





CLFLWD
WATERSHED DISTRICT

651-395-5850 

info@clflwd.org 

www.clflwd.org 

44 Lake St. South, Suite A
Forest Lake, MN 55025 

TO: (CLFLWD) Board of Managers

DATE: December 11, 2025

RE: Administrator's Report for the December 18, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

Administration (1000 series)

- 1001 – Board Administration
 - Pres. Anderson and Mgr. Schottmuller attended the MN Watersheds Annual Conference and Board Meeting. A summary will be provided at the board meeting.
- 1004 – Professional Services
 - Staff have been working to correct pay issues for two staff members prior to yearend. The source of the problem lies with the third-party vendor used for payroll. Staff and Redpath are looking to change vendors next year to avoid future issues. No additional charges will result from this work or change.

Programs (3000 series)

- 3002 – Permitting
 - Between November 11, 2025, and December 8, 2025, there were:
 - 102 site inspections performed with a 97.16% mean compliance rate.
 - 1 permit application received.
 - 1 permit application approved and 3 permits closed out.
- 3003 – Monitoring & Data Assessment
 - The 2025 Monitoring effort has concluded. Staff are evaluating this year's data and working to maintain all monitoring equipment.
- 3004 – Non-Point Source Pollution Abatement (Cost-Share)
 - Final projects for the year were closed out and end of the year reporting has begun.
 - The 2025 shoreline inventory report and cost-share report will be available in early 2026.
- 3005 – Education & Outreach

- The CLFLWD Community Education Partnership Program was honored to be a finalist for the 2025 MN Watersheds Program of the year. Attached to this administrator's report is the application overview and letters of support from our program partners.
- The CLFLWD County Road 50 Iron-enhanced Sand Filter was honored to be a finalist for the 2025 MN Watersheds Project of the year. Attached to this administrator's report is the application overview and letters of support from our program partners.
- The District is offering the popular Watershed Connections lecture series again in 2026. The final schedule and lecture descriptions will be available on the CLFLWD website in late December.
- The District is wrapping up the 2025 community education schedule on December 15th. The 2026 schedule starts on January 12th with our first class of the year at Hardwood Library.
- Mike Kinney spoke at the MN Watersheds Annual Conference on Dec. 4th as part of a panel on MN's urban and rural watershed flood resiliency efforts.
- 3006 – Interagency Communication
 - Staff continues to monitor agendas and board packets of local partners so as to keep informed of items of possible interest to the CLFLWD.
 - District staff met with the City of Fores Lake on Dec. 10th to discuss the flood resiliency action plan as well as permitting rule changes.
- 3009 – Grant Research & Preparation
 - Lessard-Sams: The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council met on December 9th to approve bill language for the legislature. Additionally, funding from the state has been updated, and this round of grantees is slated to receive additional funding for each grant proposal. The CLFLWD may receive additional funding for the Bone Lake South Phase 2 and Greenbelt Phase 1 projects. The District is awaiting confirming and further details from the LSOHC.
 - Keep it Clean Grant: The District's application was not selected for funding under this grant program. This is the first time the CLFLWD applied for this grant. The Board of Water and Soil Resources received 22 applications from local units of government totaling over \$500,000 in requests. With \$185,000 in available funding, BWSR was only able to fund five proposals, all of which are soil and water conservation districts located outside the Twin Cities Metro Area.

