

**Minutes of Joint Meeting of The
Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District and
City of Scandia
Wednesday, April 1, 2015
14727 209th St. N. Scandia, MN**

1. Welcome and Introductions- Mayor Randall Simonson

Mayor Simonson welcomed attendees.

Attendees representing City of Scandia: Mayor Randall Simonson, Councilmembers Jim Schneider, Dan Lee, Chris Ness and Bob Hegland, and Kristina Handt (Administrator)

Attendees representing Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD): President Dick Damchik, Managers Jon Spence, Jackie Anderson, Wayne Moe and Steve Schmaltz, Mike Kinney (Administrator), Emily Schmitz (Watershed Technician) and Ryan Peterson (Intern)

Others: Margie Schmidt and Beryl Halldorson (Scandia residents and Bone Lake Association)

2. Bone Lake Fish Barriers

Administrator Kinney thanked the City Council for inviting the District. He stated that newly extended grates have been installed at the fish barriers in the last few days. The barriers were redesigned to add more surface area to allow more water to flow into the grates. This reduces debris and accommodates large rain events. The existing grates can be removed and replaced with stop-logs to completely restrict the flow of water and keep carp from moving into the lake. The Bone Lake system is unique for carp management.

In response to Ms. Halldorson's question about a turtle friendly re-design, Administrator Kinney responded that in discussions with the District engineer, the contractor and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), options and cost were evaluated. Herpetologists also reviewed the options and all agreed that turtles will be able to move away from the face of the grates safely.

The barriers prevent the carp from getting into the shallows to spawn. Regarding the effect on other fish, Administrator Kinney responded that carp expert, Dr. Peter Sorenson, of the University of Minnesota had interns sit at other fish passages and track fish movement. All fish are temperature sensitive with regard to spawning and Dr. Sorenson felt comfortable with the ability of other fish to spawn and survive in the lake. But this is a long-term issue that will be watched and, if needed, the water flow through the pipe can be adjusted to let fish in to spawn before the carp will spawn.

In response to Ms. Halldorson's question about a carp harvest last year, Administrator Kinney stated that the DNR issues one commercial fishing permit by county per year. The current commercial fisherman felt the number of carp remaining in Bone Lake was not

significant and he was not willing to harvest. Another difficulty of seining in the lake is the debris on the bottom which varies from boat motors to tree stumps. The District has submitted a grant proposal to Washington County for carp management activities, which the District will do regardless of the grant. St. Mary's University fisheries, using the Sorenson protocol, will do an assessment of the carp population. Some of the carp that come to the surface during the assessment will be tagged and released. Using telemetry on the tagged carp, it is possible to locate clusters as they herd together in winter. Steve McComas of Blue Water Science will do an assessment of the bottom debris and will try to arrange for the removal of the obstructions. Ms. Halldorson stated that removing carp had done the most to improve water quality. Administrator Kinney summarized the barrier project. Since the barrier system was installed in 2012, it has been working well. Carp do not migrate upstream until they reach a particular size and then they are too big to get through the barrier. The stop-logs act like a filtration system and when all the logs are in place nothing can get through.

3. Update on AIS Program, Grants and Management Plans

Administrator Kinney reported that last year has been a turning point from the state-wide standpoint. The state provided \$10 million to counties for pass-through funding for AIS related work. The DNR has had the lead on AIS since Eurasian watermilfoil was discovered in water bodies in the 1980s, but the agency is limited and not always responsive to local needs. The Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District is currently ahead of the curve compared to most other watershed districts in the state. The CLFLWD Board has agreed to take over AIS work that the lake associations have been doing. A curlyleaf pondweed assessment was done for water quality. In the past, the Board considered watermilfoil more of a recreational issue, but now in the context of AIS it is an issue. This year curlyleaf pondweed assessments and treatments are planned for Bone and Moody Lakes. Eurasian watermilfoil assessments and treatments on Bone Lake have been scheduled as necessary. Carp management will continue as previously mentioned.

Ms. Halldorson asked about milfoil mats blocking the sun so native vegetation can't grow. Administrator Kinney responded that many natives immerse in June before milfoil. But milfoil treatments are not permitted by the DNR if lily pads are in the area. In that case, hand pulling can be done. Steve McComas is working with the District on assessments and treatments. Manager Anderson described how the assessments are very important. Mr. McComas tests soils around the lake to determine what sections of lake will sustain milfoil. The Bone Lake assessment was done last year and results are posted on the District website. This year Mr. McComas will do additional lake assessments.

Administrator Kinney reported that the District will be looking at funding additional boat launch hours for AIS inspections. The District intends to keep key stakeholders included in the communications about the AIS work. Other educational elements are outreach to property owners and boaters at launches. Last year 73 boats came in from lakes with Eurasian watermilfoil. At an AIS Summit, the DNR was asked to consider closing off launches on some lakes and only renting boats. The number of infested lakes keeps rising which affects fishing and recreation. The economic impact gets legislators' attention.

4. Proposed Work Upstream of Bone Lake and at the Moody Lake Drainage Area

Moody Lake is impaired and drains to Bone Lake, affecting Bone Lake's water quality. The Board has a strategy of working at the top of the watershed and moving downstream. Last year the Board undertook a Moody Lake Diagnostic Study. Monitoring over a couple of seasons identified four high loading areas that contribute the bulk of the phosphorus. This year, the District will be coordinating with property owners—of which one person owns property in three of the four areas—to develop some interest in voluntary best management practices (BMPs) projects. If projects can be done in these four high-load areas, water quality can be improved. From there, an alum treatment (a chemical compound that binds phosphorus) could be considered for Moody Lake. This winter a University of St. Thomas professor and intern took core samples of Moody Lake. Samples two meters down - even in the deepest part of the lake - were still muck. This further indicates the extent of external loading resulting in internal phosphorus loading and the need for an alum treatment. The coring could also identify the dates and rates of the sedimentation if the District was to decide to proceed with that kind of analysis.

