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TOWN OF VERNON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
AND PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2010, 6:00 P.M.
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THIRD FLOOR
MEMORIAL BUILDING, TOWN HALL
14 PARK PLACE
ROCKVILLE/VERNON, CT

PRESENT: Conservation Commission: Scott Wieting, Thomas Ouellette, Russel Kunz.
Parks and Recreation Dept.: Bruce Dinnie, Dir.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M. by Bruce Dinnie.

2. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Bruce Dinnie and Thomas Ouellette chronicled the discovery of invasive aquatic vegetation in Valley Falls Pond and Walker Reservoir East, leading to performance by Dr. George W. Knoecklein, Northeast Aquatic Research, of a baseline aquatic plant survey of Walker Reservoirs East and West, and of Valley Falls, Tankerhoosen Dobsonville, Talcotville, South Street and Ecker's Ponds.
- B. Dr. Knoecklein reviewed the results of the baseline aquatic plant survey. He reported that Valley Falls Pond is infested with variable-leaf milfoil and that Walker Reservoir East is infested with variable-leaf milfoil and fanwort. Neither species was observed in any of the other ponds. He emphasized the urgency of removing fanwort from Walker Reservoir East before it becomes established within the Tankerhoosen River, the downstream ponds, and the Hockanum River.

3. DISCUSSION

Attendees and presenters discussed the following remedial measures:

A. Herbicides

Use of 2,4-D (Navigate) and fluridone (Sonar) are recommended for use in Valley Falls Pond and Walker Reservoir East respectively. Proposals for herbicide treatment were prepared by Aquatic Control Technology, Inc. (ACT). Sonar slow release pellets are recommended to accommodate the high rate of flushing in Walker Reservoir East. Treatments can be expected to eliminate invasive plants for 3-5 years, including in Valley Falls Pond even if the source of milfoil is Bolton Notch Pond.

B. Sterile grass carp

If carp are used in Walker Reservoir East, it would be difficult to prevent their migration upstream in Gages Brook or downstream in the Tankerhoosen River. In each case they would threaten the population of native trout in the Tankerhoosen River. It is unlikely that DEP would permit use of carp.

C. Suction dredging

Suction dredging is the most expensive method of removal. It is being used presently to eliminate fanwort in Bantam River. Dr. Knoecklein suggested tracking that project for possible future reference.

D. Winter draw down

Given the high flushing rate in both ponds, the difficulty of completely emptying and drying the ponds, and the unpredictability of necessary cold weather, the success of draw down cannot be assured.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Knoecklein made the following recommendations:

- A. He supports the recommendations of Aquatic Control Technology, Inc.
- B. The Town may wish to consult DEP fisheries biologists to discuss impacts of remedial methodologies on native trout.
- C. He offered to train volunteers to identify fanwort and variable-leaf milfoil and to survey their presence in the Tankerhoosen River and Railroad Brook.
- D. Upper Bolton Lake should be surveyed for fanwort.

5. CONCLUSION

When polled, the majority of attendees expressed support for the proposed herbicide treatment in Valley Falls Pond and Walker Reservoir East. When polled, no one present opposed use of herbicides.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Ouellette
Conservation Commission