

1 **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, April 13, 2023**
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5 **1. Call to Order**

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7 President Schmaltz called the April 13, 2023, regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
8 via online video conference.

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10 **Managers Present:**

11 Steve Schmaltz, President
12 Christopher Loth, Vice President
13 Dave Bakke, Secretary
14 Jackie Anderson, Treasurer
15 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer

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17 **Staff Present:**

18 Mike Kinney, Administrator
19 Beth Carreño, Senior Program Manager
20 Blayne Eineichner, Project Coordinator
21 Bobbie Law, Office Manager
22 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator
23 Jessica Lindemyer, Operations & Outreach Specialist

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25 **Others Present:**

26 Greg Grasko, Emmons & Olivier Resources
27 Cecilio Olivier, Emmons & Olivier Resources
28 Rosie Russell, Emmons & Olivier Resources
29 Trevor Rundhaug, Emmons & Olivier Resources
30 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners
31 Al Anderson, Comfort Lake resident
32 Jack Zabrowski, ISG Inc.

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34 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**

35 Manager Toavs moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager
36 Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

Stephen Schmaltz	X			
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3. New Business

a) 2022 DIY and CAT Water Monitoring Report

Project Coordinator Blayne Eineichner presented an overview of the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and Citizen Assisted Tributary (CAT) monitoring programs. He noted that it was a dry year in 2022, and staff/volunteers weren't able to collect as many samples as they would have liked. Mr. Eineichner explained the monitoring locations including the Sunrise River and tributaries around Forest Lake. He described the continued Duplicate Sample Comparison Study effort which compares DIY analyzed samples to those analyzed by a commercial lab in order to evaluate the accuracy of the DIY technology.

Mr. Eineichner summarized that 2021 and 2022 were challenging monitoring years due to drought, and few conclusions can be drawn from the dataset. He recommended the District focus on areas identified in the 2021/2022 efforts as potential nutrient sources and continue and expand the CAT effort in Forest Lake. He recommended that the District shift the DIY effort into the Comfort Lake direct drainages and continue the Duplicate Sample Comparison Study.

Mr. Eineichner thanked Randy Schumacher, who volunteered as part of the CAT program.

Manager Anderson expressed interest in speaking with Mr. Eineichner about future monitoring efforts around Comfort Lake.

Manager Anderson moved to approve the 2022 DIY and CAT Monitoring Report as presented in this memo. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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b) 2022 Water Monitoring Report

President Schmaltz noted there is no recommended action on this item at this meeting. The report will be recommended for approval at the April 27th meeting.

72 Comments on the report should be submitted to the District Administrator by April
73 19th.

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75 Rosie Russell (EOR) presented an overview of monitoring efforts in 2022 including
76 climate context, monitoring locations, lake monitoring trends, and key takeaways.
77 She explained that there are some declining water quality trends in Forest Lake and
78 Lake Keewahtin, but there are not *statistically significant* declining trends on any
79 lakes in the District. Ms. Russell noted that the Forest Lake alum treatment will help
80 improve water quality trends in Forest Lake. Monitoring data show that internal
81 loading does not appear to be a significant problem in Little Comfort Lake. Ms. Russell
82 described chloride monitoring efforts, concluding that all of the lakes are below the
83 state standard of 230 milligrams per liter, and chloride loading in streams is also
84 below the state standard.

85
86 Several of the managers and Al Anderson, a resident on Comfort Lake, noted the
87 increasingly high water levels being observed on lakes in the area. President
88 Schmaltz noted Minnesota saw record high snow fall this winter. Manager Bakke
89 thanked Mr. Eineichner for inspecting and clearing debris from the Bone Lake outlet
90 fish barrier, which affects water levels in Bone Lake.

91
92 Ms. Russell presented key takeaways from the 2022 monitoring season: in general,
93 water quality trends in lakes are good (i.e., below state standards), 2022's drought-
94 like conditions resulted in reduced external nutrient loads to lakes, and the District's
95 projects are targeting the key problem areas.

96
97 Manager Bakke asked about chloride monitoring on Bone Lake. Mr. Eineichner
98 explained that the District will collect chloride data on Bone Lake during winter
99 monitoring. He noted that Bone Lake has historically been below the state standard.
100 Manager Bakke requested that the data be summarized in the monitoring report
101 when available.

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103 President Schmaltz reminded managers of the April 19th deadline to provide
104 comments/questions on the monitoring report to Administrator Kinney.