- 3010 – Operations & Maintenance
 - Staff are working on an end of year summary of O&M to share with the Board of Managers at an early 2026 Board meeting.
- 3011 – Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention & Management
 - Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM): Applications have been submitted for funding through the Minnesota DNR's invasive aquatic plant grant program for Forest, Bone, Comfort, & Shields. Funding is for reimbursement of expenses incurred while conducting local aquatic invasive species (AIS) management for curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, & flowering rush. Grant award notifications for each lake will be sent to applicants early in 2026 regarding award status and funding amounts which typically range from \$5,000 – \$15,000.
 - District staff met with Triparty partners to finalize 2025 financial obligations. The 2025 agreement combined with the drawdown resulted in the City of Forest Lake paying the Forest Lake Lake Association \$8,997.16 and CLFLWD \$25,491.95.
 - Staff attended the 2nd meeting for WCD's Washington County AIS Plan Update was held on November 20th. The purpose of this meeting was to define and refine AIS prevention and early detection efforts.
- 3012 – Land Acquisition
 - The District officially acquired the Bone Lake South property on Dec 9th, 2025. This 238-acre property will be open to the public for non-motorized recreation upon the completion of restoration efforts on the property. Restoration efforts include wetland restoration, forest enhancement, and the conversion of agricultural lands to native prairie / oak savanna. Full public access is not anticipated until 2027 or 2028.
- 3013 – Watershed Planning & Resiliency
 - Floodplain resiliency project development grant applications underway.

Projects (5000 series)

- Moody Lake
 - Capstone: Agricultural BMPs – Staff seeded the eroding 2-acre former agriculture field upstream of Moody lake on Nov 24th. This effort will stabilize the field with native prairie species to decrease runoff to Moody Lake.
- Little Comfort Lake

- Heath Ave IESF – EOR is currently developing the 90% designs for the sand filter project. The project will come before the Board for ordering this winter/spring.
- Forest Lake
 - Alum Treatment – Close out of this project at the Dec 2025 Board Meeting.
- Comfort Lake
 - Goodwin/East Comfort Stormwater Wetland Project: District staff are working to develop a project to use Green Infrastructure funds allocated by BWSR. The initial project was located at the end of Goodwin Road – along the Sunrise River, West of Comfort Lake. Although initially supportive, the original landowners are no longer interested in allowing a project on their property. As such, Staff reached out to a landowner along East Comfort Drive that has a depressional wetland pond on their property that was created prior to the City of Wyoming's MS4 regulations. This wetland was identified through the District's DIY diagnostic monitoring program in the Comfort Lake subwatershed. Data indicates that this wetland has filled in over the years and is now a source of excess nutrient. Stormwater entering the wetland is significantly cleaner than the water discharge from the wetland pond. Water quality modeling estimates that implementation of a project at this location could result in a 5-10 pound Phosphorus reduction per year to Comfort Lake. The project site is located on the lakeside (east) of Comfort Lake Drive between 257th St and Iris Ave. Initial conversations with the landowners have been positive. Staff are working with BWSR to change the Goodwin Rd work plan to allow the project to be implemented at this new location.

**2025 MN Watersheds Project & Program of the Year
Detailed Award Information Form**

- 1) **Award Category:** Project
- 2) **MAWD Region:** Three
- 3) **Watershed District:** *Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District*
- 4) **Project name:** *County Road 50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter*
- 5) **Nominator** NA

6) Project/Program Summary (Limit 150 words) to be read at the awards program during the annual meeting banquet:

The County Road 50 project is multi-cell iron enhanced sand filter designed to reduce phosphorus loading from Washington Judicial Ditch 6 and improve water quality in Forest Lake. The multi-cell design allows for adjustments to optimize maximum treatment efficiency. Effectiveness monitoring indicates the system exceeded its removal goals in 2024 with an orthophosphate removal of 93% (127 lbs), TP removal of 87%, (147 lbs) and TSS removal of 81% (4,299 lbs).

Project funding includes a Clean Water Fund grant, a Federal 319 grant, and the District's tax levy. The project is estimated to have a lifecycle cost of approximately \$500 per pound of phosphorus removed. Improved water quality in Forest Lake benefits lake residents, lake users via the three public boat launches, the City of Forest Lake via lake associated tourism, as well as those using downstream waters in Comfort Lake, and the Sunrise and St. Croix rivers.

7) Define need:

The Washington Judicial Ditch 6 drains a vast wetland complex at the southern border of the CLFLWD. Monitoring data identified this subwatershed as contributing 29% of the phosphorus loading (mostly in a dissolved form) to Forest Lake – causing poor water quality and clarity. The CR50 IESF addresses this excess loading – improving water quality in Forest Lake and in downstream waterbodies.

