

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners
Request for County Board Action/Agenda Item Cover Sheet



To: Chairperson, Aitkin County Board of Commissioners Date: 4-23-14

Via: Roxy Traxler, Interim County Administrator

From: Gordon Prickett

Title of Item:

High Water Plan

Requested Meeting Date: 5-13-14 Estimated Presentation Time: 15 minutes

Presenter: Gordon Prickett

Type of Action Requested (check all that apply)

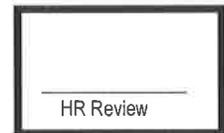
- For info only, no action requested
- For discussion with possible action
- Let/Award Bid or Quote (attach copy of basic bid/quote specs or summary of complex specs, each bid/quote received & bid/quote comparison)
- Approve/adopt proposal by motion
- Authorize filling vacant staff position
- Request to schedule public hearing or sale
- Request by member of the public to be heard
- Item should be addressed in closed session under MN Statute _____
- Approve under Consent Agenda
- Adopt Ordinance Revision
- Approve/adopt proposal by resolution (attach draft resolution)
- Other (please list) _____

Fiscal Impact (check all that apply)

- Is this item in the current approved budget? Yes _____ No _____ (attach explanation)
- What type of expenditure is this? Operating Capital Other (attach explanation)
- Revenue line account # that funds this item is: _____
- Expenditure line account # for this item is: _____

Staffing Impact (Any yes answer requires a review by Human Resources Manager before going to the board)

- Duties of a department employee(s) may be materially affected. Yes No
- Applicable job description(s) may require revision. Yes No
- Item may impact a bargaining unit agreement or county work policy. Yes No
- Item may change the department's authorized staffing level. Yes No



Supporting Attachment(s)

- Memorandum Summary of Item
- Copy of applicable county policy and/or ordinance (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable state/federal statute/regulation (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable contract and/or agreement
- Original bid spec or quote request (excluding complex construction projects)
- Bids/quotes received (excluding complex construction projects, provide comparison worksheet)
- Bid/quote comparison worksheet
- Draft County Board resolution
- Plat approval check-list and supporting documents
- Copy of previous minutes related to this issue
- Other supporting document(s) (please list) Questionnaire and worksheet

Provide (1) copy of supporting documentation NO LATER THAN Wednesday at Noon to make the Board's agenda for the following Tuesday. (If your packet contains colored copies, please provide (4) paper copies of supporting documentation as we do not have a color printer or copier.) Items WILL NOT be placed on the Board agenda unless complete documentation is provided for the Board packets.

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gordmett@crosbyironton.net

April 15, 2014

Aitkin County Board of Supervisors
c/o Sue Bingham
209 Second Street NW
Aitkin, MN 56431

As a follow up to the extreme lake conditions of the summer of 2012, and the temporary boating restrictions that the County enacted, ACLARA surveyed its membership to give you a sense of the public's response.

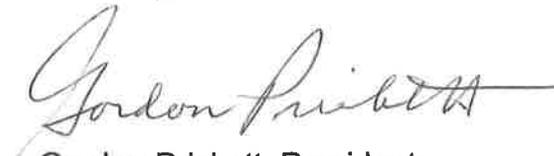
The twenty lake associations in ACLARA were given six questions to send out to their members. On the following pages you will find these questions and a tally of the 165 responses received from member lakes.

In addition there is a detailed worksheet enclosed with *available* lake level elevations for the member lakes of ACLARA. The Highest Recorded Levels in 2012 were well above Ordinary High Water. However, five of the ACLARA lakes have no lake level gages.

Situations vary greatly at individual lakes. Obtaining measurements and determining threat levels was difficult in 2012.

After continuing study and discussion ACLARA has chosen seven representative lakes in the County, termed "Indicator Lakes," where very high water was experienced. We wish to meet with you on **May 13th** at your regular meeting to briefly discuss our plans for cooperation and coordination in case of future extreme weather events.

Sincerely,



Gordon Prickett, President
Aitkin County Rivers And Lakes Association

Enclosures

State Representative, District 10B
Aitkin and Crow Wing Counties
Office: (651) 296-2365
Cell: (218) 851-1713

Sign up for my e-update here:

Our ACLARA group of high water planners has reviewed the records from the flooding events in the county in the summer of 2012. We have consulted with lake associations where the highest lake levels occurred.

In case of another extremely wet season we will work closely with the county board, sheriff, soil and water, and the DNR to advise governmental units and to spread the news around lake country of any emergency measures.

A PLAN FOR HIGH WATER

ACLARA recommends a method for Aitkin County to monitor lake level elevations at 7 representative lakes called "Indicator Lakes."

