



MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: February 16, 2023
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: Lake Association Grant Discussion Resources



Background/Discussion

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Board with the meeting materials, as requested at the last board meeting, and to consider the Comfort Lake’s Association Eurasian watermilfoil funding request, as detailed in the attached memo from Manager Anderson. An email from the Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) is also enclosed, which provides additional detail regarding the DNR’s involvement in the 2022 Comfort Lake EWM treatment.

On September 9, 2021 the Board considered a similar request from the Comfort Lakes Association, and the Board approved \$7,381 for the CLA’s Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) treatment that occurred in 2021. At the time of that funding approval, the work on the Lake Association Grant was tabled with no official program outline, application, or review form in place. The enclosed request is for the EWM treatment that occurred in 2022.

Past Board Meeting Discussions

The following table is intended to provide the Board with a quick reference guide to the meeting minutes, agenda items, and recordings from the last two years pertaining to the Lake Association Grant Program and Eurasian Watermilfoil. This information was requested by the Board at the February 9, 2023 regular board meeting.

Memo N/A = Memo does not exist (i.e., summary of board direction or report of officers) or Memo does not provide any relevant information (i.e. budget meetings where item was verbally discussed but not addressed in memo).

2021 Board Meeting Resources	
February 25, 2021	Agenda Item 11 (Minutes, Memo N/A, Recording 01:59:45)
Staff were directed to provide input on eligibility of Lake Associations to utilize funds from the District’s Community Grant Program for AIS treatments.	
March 11, 2021	Agenda Item 3d (Minutes, Memo, Recording 00:54:51)



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Mr. Miller presented information on Chisago Lake Improvement District’s (LID) AIS cost-share program. The Board directed staff to prepare a potential cost-share program with the components as discussed and bring back to the board for consideration.	
March 25, 2021	Agenda Item 7a (Minutes, Memo, Recording 01:00:20)
Manager Anderson stated that she would like to postpone this topic so it can be developed further to be brought back at a future meeting. Manager Schmaltz commented that he would like to see some objectives and goals included in the next version. The Managers agreed and the topic was not discussed further.	
April 22, 2021	Agenda Item 11 (Minutes, Memo N/A, Recording 01:22:40)
Manager Anderson discussed her lake association grant program draft and mentioned that the revised vision should go out to Board members for discussion later.	
April 28, 2021	Agenda Item 4 (Minutes, Memo, Recording 01:56:20)
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. She recommended managers review the draft program guidelines and discuss further at the next board meeting	
May 13, 2021	Agenda Item 4c (Minutes, Memo, Recording 01:51:27)
Manager Anderson moved to adopt the Lake Association Cost-Share Program as presented, and for staff to work with Manager Anderson and counsel to incorporate the program into the Plan and develop an application and review process. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0.	
May 18, 2021	Agenda Item 2 (Minutes, Memo N/A, Recording 00:47:23)
The Board discussed the lake association grant program as it relates to its place in the current 2012-2021 WMP as well as the draft 2022-2031 WMP.	
May 27, 2021	Agenda Item 4 (Minutes, Memo N/A, Recording 1:40:00)
The Board of Managers discussed the District’s cost share and community grant programs. Manager Anderson noted that she has had several communications with Board of Water and Soil Resources Conservationist Dan Fabian about the procedure to adjust the District’s cost-share program for grants to lake associations, and that this can occur separate from the plan revision.	
July 7, 2021	Agenda Item 2a (Minutes, Memo N/A, Recording 02:26:46)
Staff noted that [the 3-004 Non-Point Source Pollution Abatement program budget] amount has risen since past years to accommodate the new lake association grant program. Managers agreed with the proposed draft budget amount.	
August 12, 2021	Agenda Item 5b (Minutes, Memo, Recording 00:39:38)
Per the board’s May 13 th directive, staff presented their draft grant program outline, application, and evaluation form. Following board discussion, Manager Anderson recommended the Board table the work surrounding the lake association grant program and use the existing community grant program. She stated she would continue to work with Mr. Miller to develop the new program.	
September 9, 2021	Agenda Item 5c (Minutes, Memo, Recording 00:53:45)
Discussion of the undeveloped grant program and the grant application that was received by the Comfort Lakes Association. Manager Anderson moved to approve payment of \$7,381.00 to the Comfort	



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Lakes Association (CLA) for a second treatment of Eurasian watermilfoil to be completed by September 30, 2021, for the acreage delineated in the DNR permit issued to the CLA and also require appropriate documentation be submitted to the Administrator before payment is issued. Seconded by Manager Oknich. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

December 16, 2021 **Agenda Item 7a ([Minutes](#), [Memo](#), [Recording 00:10:24](#))**

During the 2021 AIS Program Yearend Summary, Mr. Miller provided details regarding the Comfort Lakes Association's EWM treatments, one of which the District helped fund.