Manager Moe noted that in one of the high-loading areas, cattle exclusion projects have been done. Administrator Kinney added that some work was done in the ponds. The wetlands generally take in a lot of sediment. When they get full, they become a source, discharging high phosphorus concentrations. Remediation is the only option. Alum treatment is not usually done in wetlands. The pond is highly impaired and the culvert area is somewhat plugged. Ms. Halldorson asked if the muck can be taken out of Moody Lake. Administrator Kinney responded no, but the muck can be removed in smaller ponds. This is being done by a company in Wisconsin using a machine that drives along the bottom sucking up the muck and releasing the water. But alum treatment is likely a cheaper route.

In response to a question about natural atrophy of a lake or pond, Administrator Kinney replied that core sampling could accurately determine pre-settlement sedimentation and the rate of accumulation. Regarding wetlands, the DNR allows scraping to the pre-settlement sediment level in some cases. Manager Anderson stated that this underscores the importance of BMPs. Moody and Bone Lakes are receiving agricultural runoff, which needs to be cleaned up, and then by addressing Moody Lake before addressing Bone Lake. People are now starting to understand this.

Administrator Kinney stated that just as EOR conducted a diagnostic study of the Moody Lake watershed, the Board approved a diagnostic study of the Bone Lake drainage area. The goal, as in Moody Lake, is to pinpoint problem sites. A bit of data was collected in Bone Lake last year and data collection will continue this year. Identifying the hot spots allows the District to do projects that will capture the most phosphorus. Ms. Schmidt asked if first-year data identifies a very significant load, would the District move forward. Manager Anderson responded that the District has done this, but wants to target projects with the highest phosphorus reduction. A unit cost per reduction is applied to help prioritize projects. The diagnostic study will include the Melanie Trail wetland. Manager Anderson stated that, in theory, wetlands should trap sediment and reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the lake, but there aren't enough wetlands in the area to achieve this. Administrator Kinney added that last year the District did an assessment with the Chisago Soil and Water

Conservation District to identify the top 50 wetlands for potential restoration. Plans are to talk with property owners about restoration projects, which could potentially include federal grant and District cost share funds. Ms. Halldorson stated that the City can be involved to ensure people don't build too close to wetlands or fill them in. Administrator Handt stated that wetland setbacks are always something the City considers when reviewing building permit applications.

4. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Administrator Handt reviewed the example MOU between the City and Carnelian-Marine St. Croix Watershed District. The first page provides background on the District and City water management plans. The second page formalizes the City's practices, such as the City provides zoning permit, EIS and EAW applications to the District and generally incorporates District comments into the conditions of the permits. The City continues to work with the watershed districts. If the City gets inquiries about issues within shoreland or floodplains areas, the City notifies the districts. The City and District conduct site visits together, if necessary, and both report violations. If the District receives inquiries, the City coordinates review of the applications and provides comments. There is nothing in here that would change practices the City is doing now, but if there is anything that folks want changed, let staff know and this can be further discussed.

Ms. Halldorson asked if DNR and District permits prohibit cutting trees close to a lake. Administrator Handt responded that the DNR exempts cutting trees in the road right-of-way for safety reasons and this is incorporated into city rules. Manager Moe asked that if there are any ordinance violations, such as the incidents on Bone Lake where people cleared a large area, is there any interest from the City to fine or enforce. He added that the District could be able to help if there is a lawsuit, depending on the legal issues. Administrator Handt stated that for violations, the City would need to look at this more broadly and it is a legal question for the lawyers. Administrator Kinney noted that Woodbury has a substantial penalty for tree removal and Shakopee requires a 3-to-1 replacement. Removal is a concern for the Watershed District Board. There are more tree removals on Bone Lake and on urban lakes. The natives, such as cottonwoods and willows, are usually the first ones taken because people see them as less desirable. But these trees are preventing erosion and are critical to maintaining the shoreline. The District gets calls for restoration, but replacement won't be as good as those natives. According to the DNR, people can have access to their shore. But a tree-voided property is not natural and the shore will erode. In response to Manager Damchik's question about the Council's position on the Governor's proposal for a 50-foot buffer zone, Administrator Handt answered that the Council has not discussed this. Administrator Kinney added that Mr. McComas has been documenting the state of shoreline property. There is now a photographic record on Bone Lake from 2013. The City can use this to document tree cutting. Administrator Handt added that the City does not have investigators, but rather relies on people reporting tree cutting and can use these tools to help follow-up. At this time the City does not have plans to adopt a new tree ordinance, but will take comments. Ms. Schmidt, when she and Administrator Handt met, noted some city property on the south side of 238th Street where re-vegetation projects could occur. Having garbage containers at DNR boat launches was discussed and District staff will follow up with the DNR.

Thanks were extended for the meeting. Manager Anderson thanked the City Council and staff for their continued help and cooperation.

Mayor Simonson stated that the meeting with recess for 5 minutes and Scandia staff and council will reconvene for the second half of their meeting, thus ending the workshop between the CLFLWD and the City of Scandia.