

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Wednesday, April 28, 2021**

1. Call to Order

President Spence called the April 28, 2021 special board meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. via online video conference.

Present: President Jon Spence, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Secretary Jen Oknich, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz.

Others: Mike Kinney, Emily Heinz, Garrett Miller (CLFLWD staff); Meghan Funke, (Emmons & Olivier Resources).

2. 2020 Audit

Auditor, Abdo Eick and Meyers (AEM) pre-recorded an 8-minute presentation on the 2020 audit, which was played during the meeting. Treasurer Schmaltz noted that the reserve fund at yearend was at 7% of the 2021 budget, which is lower than ideal. Administrator Kinney noted the District is still waiting on the final management letter from AEM, and the audit staff has confirmed that the numbers in the audit financial report are not going to change at this point. He noted the District does not need to submit the audit to the State until the end of June, but the District’s Annual Report is due to the state on Friday. Mr. Kinney indicated the District’s preference has been to include finalized audit numbers in the Annual Report.

Manager Schmaltz moved to accept the Abdo, Eick & Meyers, LLP prepared Management Letter and Annual Financial Report of the Comfort Lake Forest-Lake Watershed District for the year ended December 31, 2020 contingent upon review by the Board Treasurer and counsel, and direct staff to forward to the State of MN as required. Seconded by Manager Oknich. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

3. Comfort Lake & Little Comfort Lake Diagnostic Study Report & Presentation

Dr. Meghan Funke presented the findings of the Comfort Lake & Little Comfort Lake Diagnostic Study including a summary of background information, lake characteristics, watershed characteristics, pollutant sources, measurable goals, implementation plan, and

next steps. The District's adaptive management cycle includes tributary monitoring, diagnostic monitoring (i.e., this study), project feasibility, design & implementation, and effectiveness monitoring. The focus of this study was both Comfort Lake Management District (LMD) and Little Comfort LMD, since these two lakes are so closely connected. Dr. Funke outlined the District's past work in the Comfort and Little Comfort LMDs, which fed into this study. As it relates to lake hydrology, Dr. Funke recommended the District pursue flow tracer monitoring to better understand the connectivity between the two lakes through the culvert under Highway 8. Regarding water quality, Comfort Lake is slightly eutrophic, and Little Comfort Lake is eutrophic. She clarified that a reasonable goal for District lakes is to be mesotrophic (slightly better water quality than eutrophic). For comparison, Lake Superior is considered oligotrophic which is very clear; much clearer than the District would expect for its lakes.

Manager Anderson asked for clarification about the lakes' phosphorus to nitrogen relationship and why there are so many algae blooms in District lakes. Dr. Funke explained that multiple factors play a role in algae blooms including climate - ice melts sooner and the lakes stratify and heat up. The District can't control the water temperature, so it aims to reduce the nutrient input (phosphorus). Manager Anderson noted previous studies found native aquatic vegetation to be low in Comfort Lake. Dr. Funke explained native plants have increased in recent years. She noted that Blue Water Science has suggested that Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) eventually reaches an equilibrium with native plants. Manager Anderson suggested the District keep a close eye on native plant diversity during its next point-intercept survey on Comfort Lake. Dr. Funke explained sediment core and stratification data suggest that internal phosphorus loading is more of a problem for Little Comfort Lake than for Comfort Lake. Dr. Funke described land cover in each LMD. Comfort has more developed land, whereas Little Comfort has more agricultural.

Dr. Funke described pollutant sources. The majority for Comfort Lake comes from the Sunrise River inlet, and the majority for Little Comfort Lakes comes from the Itasca Avenue inlet. Manager Anderson indicated some additional inputs may be present for Comfort Lake. Dr. Funke explained this study focused on the larger inlets, but these additional inlets are being monitored and can be investigated further. In this report, the additional inlets mentioned are largely captured as part of the direct drainage area which comprises 4% of runoff to Comfort Lake. Dr. Funke recommended the District set a reduction goal and implement some projects in the direct drainage area. She explained the District's models and pollutant load estimates seem to be more accurate than other land cover-based models because of how much monitoring the District does.