2022 Board Meeting Resources

April 28, 2022 **Agenda item 12 ([Minutes](#), [Memo N/A](#), [Recording 02:01:46](#))**

Manager Anderson reported that the Comfort Lakes Association did receive an all-lake permit to treat Eurasian watermilfoil and will be meeting with District staff to discuss the planned treatment.

May 12, 2022 **Agenda item 4b ([Minutes](#), [Memo N/A](#), [Recording 00:48:18](#))**

Discussion item was added to agenda at meeting, no memo exists. Administrator Kinney and Manager Anderson updated the board on the development of a application form and application review process. Manager Anderson explained a draft was near completion and will be ready for review at the May 26th regular board meeting.

May 26, 2022 **Agenda item 8b ([Minutes](#), [Memo](#), [Recording 00:45:30](#))**
Agenda item 8c ([Minutes](#), [Memo N/A](#), [Recording 01:39:41](#))

8b-Manager Bakke made a motion to establish the Lake Association Grant Program as presented. The motion failed for lack of a second.

8c-Manager Anderson moved to include EWM management in the District's AIS program. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Manager Anderson states "We [Comfort Lakes Association] were not relying on the [Lake Association] grant to be available given the time taken to get it ready"

June 9, 2022 **Agenda item 3b ([Minutes](#), [Memo](#), [Recording 00:05:11](#))**
Agenda item 3c ([Minutes](#), [Memo](#), [Recording 01:58:56](#))

Overview of grant program history. Manager Anderson made a motion to direct staff to revise the lake association grant document, have Manager Anderson redline the document, and then return it to the board. Seconded by President Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

July 28, 2022 **Agenda item 7a ([Minutes](#), [Memo](#), [Recording 00:22:54](#))**

Ms. Heinz presented the District's current non-point source pollution abatement program (cost share) described in the current 10-year WMP. Manager Anderson suggested the board keep this information in mind for the next discussion on the proposed Lake Association Grant Program.

September 1, 2022 **Agenda item 2 ([Minutes](#), [Memo N/A](#), [Recording 01:09:10](#))**

Budget meeting with discussion of adding an additional \$15,000 for Little Comfort Lake. The budget was not changed due to a general consensus that \$15,000 was not appropriate for a lake of that size.



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September 8, 2022

Agenda item 4c ([Minutes](#), [Memo](#), [Recording 00:46:48](#))

Discussion of funding an off-schedule Point-Intercept survey for Comfort Lake due to the Lake Associations plan to conduct a fluridone treatment. Manager Anderson moved to select Option 2 and to authorize a budget transfer from 3-004-D Community Grant Program to 3-011-29-F Comfort Lake Point-Intercept Macrophyte Survey. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-1-1. No approved Lake Association Grant Program outline, application, and review form were finalized at that time.

Potential Action

The Board may consider authorizing payment to the Comfort Lakes Association in the amount of \$15,000 for the 2022 EWM treatment.

Attachments

- Memo and funding request from Manager Anderson
- Email from DNR regarding 2022 Comfort Lake EWM treatment

Lake Association Grant Program

Finding a Solution

From: Manager Jackie Anderson To: CLFLWD Board Date: 2/8/2023

To assist in our deliberations, and after speaking with Administrator Kinney, the following is offered to help us move forward. As we see it, there are three issues the Board needs to resolve surrounding this topic.

