

2020 41st Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District Annual Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

NASA Memorial Park Shelter
7207 Northshore Lane
Mosey Boat Landing
Brice Prairie
Onalaska, WI 54650

Budget Hearing 5:30 p.m.
Annual Meeting 5:45 p.m.

*Present: Marc Schultz, Sue Schultz, Tim Miller, Ben Lachecki, Mark Knapmiller, Tony Christnovich, Ron Jones, Amy Cooper, Vicki Burke, Ray Marinan, Mark Tierney, Fritz Funk, Don Welch, Connie Welch, Darryl Washa, Doni St. Marie, Scott Pirnstill, Jon Schultz, Rich Wolfe, Jerry Molnar, Barbara Friell

Call to Order – Chairman Marc Schultz called the Budget Hearing to Order at 5:30 p.m. and presented the following **Proposed Lake Onalaska District Budget 2020-2021**. The Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District's Proposed 2020-2021 Budget was approved. This Budget was included in the mailing.

Proposed Lake Onalaska District Budget 2020-2021

INCOME

2019-2020 Actual		2020-2021 Proposed
Interest	\$0	\$0
Maps	\$60	\$0
Donations	\$2450.98	\$18000
Grants	\$0	\$3000 *
Total	\$2510.98	Total \$21000

EXPENSE

2019-2020 Actual		2020-2021 Proposed
Administration	\$342.31	\$350
Annual Meeting	\$382.85	\$400
Social	\$0	\$0
Cost Share	\$0	\$3000 **
Weed cutting	\$140.17	\$17000
Total	\$865.43	\$20750
BMO weed cutting balance	\$2249.41	
General fund balance	\$5102.85	* income from grants
Total	\$7352.26	** LD funds to match grants

Item 1: Call to order - Introductions at 5:37 p.m. by Chairman Marc Schultz.

Item 2: Minutes of 2019 Annual Meeting - Sue Schultz made a motion to approve the Minutes. The motion was seconded by Darryl Washa. The Minutes were approved. Additional Minutes may be found at www.lakeonalaska.org

Item 3: Treasurer's Report 2019-2020 - The 2019-2020 Report was provided by Mark Tierney. Fritz Funk made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Barbara Friell. The Treasurer's Report was approved.

Treasury Report - Weed Cutting Account

Account Type	Nickname	Description	Balance
CHECKING	Non Profit Checking Low Vol.	Non-Interest Business Checking	\$ 2,885.28
	Posted Date	Amount	Currency
	September 4, 2020	\$ 100.00	\$ 2,885.28
	September 4, 2020	\$ 50.00	\$ 2,785.28
	August 28, 2020	\$ 485.87	\$ 2,735.28
	June 17, 2020	\$ 9.41	\$ 2,249.41
	June 8, 2020	\$ (0.10)	\$ 2,240.00
	June 8, 2020	\$ 0.07	\$ 2,240.10
	June 8, 2020	\$ 0.03	\$ 2,240.03
	January 30, 2020	\$ 600.00	\$ 2,240.00
	December 26, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,640.00
	November 14, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,540.00
	November 1, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,440.00
	October 24, 2019	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,340.00
	October 10, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,140.00
	October 9, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,040.00
	September 30, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 940.00
	September 24, 2019	\$ 200.00	\$ 840.00
	September 20, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 640.00
	September 20, 2019	\$ 60.00	\$ 540.00
	September 17, 2019	\$ 50.00	\$ 480.00
	September 16, 2019	\$ 50.00	\$ 430.00
	September 13, 2019	\$ 200.00	\$ 380.00
	September 12, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 180.00

Treasury Report

Account Type	Nickname	Description	Balance
CHECKING	Non Profit Checking Low Vol.	Non-Interest Business Checking	\$ 5,588.05
	Posted Date	Amount	
	September 3, 2020	\$ (143.00)	\$ 5,588.05
	September 1, 2020	\$ 485.20	\$ 5,731.05
	August 14, 2020	\$ 60.00	\$ 5,245.85
	June 17, 2020	\$ 1.48	\$ 5,185.85
	June 4, 2020	\$ (0.22)	\$ 5,184.37
	June 4, 2020	\$ 0.12	\$ 5,184.59
	June 4, 2020	\$ 0.10	\$ 5,184.47
	October 15, 2019	\$ (140.17)	\$ 5,184.37
	September 18, 2019	\$ (142.58)	\$ 5,324.54
	September 18, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 5,467.12
	September 13, 2019	\$ (97.32)	\$ 5,367.12
	September 3, 2019	\$ 100.00	\$ 5,464.44

Item 4: Election of Commissioners – Agenda Item 4 was addressed at the September 14th meeting, Item 5.