8) Goal/purpose of the project/program:

The Goal of the project is to reduce the external nutrient loading (phosphorus, nitrogen, TSS) from the upper Washington Judicial Ditch 6 subwatershed by 60% or greater to help improve water quality in Forest Lake and downstream water resources – Sunrise River, Comfort Lake, and the St Croix River.

9) Describe project/program:

The County Road 50 project is multi-cell iron enhanced sand filter that was constructed in 2022/23 to address elevated phosphorus loading from Washington Judicial Ditch 6 that discharges to Forest Lake. The treated subwatershed is dominated by wetlands and contributes nearly half of the phosphorus load from the entire WJD-6 system, most of which is dissolved phosphorus making it difficult to remove with traditional BMPs. The

multi-cell design with adjustable controls allows for continuous treatment by alternating pumping between basins, i.e. one basin can dry while the other basin fills. Iron enhanced sand filter systems work best when they have the ability to dry out in between periods of inundation. The system controls allow for adjustments based on observed performance for optimizing maximum treatment efficiency. Post construction effectiveness monitoring in 2024 showed the system exceeded its removal goals with an orthophosphate removal of 93% (127 lbs), TP removal of 87%, (147 lbs) and TSS removal of 81% (4,299 lbs) – exceeding its estimated removal targets of 97lbs orthophosphate and 3,500 lbs TSS per year.

This project aligns with Statewide Priority #1: Restore waters closest to meeting state standards. This project improves water quality in Forest Lake and downstream waters including the Sunrise River, Comfort Lake, and ultimately, the St Croix River. CLFLWD generated public support with help from the City of Forest Lake and the Forest Lake Lake Association. The project was funded through a Clean Water Fund grant, a Federal 319 grant, and the District's tax levy. The project is on track to achieve a lifecycle cost of approximately \$500 per pound of phosphorus removed. Improved water quality in Forest Lake benefits lake residents, lake users via the three public boat launches, the City of Forest Lake via lake associated tourism, as well as those using downstream waters in Comfort Lake, and the Sunrise and St. Croix rivers.

10) Describe public benefit: *The CR50 IESF project is estimated to annually remove over 97 lbs of the phosphorus load and 3,500 lbs of the TSS load to Forest Lake – improving water quality and clarity on that waterbody and in downstream water resources.*

11) Watershed plan reference (where is the problem/solution identified in the watershed plan, does it address stated problems, objectives and goals):
This project aligns with Statewide Priority #1 and is identified in the CLFLWD Watershed Management Plan as well as the Forest Lake Diagnostic Study and Implementation Plan. The project addresses the nutrient loading reductions identified in these documents and was designed to achieve the nutrient reduction goals for Forest Lake.

12) Was project goal achieved? If so, how was the success measured?
The project goal was achieved, as is evident in the project effectiveness monitoring results. These results indicate that the project exceeded its removal goals with an orthophosphate removal of 93% (127 lbs), TP removal of 87%, (147 lbs) and TSS removal of 81% (4,299 lbs) in the 2024 monitoring cycle.

13) Watershed or water body name to be protected or improved by project or program *This project improves water quality in Forest Lake, and in the downstream water resources including: Sunrise River, Comfort Lake, St Croix River.*

14) Watershed or water body information (e.g., size, watershed area, classification, description): The Forest Lake watershed is 8,160 acres in size, the WJD6 subwatershed is ~ 2,190 acres, and Forest Lake has 2,271 acres of open water – it is considered a recreational lake.