These lakes: *Big Sandy, Cedar, Farm Island, Minnewawa, Round (in Hazelton Township), Sugar, and Wilkins*, have DNR-installed gauges, and are located across the County.

The accompanying table shows the highest levels recorded at these lakes in 2012, above the Ordinary High Water Level, as determined by the DNR.

We want to ask for your participation in this proposal - that your association consider on your lake what threshold elevation, above the OHWL benchmark, should trigger any no-wake boating restrictions.

For this method to be effective, we will cooperate with lake gauge readers and rain gauge readers on a regular schedule.

ACLARA Indicator Lakes 2014

<u>No.</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>OHW, ft.</u>	<u>HRL*in.</u>	<u>2012 in.</u>	<u>Rep.</u>	<u>"Trigger" Ht.</u>
1.	Big Sandy	1216.6	<u>8.24 ft</u>	<u>6.37 ft</u>	Jim Krezowski	1 to 2 ft
2.	Cedar	1200.3	24.4	19.2	Les Martin	12 in
3.	Farm Island	1255.5	21.0	21.0	Bill Haroldson	15 in
4.	Minnewawa	1224.7	16.4	16.4	Sue Westberg	10 in
5.	Round	1258.6	13.9	13.9	Don Ryan	6 in
6.	Sugar	1295.2	8.0	8.0	Ken Hoffman	5 in
7.	Wilkins	1217.1	17.9	17.9	Gary Rognrud	12 in

* Highest Recorded Level, in inches above Ordinary High Water Level

Enclosure

ACLARA Indicator Lakes 2014

<u>No.</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>OHW, ft.</u>	<u>HRL*in.</u>	<u>2012, in.</u>	<u>Rep.</u>	<u>Trigger Height**</u>
1.	Big Sandy	1216.6	<u>8.24 ft</u>	<u>6.37 ft</u>	Jim Krezowski John Stermer	1 - 2 ft.
2.	Cedar	1200.3	24.4	19.2	Les Martin Jim Spaeth	12 in.
3.	Farm Island	1255.5	21.0	21.0	Bill Haroldson Jim Hausauer	15 in.
4.	Minnewawa	1224.7	16.4	16.4	Sue Westberg	10 in.
5.	Round	1258.6	13.9	13.9	Bob Peterson Bob Williams	6 in.
6.	Sugar	1295.2	8.0	8.0	Ken Hoffman	5 in.
7.	Wilkins	1217.1	17.9	17.9	Gary Rogrud Kari Paulsen	12 in.

*

Highest Recorded Level, in inches above Ordinary High Water Level

**

Trigger elevation - height above OHW where members suggest boating restrictions are needed. These values are subject to further discussion and change.

Enclosure

ACLARA Member Lake Associations:

The recent heavy rains and high water levels have caused many serious problems for lakeshore and other riparian landowners, as well as some inconveniences for lake users. Aitkin County imposed a series of no wake restrictions during this time, in order to minimize the damages to lake shores and property, and there was considerable disagreement about these restrictions.

As a reminder, the County initially placed no wake restrictions on all lakes; then, after determining actual lake levels, the County lifted restrictions on lakes that were less than 12 inches above their Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM), and continued no wake restrictions on lakes that were at least 12 inches higher than their OHWM. Lakes that were 12-18 inches above this level were restricted to 300 foot no wake zones, while those with levels higher than 18 inches above the OHWM were completely no wake. A few weeks later all restrictions were lifted, even though many lakes remained higher than normal.

Now that we have experienced these extreme events and the resulting damages, The Aitkin County Lakes and Rivers Association wants to hear your thoughts about the County's no wake restrictions in general, and your evaluation of whether the restrictions were appropriate for your lake. Please poll your lake association members and send us a summary of their responses. Based on your comments, as well as input from local natural resource agencies, we plan to develop a set of recommendations to guide County policy and responses to future events like this.

Based on your experiences and observations, please comment on the following questions:

We have received 160 responses from residents of 15 lakes, as of 5/31/13

1. Should no wake restrictions be imposed when lake levels rise to extreme highs? If you answer no, please explain why.

Yes: 151 No: 9

2. If you approve of the concept of no wake restrictions, do you agree that the Ordinary High Water Mark is an appropriate benchmark for triggering restrictions? If you answer no, please explain an alternative benchmark.

Yes: 150 No: 7 ??: 3

3. If you approve of the OHWM as a benchmark, what level above this should trigger no wake restrictions?

Less than OHWL: 30 OHWL + 1-12": 62 OHWL + 13-24": 33 Lake Specific: 35

4. Do you think that 300 feet from shore is a useful no wake restriction, or should restrictions apply to the entire lake?