Item 5: Budget Adoption for 2020-2021

The proposed 2020-2021 Budget was presented by Marc Schultz. A motion to approve the Budget was made by Sue Schultz and seconded by Darryl Washa. The Budget was approved.

Item 6: Report on Lake District Activities

2020 has been an unusual year with the COVID19 Pandemic. The LOPRD continued to hold meetings however the meetings were conducted via Zoom and Google. Discussion regarding the current and future navigation channel challenges for Lake Onalaska were discussed. Chad and Mark Knapmiller purchased, serviced and operated equipment (one machine and one barge) for the past two years assuming all expenses to do so. A cost of \$30,000 to \$40,000. They will not be able to provide equipment, service, and operation in the future.

Tony Christnovich motion to provide a \$3,000.00 with some type of promisory note to offset the Knapmiller's expenses for past services rendered. Sue Schultz seconded the motion. Fritz Funk stated another option to match the expense – two ways to get the match – purchase the equipment and fund someone to operate the equipment. Access is needed to the Lake, tourism business, recreation, groups that use the Lake, different organizations that use the Lake. Tony Christnovich suggested that a sub-committee be created to pursue options regarding the funding for **access** of the Lake, navigation channels. The committee would look at the idea of a Promisry Note, who owns the Note at the end of the year, possibly doing a special assessment/tax,etc. A committee was formed. Committee members are Tony Christnovich, Connie Welch, Fritz Funk, Ben Lachecki, and Doni St. Marie. The cost per cut has been approximately \$3,000.00 and based on the experience to-date, three to four cuts would be needed. Tim Miller (USFWS) shared there are also benefits for habitat enhancement by cutting channels and that collaborating with the Agency's can be beneficial.

Item 7: Update on Bylaws

The LOPRD is reviewing the current bylaws that were created in 1983 to ensure the LOPRD is in compliance with Chapter 33 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Item 8: Update on Surface Water Grant submission in 2020

Fritz reported that we did apply for a Grant; however we were not one of the recipients. Fritz suggested that we form a Committee to work on a new Grant that would be due in November. The following four people will meet within the next week to discuss further – Fritz, Tony, Ben and Doni

Item 9: Boat Travel Channels weed cutting

The LD is working to fund weed cutting through donations and partnership with local units of government.

Item 10: Agency Reports

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Tim Miller

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

REFUGE UPDATE

***Presented at the Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District Annual Meeting
September 8, 2020***

Biology/Management projects

- **Flowering Rush a New Invasive Species:** Flowering Rush is an aquatic invasive plant that when emergent looks like native rushes, and when submersed appears like native wild celery. It is cryptic unless flowering during low-water summers. It's possible that it was a semi-recent invasion into the UMR system but not identifiable until the low water of 2020. It reproduces through seeds, root bulbils (little root pods that float), and broken root systems. It is highly mobile and readily reroots/resprouts when disturbed by boats, dredging, wildlife, drawdowns and floods. It was discovered in Pool 8 in mid-June, and by mid-July USFWS, WI/MN DNRs, and LTRM staff was mapping it in all pools of the UMR. In the La Crosse District there are 6-8 known small patches of flowering rush plants in Pool 7, including one location in Lake Onalaska. In Pool 8 there are multiple large infestations. The refuge is coordinating the permits for aquatic herbicide application in the future, but removal through digging is NOT recommended. Its food value to North American waterfowl isn't well known. (a map with the locations where it was detected in 2020 is attached).