15) Project partners (financial or inkind support)

<u>Agency or organization</u>	<u>% Participation</u>
<i>City of Forest Lake</i>	<1 %
<i>Landowner(s)</i>	<1 %

16) Start date: construction began in the fall 2022

17) Project status:

On-going Project : *The project is operated annually from May to November.*

Completed: 5-2023 Completion date: the project came online in May of 2023

18) Project cost (this can be provided as total cash cost or a breakdown can be provided to show the cost of various project elements and partners):

Clean Water Fund Grant: \$747,400, Section 319 Grant: \$191,965, CLFLWD Grant Match: \$321,300. Total Project Budget: \$1,260,665

19) Letters of support: *attached at the end of this document*

20) Photos:

As noted in the instructions, each nomination must be accompanied by **at least 4 (4) photos**.



IESF overview #1 – during construction.



IESF overview #2 - spring after construction



Filter bed inlet – water actively flowing into the filter bed.



Intake pond on WJD6 and the control panel/pump system (underground).



Date: October 8, 2025

To: MN Watersheds Award Review Committee

Re: Letter of Support for Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District Award nomination –
CR 50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter

Dear Review Committee,

The Forest Lake Lake Association supports the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District in its Project of the Year award nomination for the County Road 50 Iron Enhanced Sand Filter. This project was completed in 2023 and helps protect and improve the water quality in Forest Lake by reducing phosphorus loading by 97+ pounds per year.

The mission of the Forest Lake Lake Association is to promote, protect, and improve Forest Lake for current and future generations. This project aligns with the Forest Lake Lake Association's mission and deserves recognition by the MN Watersheds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth Wood".

Kenneth Wood
Vice President
Forest Lake Lake Association

2025 MN Watersheds Project & Program of the Year

Detailed Award Information Form

1) **Award Category** (check one)
Program X

2) **MAWD Region** (check one):
Three X

3) **Watershed District:** *Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District*

4) **Project/program name:** *Community Education Partnership Program*

5) **Nominator (if different from above watershed district)** NA

6) **Project/Program Summary (Limit 150 words) to be read at the awards program during the annual meeting banquet:**

Protection of natural resources and improvement of water quality starts with awareness and education. The Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) identified a greater need for local engagement with landowners to educate and empower them into making stronger stewardship decisions on their own properties that will positively impact local water resources. The CLFLWD partners with established education institutions including Hardwood Creek Library, Forest Lake Area Schools Community Education, and Chisago Lakes Community Education. The resulting partnership utilizes each entity's strengths, resources, and abilities to efficiently and effectively educate throughout the local community.

In 2024, the partnership hosted 18 community education events attended by a total of 225 people and expects to more than double these numbers by the end of 2025. This includes a variety of events for adults, families, and youth. Topics range from turf alternatives, rain barrels, natural shorelines, and wide variety of native plant classes.

7) **Define need:**

Through communications and interactions with local lake associations, community groups, and area educators, the CLFLWD identified an ongoing and substantial need for more quality education throughout local communities that focuses on residential stewardship to improve water quality.

8) **Goal/purpose of the project/program:**

The purpose of the program is to increase awareness, through education, of the role that local stewardship plays in improving water quality. The intended outcome is for event attendees to implement learned stewardship practices on their properties.

9) **Describe project/program:**

The CLFLWD brought together community education staff from Forest Lake Area Community Education, Chisago Lakes Community Education, and Hardwood Creek Library to develop and implement a wide variety of events, workshops, and classes that are focused on engaging and educating local communities with local water resources. Roles and responsibilities are divided among the partners to best leverage each entity's specialties, materials, and facilities. The CLFLWD develops educational materials and

is the lead presenter at the events. The other partners advertise the events, manage registration logistics, and host the events at their respective facilities.

10) Describe public benefit:

In 2024, the partnership hosted 18 community education events attended by a total of 225 people. This is an average of 12 attendees per event. This included a variety of events for adults, families, and youth. Topics ranged from turf alternatives, rain barrels, natural shorelines, and wide variety of native plant classes.

So far in 2025, the partnership has hosted 24 community education events attended by a total of 395 people as of October 1st. This is an average of 16 attendees per event. The partnership has 30 more events scheduled for fall 2025 and early winter 2026; at the current average attendance rate, this would result in an additional 480 people being reached.

