



## MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

**Date:** October 19, 2023  
**To:** CLFLWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Mike Kinney, District Administrator  
**Subject:** AIS Prevention Grant Opportunities



**District Wide**

### Background/Discussion

At the September 14<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, the Board of Managers directed staff to pursue shoreline grant partnership opportunities with MN Lakes and Rivers (MLR). In addition to the shoreline grant seeking, staff recommends the Board consider aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention partnership grant opportunities as well. In discussions with MLR and by reviewing information online, staff have learned about AIS prevention projects for which MLR has partnered with other organizations in the state, and potential for a similar program in our area.

### Relation to CLFLWD Watershed Management Plan (WMP)

The following grant partnership proposal would advance the following high priority goal from the WMP by educating the public about AIS prevention and providing tools to help prevent the spread of AIS.

*3011, Goal 1: Continue use and refinement of the District's prevention and early detection & rapid response initiatives to reduce the risk of new invasive species introductions to District waterbodies and prevent the spread of existing infestations to other waterbodies.*

### Reasoning for Approach

Boat cleaning stations have been on the District's radar for a while. The brand name boat cleaning solution, CD3 Station, came out a few years ago and has gained popularity over time. The District has looked into this product, but it has generally been too costly for the District to purchase on its own, and small-scale grants to cover the purchase of one or two units are not available.

Two relatively recent developments have prompted staff to reassess boat cleaning stations at CLFLWD launches:

1. **Grant funds may in fact be available, if partnerships are utilized.** MLR has been successful in obtaining a \$1 million grant from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) to purchase boat cleaning stations and implement public outreach. ENRTF grants prioritize partnerships, and grant awards through this program typically range from \$100,000 to \$7 million.



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Note: While MLR utilized the brand name CD3 Station in its previous partnerships, there is no reason CLFLWD has to be confined to that one option if we were to partner on a similar grant. The grant could be written in a way that does not commit CLFLWD or its partners to a particular name brand product. The District and partners would evaluate cost-benefit options and select a boat cleaning solution that works best for each partner.

2. **DNR report recognizes the importance of boat cleaning.** Within the last few years, the MN Department of Natural Resources published and subsequently updated a report on its [AIS Community-Based Social Marketing Project](#). The report details several implementation strategies to increase public awareness and prevent the spread of AIS. The District is currently engaged in many of these activities (e.g., watercraft inspectors, bait disposal resources at public launches, public outreach). The report refers to the importance of cleaning, draining, and drying watercraft several times. The report notes, “One of the biggest barriers to cleaning, draining, and drying is lack of readily available equipment. Providing simple equipment, such as brushes, scrapers, and grabbing tools would remove that barrier.” This fact has been known to the District, but the costs of implementing boat cleaning equipment have been prohibitive.

### Partnership with MN Lakes and Rivers

In 2021, MLR led a successful grant proposal to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) administered by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for Community Invasive Species Containment, specifically for starry stonewort. The work plan entails community outreach to promote AIS prevention stewardship, purchase of boat cleaning stations, and monitoring of how the cleaning stations were used.

MLR is interested in partnering with CLFLWD and other organizations in our area to implement a similar program, but with a few key differences. Following are some notes about the potential project:

1. Starry stonewort containment wouldn't be the main focus. Rather, containment of existing AIS and prevention of new AIS, such as starry stonewort, would be the objective.
2. Again, the grant proposal could be written in a way that doesn't commit the District or its partners to any particular name brand boat cleaning station.
3. The overall objective of AIS prevention and public education would remain the same.
4. MLR would still lead the grant application and serve as the fiscal agent. As discussed at the September 14<sup>th</sup> board meeting, this would likely result in less staff time commitment than pursuing such a grant on our own.
5. The District would partner with its local lake associations to implement the project within our borders.



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6. A few Lower St. Croix Watershed Partners have expressed interest in such a partnership. If other partners participate in the project, they would need to assign a staff member to lead implementation in their watershed. CLFLWD staff would not be implementing work outside CLFLWD boundaries.

In summary, this partnership opportunity has the potential to enhance the District's AIS public outreach program, provide boat cleaning stations at one or more launches in the District, and strengthen partnerships with local organizations.

### **Recommended Motion**

Proposed Motion: Manager \_\_\_\_\_ moves to direct the administrator to pursue AIS prevention grant partnership opportunities with MN Lakes and Rivers and provide a letter of support. Seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_.