1. **Confirm the creation a new grant category** by separating our three lake associations from the current community grant program, and restructuring the application and implementation process, thereby transforming this targeted portion into a more accessible model. By making this a pilot program and testing this model, we can determine its applicability to the other community non-profits and commercial entities within the current program.¹The lake association grant concept was first brought to the board in early 2021 when it was unanimously approved, and subsequently approved twice more over the next two years. Working out the details of this new focused approach, its process, and implementation was rocky, but the conversation over time clearly identified the need for the Board to address the purpose of our district wide Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program, and the burden placed on only a portion of local taxpayers in the management and control of this pollutant.
2. **Confirm all AIS is covered under our current district AIS program.** Our District's AIS program was created in 2014 after the spread of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) reached into three of our four major lake sub-watersheds, Bone, Forest Lake, and in September 2014, EWM was discovered in Big Comfort Lake. EWM was now traversing that portion of our watershed from the headwaters to the outlet. This sparked the Board to **engage our engineers in the development of our comprehensive AIS program with maintenance and control program and a unique rapid response protocol for any invasive species that may appear in the future.** We were told by our professional staff this was a unique approach and unlike any they knew of at that time in the watershed community. **The program was designed to handle all identified AIS,** however, the Board voted 4-1 in 2016 to focus our AIS attention on only those species that contributed to our primary target of phosphorous reduction in our surface waters. Work on any AIS flora that was not considered to contribute substantial amounts of phosphorous to the waterbody would not be treated by the district. As we have met our phosphorous reduction targets in our major sub-watersheds, the question before the Board now is whether to return the AIS program to its comprehensive foundation.
3. **Approve funding of \$15,000 for the 2022 DNR Research project** of whole lake EWM treatment on Comfort Lake. Funds are available for transfer from the district's reserve funds.

¹ The current program is confusing with onerous application and requirement protocol and has not fulfilled its original purpose of engaging the community in small local projects and building awareness of how we can all help keep water clean.



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Date: 2-16-2023
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: DNR's Responses to CLA Fluridone Treatment Questions



District Wide

Background/Discussion

Board members have asked staff on several occasions if the Comfort Lakes Association's whole lake fluridone treatment was part of a research project being conducted by the DNR. In an effort to clarify some uncertainties and questions surrounding this treatment, staff reached out to Chris Jurek, Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist for the Minnesota DNR, who issued the treatment permit. Their emailed responses to the District's questions are listed below in blue text.

1. Was this treatment part of some type of research project by the DNR specifically studying whole-lake fluridone treatments?

"No, this is not a research project, but part of our Innovative Control Project Grant. Part of this grant requires the applicant to collect pre/ post/ 1-YAT treatment data to evaluate outcomes."

2. A lake association representative stated the following at a District board meeting, "The increase in the volume of EWM got the attention of the DNR and they reached out to the CLA lake president. This did not generate from the CLA (referring to treatment idea), this generated from the DNR contacting the CLA". Could you confirm this was the sequence of events, and if so, what was the DNR's reasoning?

"The DNR has conversations with lake associations regarding management of invasive species, especially when management of a species is not effective. The DNR does not determine the effectiveness of the treatments but will issue permits based on the presence of AIS in the treatment areas. It is recommended that the applicant or lake group does inspect or contract a surveyor to perform a post-treatment survey to evaluate success. In this situation, Comfort Lake has tried different pesticides to manage EWM. As I do with any group that is not finding success in managing a species, I suggest alternatives, such as in this case, using fluridone for EWM management. This competitive innovative grant was open to any lake association and scored based on criteria provided in the grant application. This criteria is based on project success, innovation, selectivity, lake management history, project partnerships, etc. I do encourage any of my lake groups to apply for our grants."



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3. Was there anything about Comfort Lake's EWM population that made the waterbody an especially good candidate for a whole lake fluridone treatment?

"As mentioned in #2, Comfort Lake received a grant based on criteria in our evaluation rubric."

4. Is there an EWM occurrence threshold that needs to be met to receive a whole lake fluridone permit?

"No, Comfort Lake received a grant based on criteria in our evaluation rubric."

5. What is the DNR's opinion on the outcome of the treatment as of now (i.e., the control of EWM versus the destruction of native plants)? I understand if you need to wait until spring delineations to give a full opinion, but just wondering if you have anything to share at this point in time.

"We will be evaluating this project 1-YAT (2023) and it is expected that organization has capacity to continue to monitor the project after the life of the grant (June 31, 2023)."