11) Watershed plan reference (where is the problem/solution identified in the watershed plan, does it address stated problems, objectives and goals):

The CLFLWD 2022-2031 Watershed Management Plan (WMP), section 2.2 Issues Identification identifies community engagement as a gap that needs to be filled and as a high priority for the 10-year plan. Community members identified “increased community engagement and communications” as a high priority. Interagency partners identified “increase in coordinated community engagement and communications for a variety of target audiences (e.g., urban residents, agricultural landowners and farmers, lake users, etc.)” as a high priority. The Community Education Partnership Program addresses Education & Outreach Goal #1 in section 3.2 of the WMP: Increase public knowledge of and appreciation for human impacts to surface water, groundwater and natural resources to increase target audiences’ behaviors that positively impact water resources.

12) Was project goal achieved? If so, how was the success measured?

The purpose of the program is to increase awareness, through education, of the role that local stewardship plays in improving water quality. This purpose was achieved, and success was measured by the attendance counts at each event (225 attendees in 2024, and 395 attendees so far in 2025).

The intended outcome is for event attendees to implement learned stewardship practices on their properties. Post-event surveys indicate that most attendees left the event feeling more knowledgeable about water stewardship and are interested in returning for more classes in the future.

There is a continued demand for classes and an ever-increasing number of participants. The program continues to expand with new class topics and events offered in 2026.

13) Watershed or water body name to be protected or improved by project or program (if applicable)

CLFLWD and surrounding communities

14) Watershed or water body information (e.g., size, watershed area, classification, description):

The CLFLWD covers 49 square miles in northern Washington and southern Chisago counties.

15) Project partners (financial or inkind support)

<u>Agency or organization</u>	<u>% Participation</u>	
<i>Forest Lake Area Schools Community Education</i>	20	%
<i>Chisago Lakes Community Education</i>	20	%
<i>Hardwood Creek Library; Washington County</i>	20	%
<i>CLFLWD</i>	40	%

16) Start date: *September 2024*

17) Project status:

Ongoing

18) Project cost (this can be provided as total cash cost or a breakdown can be provided to show the cost of various project elements and partners):

The average cost for printing and materials is \$20 per participant. We estimate that the cost of staff time and overhead (e.g., building and operational costs) is approximately \$20 per participant. This amounts to \$9,000 in 2024 and \$15,800 to date as of October 1st in 2025.

19) Letters of support:

Each application may have up to two letters of support. The letters can be from individuals, agencies, organizations, or local units of government. Letters from staff or managers of the sponsoring District will not be accepted. Attach letters to this application as a pdf document.

20) Photos:

As noted in the instructions, each nomination must be accompanied by **at least 4 (4) photos**, but no more than eight (8) of the project or program. The photos must be in a digital format.



Daniel McGonigle
Community Ed Director
651-213-2601
dmgonigle@isd2144.org

Jessica Hansen
Early Childhood Coordinator
651-213-2282
jessica.hansen@isd2144.org

Ian Lexvold
Community Education Coordinator
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ilexvold@isd2144.org

Christine Melbostad
Community Education Coordinator
651-213-2606
cmelbostad@isd2144.org

To the MAWD Awards Committee:

I am excited to write this letter of support for the MN Watersheds Project or Program of the year! Our partnership with CLFLWD has brought a deeper respect and understanding of our area watersheds and its impact on our community overall.

CLFLWD aligns with the mission, vision and values of Chisago Lakes Community Education and their contributions to educating our community have had a wide reaching impact. Water is a part of life here in Chisago Lakes. It is what makes our back yards so desirable. Our partnership with CLFLWD have provided our community with a deeper understanding and appreciation of how to keep those lakes healthy and sustainable into the future. It has strengthened the fulfillment of protection and enhancement of our watersheds within our communities.

