

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE  
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE  
WATERSHED DISTRICT  
Thursday, April 16, 2020**

**1. Call to Order**

President Spence called the April 16, 2020 special board meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. via online teleconference.

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

Absent: Secretary Jen Oknich, Manager Jim Dibble.

Others: Mike Kinney, Emily Heinz, Garrett Miller (CLFLWD staff); Meghan Funke, Camilla Correll, Cecilio Olivier, Jason Naber, Rosie Russell (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Matt Downing (Washington Conservation District); Keegan Lund (MN Department of Natural Resources); Alena DeGrado (Washington County); Meg Duhr (MN Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center); Steve McComas (Blue Water Science); Jeff Berg (MN Department of Agriculture).

**2. Watershed Management Plan Update – Groundwater, Upland Resources, Aquatic Invasive Species**

Attendees introduced themselves and Camilla Correll and Jason Naber facilitated the discussion of groundwater, upland resources and aquatic invasive species. There was discussion about the CLFLWD's four lake management districts (Bone Lake, Forest Lake, Little Comfort Lake, and Comfort Lake) potentially having different priority levels for various goals since each lake district has unique characteristics. For example, some lake management districts may require a greater emphasis on upland resource management in the form of preserving naturally-vegetated land from urban development.

Groundwater

Ms. Correll displayed maps from the Lower St. Croix Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) report showing areas within CLFLWD that may be particularly important for groundwater protection. Jeff Berg explained that the MN Department of Agricultural (MDA) regulates fall application of nitrogen fertilizer in some areas, which is another factor to consider in prioritizing groundwater protection locations. Manager Schmaltz indicated that groundwater is a relatively new area for CLFLWD and the District should be proactive in it. Manager Anderson suggested that the District's rules be revised to address groundwater issue areas. Staff and Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR) were directed to develop an executive summary or section in the Land and Water Resource Inventory that summarizes what information/programs are available and where the critical groundwater management areas are to inform decision-making. Manager

Schmaltz suggested that CLFLWD should rely on agencies like Washington County for groundwater planning support. There was general agreement that groundwater goal D: “Coordinate efforts with Counties through groundwater plans and participation in Washington County Water Consortium” would be better classified as an objective rather than a goal.

### Upland Resources

Diagnostic studies may help decide needs and priority levels for upland protection and management. Manager Anderson suggested that diagnostic studies should be completed or updated for each lake district. She indicated the development in the Comfort Lake management district is quickly converting natural habitats into developed, impervious areas. Manager Anderson indicated that the CLFLWD is not anti-development but is in favor of smart development. There was discussion about upland ecosystem services, which can be difficult to quantify and measure. A study to quantify these services may be a first step to identify key upland areas to protect and protection methods. Groundwater recharge is another factor to consider in identifying key upland areas for protection.

### Aquatic Invasive Species

There was discussion about aquatic invasive species’ (AIS) impacts on lake recreational utility and economic value of shoreline properties. Goal priority tiers may not only be dependent on lake district, but also on specific species such as Eurasian watermilfoil. Steve McComas suggested that AIS management is subject to three elements: economics, technology, and politics. He recommended the District be familiar with the latest research, so it is prepared to handle new invasions, such as starry stonewort, for example.

Manager Anderson expressed concern about lakeshore property owners taking invasive plant management into their own hands. She indicated that CLFLWD should oversee all invasive plant management in Comfort Lake to ensure it is being done properly. While the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) should be regulating all chemical treatments and some mechanical treatments, Matt Downing suggested that it would be beneficial for CLFLWD to take a more active leadership role in coordinating treatments. Emily Heinz noted that CLFLWD has a history of managing Eurasian watermilfoil in Comfort Lake through the DNR’s Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) permit which only allows treatment of the invasive species and prohibits impacts to nearby native plants such as water lilies. As such, treatment areas have been limited in the past based on water lily presence, as surveyed by DNR. She suggested that most shoreline homeowners are likely more interested in non-targeted treatment in order to clear a pathway from their shoreline to open water, i.e. treatment of native plants as well as the invasive. Such broad-spectrum treatments are handled under the DNR’s Aquatic Plant Management (APM) permit. Manager Anderson suggested that a local subwatershed tax assessment could be implemented to fund additional AIS management efforts on certain lakes.

There was discussion about AIS prevention and potential new invasions. In 2019 zebra mussels were discovered in Bone Lake and a rapid response project was initiated to attempt

eradication before the invasion spread. CLFLWD coordinated with multiple partners, including Washington Conservation District and DNR, to perform a pilot chemical treatment at the public launch area. The rapid response process was widely seen as a good example/format to use for future invasions. It was noted that public outreach could be increased, which will help prevention efforts. Suggestions included holding seminars and/or webinars to let individuals know what steps they can take to prevent the spread of AIS, improving/standardizing signage at public launches and other lake access points, making informational pamphlets available all summer, and holding an annual seminar in each lake management district as a reminder of what is happening in and on the lakes. There was discussion about strategically closing some public boat launches and unregulated lake accesses to boaters and redirecting them to launches with a watercraft inspector present. Matt Downing suggested that outreach to lake service providers should be increased, as he has seen some providers trying to install docks and boat lifts that are covered in zebra mussels. Education of lake service providers seems to be a growing issue, while it appears most boaters are now aware of AIS prevention strategies (whether they practice them or actively try to avoid them).

There was general agreement that CLFLWD’s AIS program is currently fairly comprehensive and well-coordinated, AIS is and will continue to be a high priority issue, and CLFLWD needs to establish measurable goals for this issue.

### 3. Adjourn

#### a) Next regular board meeting – April 23, 2020

Manager Schmaltz moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

<b>Manager</b>	<b>Aye</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich			X
Jim Dibble			X

Jen Oknich, Secretary \_\_\_\_\_