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106 **c) 2023 Water Monitoring Scope of Work**

107 Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the 2023 Monitoring plan as presented in this
108 memo. Seconded by Manager Toavs.

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110 Mr. Eineichner summarized the 2023 monitoring plan and the proposed scope of work
111 from Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR). The monitoring plan covers lake monitoring
112 (including the Citizen Assisted Monitoring Program through Metropolitan Council),
113 the DIY and CAT volunteer programs, and stream monitoring. The EOR scope of work
114 includes stream monitoring and report writing.

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Manager Bakke asked why stream monitoring is more costly than lake monitoring. Mr. Eineichner explained that stream work requires additional effort to develop rating curves, and also that lake monitoring uses volunteer and Metropolitan Council support.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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Manager Loth moved to authorize the administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter into an agreement with EOR to complete Tasks 1 & 2 as in accordance with the 4-04-2023 scope of work and in an amount not to exceed \$53,757. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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d) 2022 Progress Summary Presentation

Planning Coordinator Emily Heinz presented an update on progress toward delisting District lakes that are impaired for excess nutrients. She noted that this presentation will be brief, and the District will give more presentations to additional audiences in the future. These presentations will provide more background information on impairments, the District’s diagnostic targeting process, the portfolio of projects the District has completed, and the various programs the District has to offer such as aquatic invasive species management, permitting, education & outreach, and cost-share programs.

- Little Comfort Lake and Moody Lake are not quite meeting state standards yet, but both lakes are getting close. Continued project implementation and ongoing monitoring are expected to result in delisting in a few years.
- Shields Lake and Comfort Lake are currently meeting state standards and could be considered for delisting. However, staff recommends continued

145 monitoring of Shields Lake for a few more years and continued project
146 implementation upstream of Comfort Lake before initiating the delisting
147 process.

- 148 • Bone Lake is meeting state standards by all measures, and staff recommends
149 initiating the delisting process with the MN Pollution Control Agency at this
150 time. She noted the various projects in place around Bone Lake which will help
151 protect the improved water quality that the District has monitored in recent
152 years.
- 153 • Forest Lake is not on the impaired waters list, but it has occasionally exceeded
154 state standards in some years. There are several projects in place and in
155 progress to keep Forest Lake from becoming impaired.

156
157 Manager Bakke asked who the target audience for the Progress Summary is. Ms.
158 Heinz responded that these data serve as the District board's, and staff's, compass
159 to inform management recommendations and decisions. The District produces an
160 annual Year in Review summary and Annual Report which are more tailored to the
161 public. Manager Anderson noted the Progress Summary is also fit to be shared with
162 the public, and it is useful to display information in a graphical format.

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164 President Schmaltz suggested the Progress Summary mention the other programs
165 that the District offers, at least briefly. He indicated he didn't want readers to think
166 that the District is solely focused on the water quality improvements alone. He
167 suggested the Progress Summary prominently reference the Annual Report, which
168 contains more information on other programs. Manager Bakke called attention to
169 the Clean Water Fund grant appendix to the Progress Summary, noting it is
170 remarkable how successful the District has been in obtaining support from this grant
171 program. Manager Bakke and Manager Toavs indicated an interest in obtaining
172 copies of the final reports so they can share with fellow lake residents. President
173 Schmaltz indicated the Progress Summary and Annual Report will be brought to the
174 April 27th meeting for board approval.

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176 Administrator Kinney noted that he isn't aware of any other watershed district
177 creating a progress report this in-depth. He explained how the report has evolved
178 since this effort began in 2015 and how critical this information is to the District's
179 adaptive management process.

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181 **e) Hybrid Board Meetings**
182 The Board considered two options for returning to in-person meetings, as proposed
183 by staff. One would be a hybrid option, under which the District administrator and
184 managers attend the meeting in person, or virtually from a publicly posted and
185 accessible location, while supporting staff, consultants, and members of the public
186 may attend the meeting in person or virtually.

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188 Manager Anderson moved to convene future meetings of the Comfort Lake-Forest
189 Lake Watershed District Board in a hybrid format starting with the May 11, 2023,
190 Regular Board Meeting. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz.

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192 Administrator Kinney explained how hybrid meetings could function. The District
193 would host each meeting at the District office space and offer virtual attendance
194 over Zoom as well. In order for a manager to participate in the discussion and vote,
195 they must either attend the meeting in-person, or attend the meeting virtually from
196 a publicly posted and accessible location, and by a means by which they can be
197 both seen and heard by the other managers and attending members of the public.
198 If a manager does not fulfill one of the above criteria, they may listen in on the
199 meeting, but may not participate in discussion or vote on motions.