300' OK: 62 Entire Lake: 83 ??: 15

5. If no wake restrictions are required, how long should they remain in force?

Below Threshold: 73 Other: 87

6. Should violations of these no wake regulations result in warnings or fines?

Warnings: 54 Fines: 29 Both: 66 ??: 11

Enclosure

Sheriff Turner

Q1: The vast majority (94%) of respondents support the concept of County-based no-wake restrictions, and they agree that the conditions in summer 2012 warranted action by the County. The very few negative comments downplay the significance of boat wakes compared to the effects of natural wave action.

Q2: Again, 94% agree with using the OHWL as a benchmark, although many did not know the definition of OHWL, or the elevation that is OHWL for their lake.

Q3: There is considerable disagreement among respondents as to what elevation relative to OHWL is an appropriate trigger for no-wake restrictions. More than half of the respondents (58%) think that a threshold of OHWL+ 12" is too high for their lake, and many commented that restrictions should be lake-specific.

Q4: Less than half of the respondents (39%) think that 300' is a useful no-wake restriction, either because it is difficult for boaters to judge 300', because it makes little sense on smaller lakes, or because a regulation based on distance from shore is difficult to enforce.

Q5: Many respondents (46%) think that no-wake restrictions should remain in force until lake elevations drop below the no-wake trigger, and that the restrictions were lifted too soon in 2012.

Q6: The vast majority (93%) of respondents believe that enforcement is necessary, while a majority (59%) agree that fines are warranted, at least after an initial warning.

9/15

Examples of some comments by respondents:

Negative/Opposed to No-wake Restrictions:

1. Natural waves do more damage than boat wakes
2. The solution to high water is to lift docks and sandbag shorelines
3. No-wake restrictions are bad for business and recreation

Positive/Approve of no-wake restrictions with suggestions to improve

1. Publicize the restrictions more often and widely so that everyone is informed
2. Bays should be no-wake longer than entire lake, have lower thresholds, or be permanently no-wake
3. Small lakes should have restrictions for the entire lake.
4. No-wake restrictions should be lake specific, not generic.
5. Wake boats should be banned from small lakes and bays of larger lakes.

8/11/2012

Aitkin County lakes currently with a 2012 lake level gage
Lake Level MN Monitoring Program

DNR PWI ID #	DNR PWI Lake Name	Area	Twp.	ACLARA Lakes	2012-0HW
01-0023-00	Round	577	Shamrock +		* 0.6"
01-0030-HW	Rice (HW @ Hwy 65)	333	McGregor		?
01-0033-00	Minnewawa GD	2512	Shamrock	X	* 16.4"
01-0034-00	Horseshoe	236	Shamrock		?
01-0045-00	Blackface NE	172	Cornish		* 4.6"
01-0057-00	Little Ball Bluff NE	(34)	Ball Bluff +		?
01-0058-00	Vanduse	230	Ball Bluff		* 19.4"
01-0071-00	Davis NE	(42)	Jevne		?
01-0077-00	Rat	405	Workman		21.6"
01-0087-00	Sugar	398	Malmo +	X	* 8.0"
01-0091-00	Rabbit	214	Glen	X	* 17.2"
01-0093-00	Clear	562	Glen	X	0.8"
01-0096-00	Dam	642	Kimberly +	X	* 32.4"
01-0101-00	Long NE	(34)	Fleming		1.24
01-0102-00	Wilkins	372	Fleming	X	* 17.9"
01-0105-00	Fleming	296	Fleming	X	4.2"
01-0123-00	Elm Island Ripple R.	522	Nordland	X	20.4"
01-0125-00	Lone	448	Nordland	X	- 1.2"
01-0136-00	Waukenabo	644	Waukenabo		* 18.0"
01-0137-00	Round	633	Waukenabo		* 5.4"
01-0142-00	Hill GD	808	Hill Lake		27.6"
01-0146-00	Ripple Ripple R.	556	Nordland +	X	27.8"
01-0159-00	Farm Island "	2054	Farm Island +	X	* 21.0"
01-0170-00	Hanging Kettle "	302	Farm Island		20.4"
01-0176-00	Little Pine "	220	Farm Island		* 15.4"
01-0178-00	Spirit "	530	Farm Island	X	1.6"
01-0204-00	Round	767	Hazleton	X	* 13.9"
01-0209-00	Cedar	1769	Farm Island +	X	19.2"

Total 28

RD 22
NE 4
GD 2

14
24 lakes w/
2012 data
* 13/24 HRL
in 2012

from Sandy Fecht, DNR
Program Coordinator

Enclosure