try to explain three mains points and therefore has been broken into three main parts:

#1:The history of the chain of lakes



#2: The early obstacles that the commission had to overcome so that it could take off



And #3: Successes of an organization that is leading the way.





Eagle River is located in Vilas County, which is in the northern portion of the State of Wisconsin.



Vilas County has by far the most lakes of any county in the State of Wisconsin. The Eagle River Chain is only a small percentage of Vilas County's 1320 lakes.



For simple purposes we will say that the Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission chain monitors and assumes responsibility for EWM treatment from the Vilas & Oneida County border in the east to where the Wisconsin River crosses under HWY 70 west of town. Around the year 2000 people living on the Eagle River chain of lakes started noticing a new aquatic plant growing near their homes. The plant seemed to be increasing.



After close examination, it was discovered that this plant was EWM.



And that was were the real fun began.



The Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes in Vilas County, Wisconsin, is composed of 10 lake basins and parts of two river sections, comprising over 62 miles of shoreline and over 3500 acres of surface water. Over 1400 riparian property owners own real estate on the chain and they pay taxes on over \$500 million worth of property



Furthermore, the chain is now, and has been, an integral part of Vilas County's \$250 million tourist trade. Since 2001, various lake groups have recognized the problems caused by Eurasian Water Milfoil on the Eagle River Chain of Lakes.



Understanding that the degradation of the Eagle River Chain would be disastrous for the local and county economies, which for many generations have revolved around tourism dollars created by the large concentration of waterbodies. In 2005, the Town of Washington successfully applied for multiple Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Management Planning Grants to fund the development of Aquatic Plant Management plans for each of the projects lakes. Four municipalities, including the Towns of Washington, Lincoln, and Cloverland, along with the City of Eagle River, partnered to fund the completion of the plans.



During the planning project, it was realized that the Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes must be viewed as **one system** if aquatic invasive species were to be effectively managed. In 2006, after public discussion, the parties involved agreed to form a public/private partnership out of which a joint powers agreement was made.



And thus, the Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission was born



The Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lake Commission is a unique partnership and the first of its kind in the State of Wisconsin.



The ULERCLC understands the importance of the Eagle River Chain, not only in terms of local and state economies, but also its importance in the lives of people from the area and well beyond







One of the earliest obstacles to overcome was the fact that at the time of the discovery of the EWM, only two

only 2 of the 11 lakes on the Eagle River chain had lake associations. The two lake associations (Yellow Birch and Catfish) moved forward with trying to procure grant money to treat the EWM.



But you see, they got the cart in front of the horse because the DNR had no intention of continuing to give individual lake associations permits to chemically treat their own waterbodies. And this makes sense considering the fact that the DNR was offering grant monies to help treat the EWM. It was the DNR's opinion that the best use of taxpayers money would be to combat the entire problem, rather then just going at the treatments in a hit or miss fashion.



Now please remember that at this time the Commission had not yet been created, so there were a lot of separate entities out there, each of which thought that **they knew the answer** of how to combat the EWM. And just as every child in this photo is different, so where all of the differing entities, and although they all thought that they were doing what was right, one of them erred and hit...



The panic button. Panic is an interesting thing because once you hit the panic button it is very hard to turn it off.



Telling people not to panic, even if the reasoning is rational, doesn't always work.







In order to chemically treat surface water in the great State of Wisconsin, it is required that a public notice be published in the paper stating where, when, how, and with what you plan to treat.



But if you read the label of Navigate 2,4D herbicide, the first warning you see is:





According to DNR statues if a project receives more than 3 objections from the public, then there has to be a public meeting on the situation. It is at these public meetings that the DNR tells everybody that they aren't going to give anymore permits for application unless the entire chain is organized and in agreement.



Well now you have a situation where neighbors are pitted against neighbors, not only on the disagreement on the usage of chemicals, but also on the whole notion that now there has to be 9 new aquatic plant management plans created.



So the residents of Yellow Birch and Catfish Lakes are ripping their hair out because now not only will the DNR not allow them to treat their lake on an individual basis, but they have to wait at least two years before they can treat, because it will take one year for the lake associations that don't even exist yet to become a QLA, but then and only then can they start the APM plan, and those usually take an entire summer.



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And since the formation of the lake associations was a product of combating EWM, then of course there had to be education on what 2,4D was too. And it's not just the mere formation of 9 new lake associations...it's educating thousands of people on why they should care enough to even try to form a lake association.







