

Rice Lake Drawdown for 2020-2021 signature form

Background to this request

The invasive Curlyleaf Pondweed (CLP) plant has been increasing in overall growth the past several years to reach a density level not seen since prior to the last series of drawdowns ending in 2014-2015. CLP grows under the ice over the winter and prevents native (good) plants from getting established. CLP also adds abundant amounts of nutrients, such as phosphorous, to the water column, which leads to severe algae blooms after the CLP breaks loose from the lake bottom and dies off. Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) has also seen a tremendous upsurge over the past several years where this is now becoming a serious invasive infestation.

A recent aquatic plant survey conducted in June determined that both CLP and EWM should be treated. Approval by at least 75% of the adjacent shoreline homeowners on Rice Lake/Elm Creek would need to be obtained before the City of Maple Grove would submit a formal request for a DNR permit to conduct a drawdown this coming winter of 2020-2021.

What is a Drawdown and why do it?

A drawdown is a method of lowering the water level on a body of water to expose the lake bottom. Invasive exotic non-native aquatic plants such as Curlyleaf Pondweed and Eurasian Water Milfoil are embedded in the lake sediment waiting to grow again in the next season. The decrease in the density of Curlyleaf and elimination of Milfoil will allow the native plants to flourish, which is one of the changes in the lake which we noticed after the first drawdowns in the 1990's. If the correct weather conditions occur (ground freezes before snow cover), it is possible to "freeze out" many of these nuisance seedlings and prevent them from growing.

A drawdown is a very cost-effective alternative to reducing unwanted nuisance plant growth; other methods such as spraying with an herbicide can cost thousands of dollars and only offer control for a small percentage of the entire lake. Cutting weeds with a harvester can cost well over \$20,000 per year (this is what Weaver Lake has been doing year after year). Rice Lake has been fortunate to be controlled by a man-made dam (located behind Maple Grove Senior High School) which can lower the lake level by up to 5 feet, exposing more than 40% of the lake bottom. Results achieved by a drawdown on Rice Lake can be very positive. The lake level usually returns to normal in early spring in less than 1 week after the gate at the dam has been closed.

Drawdown Request Process

For those unfamiliar with the procedure, the City of Maple Grove would request a drawdown from the Minnesota DNR when one is deemed necessary. Lake management experts (such as Steve McComas from Blue Water Science and James Johnson from Freshwater Scientific Services) have suggested Rice Lake conduct drawdowns. The last drawdown in 2014-2015 was deemed very successful by providing the most weed-free and high clarity water in many years.

The City Council must approve a drawdown so the City Engineering department can "pull the plug" on the dam. In the spring, normal water levels are restored within 2 weeks based on past drawdown experiences.

What will it cost?

The City of Maple Grove will pay for all costs regarding the drawdown (including DNR permit and labor necessary) to conduct a Drawdown on Rice Lake this fall/winter. Typically, this cost is less than \$250. The drawdown will commence in October, 2020. A letter will be sent to all Lakeshore Owners indicating this timing so boats can be removed from the lake before the water is too low.

Will other activities take place during the drawdown?

This is also a good time to clean up shorelines, improve shoreline stabilization, and do other work along the lake/creek banks. The City of Maple Grove would be asked to assist in this effort. This may also be a good time to help reduce/capture nuisance fish like carp and bullhead which contribute to the poor lake quality.

By signing your name below, you are authorizing the Rice Lake Area Association (RLAA) permission to present this request to the City of Maple Grove in order to pursue a Minnesota DNR permit for a drawdown in the winter of 2020-2021. For more details, feel free to visit the RLAA website at (<http://RiceLake.Homestead.com/>).

Thank you,

Rice Lake Area Association Board of Directors

Printed Name _____

Printed Lake Address _____ ***Yes, I support a Drawdown to
be conducted fall/winter 2020-2021***

Comments: _____

Signature _____ Date _____