

ELOSTA Monthly Membership meeting

Wednesday June 15, 2005

Minutes

(Also available on www.elosta.org)

- President Charlie Ames called the fourth monthly meeting to order at 7:12 PM in Gander Mountain's Lodge Meeting Room in the Cicero store. Thirty one members/guests attended to hear Dave MacNeill's presentation concerning the introduction and advancement of "Exotic Species in the Great Lakes. Specifically, Lake Ontario.
- Charlie called attention to the store's 9:00 PM closing time and the need to move the meeting along. His motion to accept the last meeting's minutes as presented in the May Newsletter was seconded and unanimously accepted.
- Treasurer Tom Lott presented his Financial Report for the period May 18 – June 15, 2005. Deposits from the sonar raffle, dues, and Newsletter advertisement fees totaled \$805.00. Checks written to PIP for the April & May issues of the Newsletter, Newsletter editing, and the barge stocking donation totaled \$1,465.61. ELOSTA's net savings and checking account for the period total \$8,634.48. The Net-Pen account remains unchanged at \$1819.59. Tom's report was accepted and approved as presented. Copies of the report were distributed to the officers.
- At 7:30 PM Charlie introduced Dave MacNeill from Sea Grant at SUNY Oswego. Dave brought the membership up to date on the imminent introduction??? of Asian carp and the Northern Snakehead to Lake Ontario and it's tributaries. He also spoke briefly about the round goby, spiny water fleas, and the Mitten Crab which is rapidly advancing up the St. Lawrence River.
- Charlie Ames thanked Dave at 8:10 PM and resumed the business meeting. He called attention to ELOSTA's 26th annual picnic which has been scheduled to start at noon on Saturday August 6th at the VFW pavilion on State Rte 3 south of Mexico. Charlie called for help to work at the picnic and/or contact vendors for donations to use as door prizes. He announced that a Board of Directors' Meeting would be scheduled in the near future to discuss these issues. Interested persons who would like to attend the meeting and help out should leave their name and phone number with him.
- Doug Fuegel reported that green algae has covered the walleye ponds at Cape Vincent. The bloom is attributed to the long period of exceptionally hot temperatures and the pre-treatment of the ponds with nutrient rich manure. If all goes well healthy fish will be released to the lake in 2-3 weeks.
- Doug also reported that the barge stocking effort here in the Eastern Basin came off on schedule. Thank you letters are being sent out to the major contributors. This was a cooperative endeavor that initiated lake-wide support.
- Doug emphasized the need to become involved in the review of the International Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River Study. Numerous public meetings have been scheduled in New

York and Canada to obtain input concerning three proposed operating rule curves that are being considered to regulate Lake Ontario's seasonal water levels for various, often conflicting, purposes. The membership's boaters, fishermen, and property owners will all be affected. For more information about the meetings and the Study contact: Arleen Kreuzsch at 716-879-4438. Website is: www.losi.org.

- Bud Duell (Old Hickory) reported that he and Skip Geppner took the first shift this year and tended the five Oswego salmon and steelhead netpens between 7-9 each morning for five days a week. The fish have been released and there were very few losses.

It was noted from the floor that Zeceda Harwood faithfully fed the skamania in the Little Salmon River net-pen five times a day until the date of release.

- Jerry Lougnot called for help with the picnic and the collection of donations.

- At 8:50 PM Charlie thanked all those in attendance and made a motion to close the meeting at 8:40 PM. That motion was seconded and carried. *Mac MacKenzie Secretary*

Exotics in the Great Lakes

Member Dave MacNeill, a fishery biologist with Sea Grant SUNY, Oswego, presented an interesting overview concerning invasive species in the Great Lakes. He focused on the four species of Asian Carp, goby, and northern snakhead that represent imminent threats but, cautioned there are many more opportunistic vertebrate and invertebrate aliens poised on our doorstep.

It's not what is going to happen "**IF**" these species arrive but, what is going to happen "**WHEN**" these species arrive. He emphasized that there is, currently, a great deal of uncertainty regarding the outcome. Undoubtedly, there could be some major changes to the Lake Ontario fishery as we know it; but, biologically, it is unlikely that the ecosystem would be totally destroyed. by Asian carp.

What is of immediate concern is the lake-wide potential for significant adverse socio/economic impacts. Our representatives must be made aware that ecological risk studies are desperately needed to determine the level of impact and the priorities that are required to control or manage these non-indigenous influences. Right now he said "... we know so little about the outcome..." "It is easier to predict the weather".

Scientists are pooling their efforts in an attempt to determine how these alien invasions progress. With the transportation network available today all ecosystems are at risk – not just the Great Lakes. It is known that most attempts by new species to become established fail. Only about 10% succeed. There are several biological theories regarding these attempted takeovers and, as usual, there are exceptions to all of them.

Most of the information available concerning these outsiders is from documentation obtained from their place of origin. The black and bighead carps are filter feeders, the common and grass carps are aquatic vegetarians that muck up the water, and black carp prefer mollusks.

All five species are temperature tolerant, can become quite large, reproduce rapidly, and they have big appetites. These attributes give them a significant competitive edge.

The northern snakehead and round goby could be real problems – but again, we just don't know at this point. The snakehead's diet, for example, is 90% fish. It has the ability to survive out of water for short periods and it can migrate short distances over land. On the other hand, they must breathe free air to supplement oxygen provided by their gills. This requirement could limit their ability to survive under a persistent ice sheet. In the case of the goby and smallmouth – it might boil down to the rate of predation vs. the rate of recruitment.

According to Dave – control of these species and future immigrants poised in the wings is not going to be easy. Simply replacing foreign freshwater ballast with seawater before seagoing vessels enter the Great Lakes system will do little to control salt tolerant species like the spiny water flea or dormant species protected by bilge sludge. It is also important to note that all of the carp species and the snakehead were intentionally imported for food, personal aquariums, and weed control in aquaculture ponds.

Is there a bright side ?? Dave reiterated “ we don't know at this point”. Bighead are reputed to taste like canned tuna when processed and the silver (flying) carp might turn out to be a great sport fish. The invading zebra mussel has essentially been replaced by its invading cousin, the quagga. In turn, the quagga might have peaked as a result of improved water quality and a reduction of available nutrients. Dave had nothing good to say about the hairy clawed Chinese Mitten Crab that apparently exists to dig holes and eat everything in sight.

Mac MacKenzie