Manager Schmaltz noted that there has been past discussions about a high sediment load entering Comfort Lake; if this is the case, why isn't internal loading higher? Dr. Funke explained there is a difference between sediment and sedimentation - a highly eutrophic lake will fill in with sediment faster. Contributions from the watershed factor in as well. There is a lot of sediment that gets discharged to Comfort Lake and Little Comfort Lake, but it is flashy in nature (i.e., highly variable based on storm events). In years 2011 and 2012, there were higher sediment loads upstream of Bixby Park and in Bixby Park and Shallow Pond. The depressional landscape allows sediment to build up in these depressions,

then a big rain event will cause a big load of sediment to show up in the data. Manager Anderson indicated these act like point sources, in a way. Dr. Funke indicated the bottom line is that Shallow Pond is acting as a sediment and phosphorus sink, treating the runoff from upstream, but it won't be able to stay that way forever. The District should plan to clean out Shallow Pond sometime in the future so that it doesn't switch from a sink to a source.

Manager Anderson asked why the tax forfeit project isn't noted in the study more. Dr. Funke indicated that while it will help with phosphorus reductions, it will also increase water storage and reduce sediment loading. Manager Anderson requested the report be revised to include enhanced language regarding ditches serving as stormwater conduits.

Dr. Funke walked through measurable goals and total phosphorus reduction scenarios. Getting Little Comfort Lake down to 30 µg/L phosphorus concentration will result in a large reduction to Comfort Lake, requiring less of a reduction from the Sunrise River inlet and the direct drainage area. Results from the Little Comfort Lake paleolimnological study will be used to determine if a 30 µg/L phosphorus concentration scenario is feasible. If Little Comfort Lake only gets down to 40 µg/L, more reductions will be required from Sunrise River and direct drainage to get Comfort Lake to its long-term sustainable water quality goals. Bottom line is that the lake needs a total load reduction; it doesn't care where exactly it comes from.

Dr. Funke described potential projects to address the remaining phosphorus loads as well as projects to address sediment loading. Manager Anderson noted the farm on Heath Avenue recently sold and the livestock (goats) are no longer present. Dr. Funke reviewed the proposed implementation schedule including estimated phosphorus reductions and construction or program costs. Manager Anderson requested Dr. Funke total the phosphorus reductions in the table.

Next steps include tributary monitoring, diagnostic modeling as a result of the 2021 Little Comfort paleolimnological core; project feasibility for shoreline survey, Indian trail, and Shallow Pond; design & implementation on Sunrise Tax Forfeit and Little Comfort Lake projects; effectiveness monitoring on Broadway Avenue iron enhanced sand filter and Target "Big Box" stormwater retrofits.

Manager Anderson had several comments on the report which Dr. Funke noted and will use to update the report accordingly. Manager Anderson suggested the District perform monitoring at the Highway 8 ditch in order to get a baseline. Manager Schmaltz recommended against doing any monitoring prior to the Highway 8 reconstruction project.

The presentation slides are available at www.cflwd.org/4-28-21_special_board_meeting.php.

Manager Schmaltz moved to accept the Comfort Lake & Little Comfort Diagnostic Study Report with the revisions discussed. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

4. Lake Association Cost-Share Program

Manager Anderson indicated the District’s community grant program has been underutilized over the last 15 years or so. She recommended broadening the grant program in order to fund initiatives undertaken by lake associations. The eligible projects would be broadened beyond non-point source pollution reduction to include things like public education and aquatic invasive species treatment. Due to the size differential between Forest Lake and other lakes, Manager Anderson recommended having different funding guidelines for each lake. For example, Forest Lake may have a total grant amount of up to three times higher than the other lakes. She recommended managers review the draft program guidelines and discuss further at the next board meeting. She explained the focus of this program is based on the Minnesota Clean Water Roadmap which describes recreational utility. Manager Schmaltz indicated he would provide comments on the materials to Manager Anderson.

5. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – May 13, 2021

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

Jen Oknich, Secretary _____