- **Prairie:** In 2020 skilled technicians conducted surveys on native and restored prairies using the NWRS Prairie Restoration Initiative protocol and the data is still be summarized. Over 135 species were recorded at Brice Prairie. Treatment of woody vegetation in highly-infested areas of Brice Prairie was conducted in August 2020, and if conditions permit other target areas will be treated in September. There will always be an issue of woody plant encroachment due to seed trees such as Siberian elm off-refuge that rain onto the prairie. Control of these woody plants are cyclical based on staffing and availability of seasonal control techniques (herbicide application, hand-removal, mowing, burning). We appreciate the assistance of local volunteers that periodically manually remove woody vegetation in select areas.



- **Forest Inventory:** in 2020, approximately 100 forest inventory sites were completed in Pool 8 around the Root River, some of these confirming willow stands and others inventorying the forest conditions between the main channel and Lawrence Lake. Overall, approximately 590 forest inventory sites have been collected in Pools 7 and 8 since 2017.
- **Slow No Wake Posting and other sign maintenance** – It's that time of year to get out and make sure refuge signs are visible and the "slow no wake"/"voluntary avoidance areas" and "Closed to Migratory Bird Hunting areas" are marked before the start of the waterfowl season.



- **Voluntary Waterfowl Avoidance Areas-** Staff will be deploying the buoys on Lake Onalaska for the Voluntary Waterfowl Avoidance Area. Waterfowl need a place to rest and refuge to feed and gain necessary resources for migration. Please help us by avoiding this area from October 15 to the end of state duck hunting season.
- **Fishing Pier Installed at Fred Funk Boat Landing:** Normal water conditions this spring permitted the contractor to install the new fishing pier at Fred Funk Boat Landing. Fishing use has greatly increased in the last six months due to Covid-19 restrictions and a greater interest in outdoor activities.



- **Upper Halfway Creek Marsh:** Repairs to the dikes and sediment removal is in the works at Upper Halfway Creek Marsh through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant in partnership with Ducks Unlimited. A water control structure and dike on Pool B was repaired last fall.
- **New Staff:** Amy Mueller is joining the staff of the La Crosse District as our new Administrative Support Assistant.
- **HREP (Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects):** were inspected in 2020. Normal water conditions permitted the inspections of some of the HREP project features in Pools 7 and 8. Year long high water conditions in 2019 caused damage to some of the protecting islands and shorelines.

- **Vegetation Cutting on Lake Onalaska:** A Refuge Special Use Permit was issued to the Lake Onalaska Protection and Rehabilitation District for harvesting aquatic vegetation to improve access on an agreed travel corridor. LOPRD volunteers placed the red and green navigation buoys to mark the corridor and harvest path.

Wildlife update!

- **Waterfowl Counts** –Fall migration waterfowl counts will be conducted in the Pool 8 Goose Island Closed Area this year.
- **Waterfowl Disturbance Monitoring on Lake Onalaska Voluntary Waterfowl Avoidance Area:** USGS will be continuing a study to monitor disturbance to resting/feeding waterfowl using the Lake Onalaska Voluntary Waterfowl Avoidance Area. We ask the public to please avoid the area marked with the buoys from October 15th to the end of the state duck season.
- **Black Tern Surveys:** Biology staff conducted Black Tern surveys at Blue, Target and Lawrence Lakes on Pool 8, and at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. Adult numbers were up from 2019 with the greatest concentration on Blue Lake. Lower (more normal) water conditions led to better nesting conditions and greater nesting habitat availability.
- **Bat Surveys:** In 2019 bat detectors were deployed at 15 locations in Pools 7 and 8. The data is still being processed but overall, the most commonly recorded species were little brown, big brown, silverhaired and hoary bats. In some areas of the refuge like the Black River Bottoms and the Root River, tri-colored bats have been detected along the forested-river interface. This is welcomed news since tri-colored bats are one of the species hit hard in hibernation by white-nose syndrome, and their numbers are declining range-wide. A few acoustic records of red bats and evening bats also turned up in the data. State agencies have noted that Evening bats seem to be going through a range expansion into the upper Midwest. Bat detectors have been deployed again this season and we are hopeful that we can gain a better understanding of bat use of this great migratory corridor.



Visitor Services projects

- **Visitor Center/Office Operations related to the Covid-19 outbreak:** The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is working with federal, state, and local public health authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. As an agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is following a three-phased approach to re-opening that is modeled on the White House *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*.