In addition, our strong connection to our Minnesota Master Gardener programs made the classes on native plants, turf alternatives, rain barrels, and others, highly impactful and popular. We were able to offer these classes for little to no expense to the end user and that helped make them a very popular and appreciated community resource. That partnership would not have been possible without the CLFLWD, ourselves and the Master Gardeners already having deeply rooted connections which are mutually beneficial. Adam and his team did an amazing job of creating innovative and informative classes which really resonated with our community and class attendees.

I am honored to recommend CLFLWD to the MAWD awards committee for consideration. The benefits this partnership has already created continue to expand. The impacts are felt throughout the community and region. Our class attendees are hungry for more knowledge and they take that knowledge and apply it to their own conservation goals. The classes are having a real and measurable impact throughout our region and we are proud to be a partner in CLFLWD's efforts.

Sincerely,

Daniel McGonigle

Director of Community Education

dmgonigle@isd2144.org; 651-213-2601



**Forest Lake Area Schools
Community Education**

943 9th Ave SW
Forest Lake, MN 55025

Corey McKinnon, Director

Laurie Drolson, Youth & Adult Prog Coordinator

Janet Nutter, Adult Program Planner

October 6, 2025

To whom it may concern,

We strongly support the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District's nomination for 2025 MN Watersheds Project & Program of the Year. We've been working with Adam Helm from CLFLWD since the fall of 2024. He came to us with a wide variety of classes that we could offer to adults and families in our area.

These classes are a great opportunity for people to gain knowledge and resources to help them be good stewards of our lakes and streams. We love being able to offer classes that are based on sound information and provide that information in an interesting format. The combination of some in-person classes and some virtual classes make it convenient for participants.

Adam has been great about connecting districts for shared classes. He has also added some parent/child classes to help connect young people to the outdoors.

Participant evaluations have rated the quality of Adam's instruction as EXCELLENT and participant comments have said that he is very knowledgeable.

We look forward to continuing to work with CLFLWD on these classes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Laurie Drolson".

Laurie Drolson
Youth & Adult Programs Coordinator
Ldrolson@flaschools.org
651-982-8334

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Janet Nutter".

Janet Nutter
Youth & Adult Program Planner
Jnutter@flaschools.org
651-982-8328

Engaging People; Enriching Lives!



Rooted in **Connection**
Growing with **Direction**

LIBRARY

Jacquie Kramer, Director
Drew Wylie, Deputy Director

Dear Minnesota Watersheds Award Committee,

I'm writing in support of the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) application for the 2025 MN Watersheds Project & Program of the Year. I'm a librarian at the Hardwood Creek Library in Forest Lake and have been partnering with CLFLWD to educate residents in the community about water resource conservation for three years. Attendance at these events is steady and continues to grow as residents learn about the valuable information available at these programs for free.

Access to nature has been one of the most popular reasons for those locating to our area (2017 Forest Lake Community Survey). People live here because they care about access to the outdoors, but they don't always have the information and tools to care for the resource. CLFLWD identified a need to share information in easily accessed locations and formats. Together we've been able to reach a variety of folks about the importance of stewardship and the myriad ways they can help.

CLFLWD programming has helped to bring those who might not usually attend the library to our facility. Once they are here, they learn about our array of materials and services and go on to share that information with other members of their community. On a number of occasions, we've observed patrons who have attended a CLFLWD program return to the library to donate native seeds to our newly established seed library.

Adam Hjelm is an energetic and engaging speaker who can make even the most banal topics interesting, e.g. mulch. His creative workshops such as Create Your Own Lure, Bugged Out Water and Make Your Own Bee House have brought all age groups to the library. While the kids are making something fun, the adults are learning information they can take home and use.

My colleagues and I have noticed that people who come to our CLFLWD programming return for new workshops and many have clearly become more interested and knowledgeable about water stewardship and the use of native plants in their yards. Our programming partnership with CLFLWD has contributed great value to our rural community and its watershed.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Cristina de Sobrino".

Cristina de Sobrino | Librarian I

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Washington County Library, Hardwood Creek

19955 Forest Road North, Forest Lake, MN 55025

651-275-7315

Rooted in Connection, Growing with Direction