But the Town Officials are Hearing This From Their Constituents

- Why should we spend tax money to rid the Eagle River Chain of EWM for all of those rich waterfront owners?
 - · The tax is levied on all of the residents of:
 - » The City of Eagle River
 - » The Town of Washington
 - » The Town of Lincoln
 - » The Town of Cloverland













• All hinges on grant funding.

Working with Elected Officials

- 1.EWM decreases property values.
- 2.EWM will decrease tourism.
- 3.Both result in less tax revenue.
 - a)Schools, road maintenance, and public services are funded by tax revenue.
 - b)Spend little bit now or lots later
 - c)Improving roads in a declining economy?















Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater!!













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LAKE DATA									
	Cloverland		Cty Eagle River		Lincoln		Washington		Total Perimete
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles
Catfish Lake					8.54	71%	3.56	29%	12.10
Cranberry Lake*					0.67	8%	8.15	92%	8.82
Duck Lake	<u> </u>				1.26	70%	0.54	30%	1.80
Eagle Lake	-				3.06	55%	2.54	45%	5.60
Eagle River			3.07	48%	3.38	52%			6.45
Lynx Lake	1			_	0.30	18%	1.35	82%	1.65
Otter Lake					2.40	68%	1.15	32%	3.55
Scattering Rice Lake							4.37	100%	4.37
Voyageur Lake							5.33	100%	5.33
Watersmeet Lake	1.75	20%			7.19	80%			8.94
Yellow Birch Lake			0.18	5%	3.55	95%			3.73
Totals	1.75	2.81%	3.25	5.21%	30.35	48.68%	26.99	43.29%	62.34

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Encourage Research of AIS Treatment Methodology

 Close relationship between the Commission, the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department, and the Wisconsin DNR





To ease the concerns of 2,4D usage, the Commission drafted a the grant application for the 2,4D Residual Monitoring Project



Water samples were taken to measure Dissolved Oxygen, Temperature, Water Clarity, and 2,4D Concentrations before and after the herbicide application. Soil substrate samples were also taken after the treatment occurred.



Sites were monitored on the day of the treatment, one day after treatment, 4 days after treatment, 7 days after treatment, and 14, 21, 28 days after treatment.


EWM densities and occurrences were dropped by 50% after the 2008 2,4D applications

Goal: Educate Residents About Comprehensive Lake Management

 All 11 lakes in the Eagle River Chain now have Aquatic Plant Management Plans.





What is a Joint Powers Agreement?

How did we get it to pass through all the Municipalities?

What roles did municipalities need to take to pass the agreement?





Commission Operations - Workload Distribution





















		Pre-app	olication	
700				
700 600				- Aquatic biota threshold
500	-			
400				
300				
200	-			
100	No 2.4-D detected at all sites		 Irrigation threshold 	
0	No 2,4-D detected at all sites			-
	□ Cranberry □ Eagle ■ Yellow Birch ■ Watersmeet	Catfish Otter Eagle River A	Voyageur Lynx Eagle River B	Scattering Rice















Results

Water Samples Collected Outside of EWM Treatment Beds


















At the same time as everything else that I have been talking about was happening she was



Meeting with representatives from each municipality; plus 2 representatives from each lake to decide what to do and to try to create an Aquatic Plant Management Plan Having all of the pertinent town boards sign town resolutions.



Performing all of the grant administration, pounding the pavement at town meetings to harness the town's share of the financing... while still in the process of creating nine new lake associations,



With bylaws



Trying to build a can do spirit by having all of the Town of Washington, Cloverland, Lincoln, and the City of Eagle River pass resolutions to monetarily support the commission and EWM management.



She brokered the joint powers agreements through all of the townships. Which made it possible for an organized group of people to work together to pound the pavement at town meetings to harness the town's share of the financing...



And in the timeframe of one year, all but one of the nine lakes had become Qualified Lake Associations And through the creation of nine Qualified Lake Associations, we now had a mechanism in which to finance projects And a network for education and a volunteer base. And it was at this time that the Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission actually formed. And allowed the 2,4D residual monitoring study to march forward.

Accomplishments

- Formation of the Commission
- Joint Powers Agreement.
- Public/Private Partnership
- •Equitable way for municipalities to split costs
- Creation of nine new Qualified Lake Associations with bylaws
- •Secured grants from WDNR for \$200,000.00
- •Mapped EWM along entire Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes

•Thousands of people educated about EWM, 2,4D, importance of lake associations, & the power of the people in local government.

•Calmed tensions of the use of 2,4D Navigate herbicide by conducting the 2,4D Residual Monitoring Study

> 50% reduction in EWM, found 2,4D dissipated rapidly in water column, and was always within EPA standards







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