Currently we are in Phase 1 of re-opening and some staff are returning to limited field and maintenance work. The lands and waters of the Refuge are open for public enjoyment, however offices and visitor centers will remain closed. We anticipate re-opening the Visitor Center during Phase 3, on a timeline that will depend on state and local conditions and may move forward or backward in phases to adapt to current conditions.

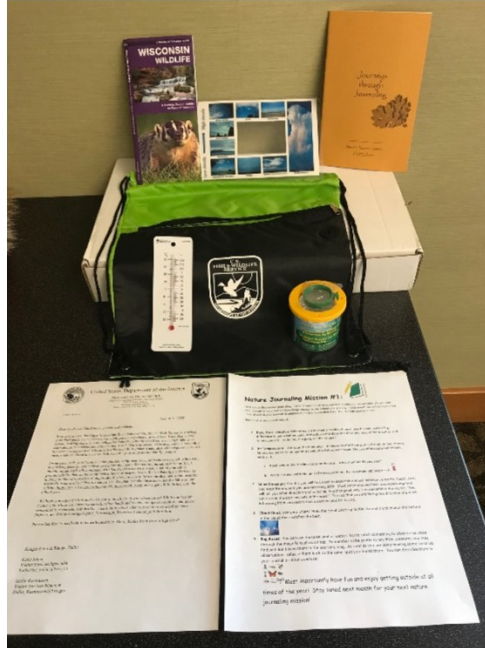
We are committed to increasing access to refuge facilities as quickly as possible when risks to the health and safety of our visitors, staff, and volunteers can be safely mitigated. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again in-person as soon as it's safe to do so and wish everyone healthy and enjoyable adventures outdoors!

- **Environmental Education:** Our partnership with Sand Lake Elementary third graders will look a little different this year as students will not be able to come to the refuge for in-person field trips, BUT, we are very excited to still offer a way for students to connect to nature! Each student will receive a naturalist kit containing a nature journal, weather equipment, a bug jar, and a field guide, and every month we plan to offer students a nature journaling prompt/activity that they can do at home with their families.
- **High visitor use on the Refuge:** Local stores are reporting fishing supplies in high demand, boat sales up, VS team brainstorming ways to interact with new visitors
- **Refuge Trapping and Trap Tag sales:** Refuge trap tag special use permits will be coordinated via mail this fall. Trappers who participated in the 2019 season will receive a packet of information and instructions to receive their trap tags/permit. We'll have a little different leg work with this process this season, but are happy we have a means to facilitate the process even if the Visitor Center is not open.

General Information:

- **Great American Outdoors Act** – Congress passed the “Great American Outdoors Act,” which will provide \$9.5 billion dollars to the Department of the Interior to address deferred maintenance needs at National Parks and other public lands and over \$900 million per year to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for new conservation and recreation opportunities, over the next five years. Read more about the Act here: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-bernhardt-designates-free-free-day-public-lands-commemorate-president-trumps>
- **Hunting and Fishing Opportunities Expanded at 138 National Wildlife Refuges & Fish Hatcheries** - Refuges and fish hatcheries are offering new hunting and fishing opportunities as they open previously closed tracts of land to these forms of recreation. As hunting and fishing participation has generally declined since the 1980s, funding for wildlife conservation has also declined due as state agencies see declines in license purchases and reduced funding through a special excise tax on firearms, ammunition, and fishing gear. This effort to increase hunting and fishing access is aimed at recruiting, retaining, or reactivating outdoor recreationists to both increase the relevancy of our public lands and conservation funding. Read more about the announcement here: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-bernhardt-announces-historic-expansion-hunting-and-fishing-opportunities>

