



MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: June 28, 2024
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: State of the Watershed Event



District Wide

Background/Discussion

The purpose of this discussion item is to provide a brief update on the progress of planning the 2024 State of the Watershed Event. Education and Outreach Coordinator, Adam Hjelm, is leading the planning efforts.

After polling the Board regarding schedules, the event will be held at the Forest Lake American Legion on Wednesday, September 18. The event will run from 6 to 8 p.m. with a social hour before the event, starting at 5:00 p.m.

The main focus of the event will be highlighting the District's 25th anniversary.



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Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: June 26, 2024
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: Summary of Bone Lake Delisting Celebration



District Wide

Background/Discussion

In the spring of 2024, the MPCA officially removed Bone Lake from Minnesota's impaired waters list for nutrients. To commemorate this achievement, the CLFLWD and the Bone Lake Association held a delisting celebration on June 11th. A committee consisting of Adam Hjelm, Pattie Ray, Tom Furey, Elaine Schumacher, and Dave Bakke worked on the planning, organizing, and overseeing the event. A total of 84 people attended the event, including 12 speakers from various agencies and organizations.

Estimated CLFLWD budget for the event was up to \$2,000 for food, supplies, venue, etc. Actual paid out expenses came in under budget at \$1771.62. In-kind match was not tracked, but it included significant time from the planning committee members, presenter's time and mileage, and the City of Scandia's venue.

Attached

Summary narrative

Summary of expenses



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Community celebrates Bone Lake's removal from Minnesota impaired waters list

By Jackie Bussjaeger, CLFLWD Seasonal Technician

There is no quick fix or silver bullet to turn an impaired lake to a healthy one, but after consistent, targeted work by the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District and its many community partners, Bone Lake in Scandia has recently achieved that incredible milestone. More than 80 members of the community joined together to celebrate Bone Lake's removal from the Minnesota list of impaired waters at the Scandia Community Center June 11. The evening's speakers included representatives from city, county, and state offices, as well as local partner organizations.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency evaluates waters for delisting every two years, and only about 1 percent of those lakes are removed from the list in each two-year span, explained MPCA Assistant Commissioner Dana Vanderbosch.

"We're accelerating that rate as we learn and do more and more of these projects as we learn from each other and we're getting better at it," she said. "I think those numbers will improve. A lot of these restorations take 15 to 20 years to do. When you think about what happens in a community in 15 to 20 years—you have staff turnover, you have councilmember turnover, you have mayors turning over, and it can just be very difficult to have the perseverance to stick with it and just that dedication of local commitment. It's really something to be celebrated and help you feel the importance of this event."

Eric Alms, MPCA Lower St. Croix Project Manager, explained the process for evaluating and delisting a lake.

"We look at three primary sources of information: total phosphorus, the Secchi disk, and chlorophyll-a, which is a surrogate for how much algae is growing the water column," Alms said.

Excessive phosphorus in a lake can translate to large algae blooms that reduce oxygen and kill off other aquatic plants and native fish. A Secchi disk, used by monitoring staff and volunteers such as Bone Lake Association President and event host Tom Furey, measures the clarity of the water. Some residents recalled a time when the lake was so clouded by algae that they could hardly see a few feet below the water's surface. Today, that clarity has increased to 14 feet.

CLFLWD Board of Managers President Steve Schmaltz praised the leadership of the District and the hard work of its many partners, including the Washington Conservation District, Department of Natural Resources, Blue Water Science, Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc., the Scandia Marine Lions, the City of Scandia, and the Bone Lake Association.



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“How did the watershed district make this kind of progress? The first one is that the key factor is strong, multi-year leadership by the CLFLWD board,” Schmaltz said. “The second key factor was adaptive management planning and decision making. We’re very blessed to have a very smart and very forward-thinking administrator in Mike Kinney.”

Six major projects contributed to the steep improvement in lake quality between 2016 and 2022, funded by the Minnesota Clean Water Fund, Section 319 grants, and local tax dollars. Early diagnostic studies in the watershed identified that Moody Lake, upstream of Bone, was contributing a disproportionate amount of nutrients further downstream. Working with local landowners, the District was able to remove historic nutrient loads leftover from the dairy farm that once operated beside the lake.

“Back in the day it was very common for the manure produced from that operation just to get moved to the lowest spot in the landscape, this being the adjacent wetland,” said CLFLWD Project Coordinator Blayne Eineichner. “That material just sat in the wetland and slowly leached out over time, contributing to the poor water quality in Bone Lake. We went in and did some testing and then removed that legacy manure from the ecosystem and we’ve got clean water now coming out and filtering through that wetland complex to Bone Lake.”

With the removal of excess nutrients, coordination of best practices with local landowners, addition of native plantings, treatment of aquatic invasive plants, and installation of a winter aerator, Moody Lake itself is on track to be delisted in 2024.

Other improvements to the Bone Lake project included excavation of excess material from contributing wetlands, conversion of a nearby crop field to perennial cover, stormwater management systems installed in partnership with the City of Scandia, installation of carp barriers, and treatments for aquatic invasive species.

“Today we can acknowledge not just the recovery of a natural resource but also the power of a collective effort and community spirit,” said Scandia City Councilmember Jerry Cusick.

“Bone Lake’s health is of immense importance to the city. More than just a body of water, it’s a valued part of our local environment, source of recreation, and a symbol of the natural beauty that makes Scandia a special place to live.”

Michelle Jordan of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources commended the community for its hard work.

“The work is not entirely over though,” she said. “Comfort Lake-Forest Lake’s robust monitoring program and their adoption of water quality goals that are even better than state standards will help to ensure that Bone Lake stays delisted for future generations to enjoy.”

CLFLWD and its partners are currently on track to delist another five lakes (Comfort Lake, Little Comfort Lake, Moody Lake, Shields Lake, and School Lake) within the watershed boundaries in 2026.



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Paid Out Expenses:

Item		Subtotal	Total	
Pizza			\$390.89	
Pop & Snacks			\$86.80	
Decorations	Balloons	\$178.98	\$281.43	
	Placemats	\$10.83		
	Utensils	\$74.83		
	Tablecloths	\$16.79		
Cake			\$300.00	
Postage and Printing			\$200.00	
EOR Staff Time	GREG G		\$512.50	
FINAL TOTAL			\$1771.62	

Estimated Staff Time/Expense:

Adam Hjelm

Planning Committee and Preparation 50 hours @ \$63.73 (AH Billable Rate)
Total: \$3,186.50

All Staff

Event Attendance 3 hours @ \$674.17 (ALL staff billable rate)
Total: \$2,022.51

Total Estimated Staff/Time Expense: \$5209.11