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201 Manager Loth asked how the virtual attendance location needs to be posted. Mr.
202 Kinney explained that the location would be included on the regular meeting
203 agenda, which is officially posted at 5:00 pm on the Monday prior to the Thursday
204 board meeting. Manager Anderson asked if the Forest Lake City Hall council
205 chambers would be available. Mr. Kinney replied that the City is still not allowing
206 outside entities to use the council chambers. Manager Anderson indicated how
207 useful the technology is at the City Hall building. Mr. Kinney explained the District
208 recently acquired new technology to facilitate hybrid meetings – the “Meeting Owl”
209 is a smart audio-visual device for fully immersive hybrid meetings. This device will be
210 beneficial for hosting hybrid meetings at the District office.

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212 Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-1.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke		X		
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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215 Manager Anderson moved to support the board president’s decision to withdraw the
216 emergency declaration when he believes it is appropriate. Seconded by President
217 Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke				X
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

Stephen Schmaltz	X			
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f) Shoreline Partnership Grant Letter of Support

Administrator Kinney explained that Senior Program Manager Beth Carreño has been working with an interagency shoreline workgroup. The group is proposing to submit a grant application for shoreline restoration work, and the MN Department of Natural Resources would lead the effort to apply for the grant. As one of the partners, the District may show its support by providing a letter of support.

Manager Toavs moved to authorize the administrator to submit a letter of support on behalf of the CLFLWD for the Natural Shoreline Partnership. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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4. Old Business

a) ISG Update & Presentation

Jack Zabrowski, ISG, presented findings from the office space feasibility study. He explained the needs for the new office space include: the District having outgrown its current space, the current office building has been sold to a new owner, and the District is being proactive in new location exploration. Mr. Zabrowski presented the results of a public survey related to the feasibility study. Respondents generally ranked water quality as a high priority. The most preferred aspects of a CLFLWD office facility were: meeting space for public use, interactive installations for children and adults, mix of indoor and outdoor educational experiences, and maintaining the lowest possible cost for the facility. Most survey respondents valued sharing an office space with another organization over building a new facility. Mr. Zabrowski presented the space analysis performed by the ISG architecture experts. ISG calculated the District’s space need is 5,782 square feet, not including a three-stall garage.

Mr. Zabrowski presented examples of offices spaces of other watershed districts and watershed management organizations. He described next steps, including providing a final report to the Board by June 30th. In summary, Mr. Zabrowski stated that a facility that educates the community and inspires staff is essential to the implementation of the administrative and programming aspects of the CLFLWD plan.

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Manager Loth indicated he was interested in learning more about revenue sources for the example offices shown. President Schmaltz asked how ISG selected the stakeholders for the interviews. Mr. Zabrowski explained that the stakeholders were identified by District staff and were already aware of the CLFLWD. The survey was distributed via postcard to a random sample of 2,000 individuals in the District. Senior Program Manager Beth Carreño explained the District hasn't received many responses to the survey yet, but staff have been distributing it via multiple methods including social media, lake association partners, and newspaper articles.

Manager Anderson indicated it is difficult to find an office rental space within the District's boundaries that satisfies all of the District's needs; there aren't many spaces to choose from. Manager Anderson and President Schmaltz agreed that the District needs to continue to tell its story and educate more people as to what the District is. President Schmaltz suggested the District revisit some of the sites it has looked at in the past. Manager Bakke noted that the District boundaries go beyond the City of Forest Lake, and the District should keep other cities in mind as well. Manager Anderson suggested she and Manager Bakke meet with Mr. Zabrowski to discuss office space options in more detail. Mr. Holtman noted that Manager Anderson and Manager Bakke may proceed with the information gathering effort and there is no need to create a formal committee.

5. Project Update

Mr. Eineichner summarized that the District is waiting to complete some additional spring construction work and plantings on the two active capital projects: Sunrise River/Highway 61 Wetland Enhancement and County Road 50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter. Both projects are slated for completion later this year.

6. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

Board directives were summarized:

- Manager Bakke requested that when chloride data are obtained for Bone Lake they be documented in the District's reporting.
- Manager Bakke encouraged that the Progress Summary be shared among residents and stakeholders.
- President Schmaltz suggested staff add a more concise way to communicate the broader range of District activity in the Progress Summary.

7. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – April 27th, 2023

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Loth. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Dave Bakke	X			
Christopher Loth	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

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298 Dave Bakke, Secretary _____