EE Kits for Students at Home Learning

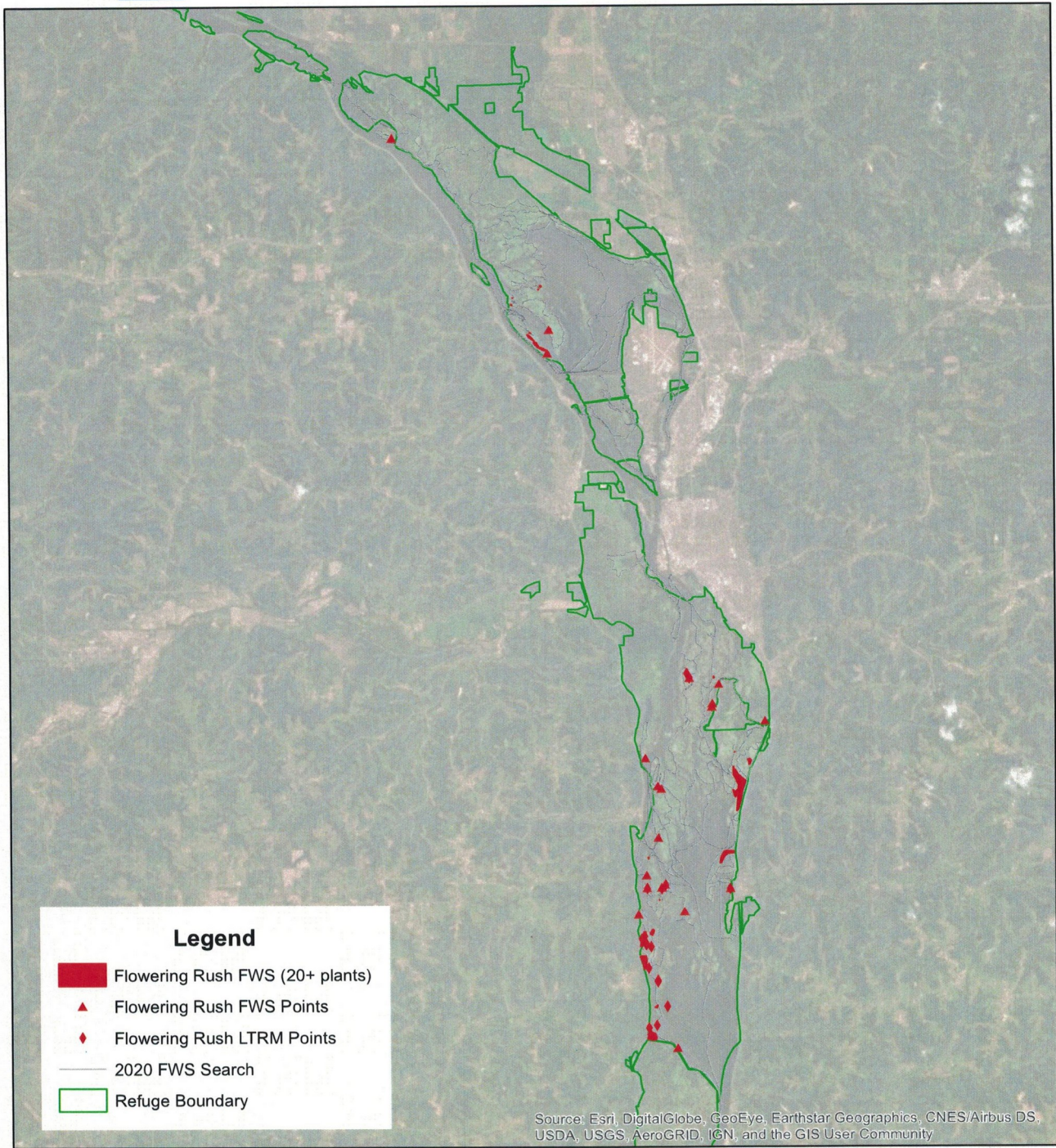


Tim provided hard copies of his report at the meeting for those preferring a hard copy. The Report can also be found at the LOPRD website - www.lakeonalaska.org



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
UMRNRWFR - La Crosse District

Flowering Rush (BUUM) 2020



Last Updated: 20200810 (ERA)
Project Saved as S:\GIS\Projects\
InvasiveControl\FloweringRush

0 2.5 5 Kilometers



A motion to adjourn was made by Sue Schultz and seconded by Vickie Burke. The motion was passed at 6:42 p.m.

RESOURCE: **Lake Tides** is a newsletter for people interested in Wisconsin lakes. It is published by the College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. They welcome articles, letters or other news items for publication and can be reached at www.uwsp.edu/uwexplakesuwexplakes@uwsp.edu or by calling 715.346.2116

LOPRD website: www.Lakeonalaska.org

