



MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: December 16, 2025
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: Rule Revision – Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership



Background/Discussion:

This memo serves as a follow-up to the discussion that was held at the last board meeting asking for more information related to the LSC Watershed Partnership effort related to permitting efforts. The Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District rules were adopted on December 18, 2008, and amended on March 24, 2011, and February 22, 2018. More recently, the Board approved a revision to Rule 9.0 Fees at the regular December 18, 2025, board meeting.

However, even with this revision, the majority of the District's rules have not been reviewed or updated in seven years. Therefore, staff are considering a larger rule revision in 2026 to incorporate input from partners, address gaps from lessons learned, and adopt up to date practices. District staff participate in an ongoing work group of other watershed professionals focused solely on permitting to further align and improve permitting outcomes across MN.

More locally, the Lower St Croix Watershed Partnership (LWSCP) has contracted with a consultant team to help local government units review and update rules. The LWSCP consultants focus on ordinances or rules that impact water quality, stormwater, shorelines and wetlands. Additionally, the partnership assists with rule language, education and outreach, and funding sources for rule revisions. Staff will meet with Barbara Heitkamp in January 2026 to discuss the role and assistance the LSCWP can provide to the District during its planned rule revision.

Ready for What's Next? Keeping Our Communities Growing — and Clean Water Flowing

Our region is growing quickly — with projected population growth across the watershed in the coming decades. New homes, roads, and businesses are on the way, bringing new opportunities and some challenges. The good news? Our communities have already invested millions in clean water projects that prevent erosion and protect our lakes and rivers — the natural assets that keep property values strong and make this a great place to live.

Now's the time to make sure our local ordinances — especially for stormwater, shoreland, and wetlands — are keeping pace. Clear, effective rules make it easier for everyone: city staff, developers, and residents who care about protecting what makes our basin such a great place to live.

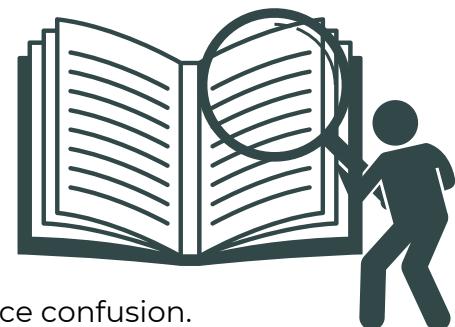


Who we are and how we can help:

The **Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership** has a consultant team ready to help local governments prepare for growth.

We'll work with your county, city or township to:

- Review your ordinances that impact water quality, addressing stormwater and if needed, shoreland and wetland considerations
- Pinpoint what's working — and what needs an update.
- Draft practical, defensible, and easy-to-use ordinance language.
- Support public and council discussions to smooth adoption.
- Explore funding options to offset staff time or project costs.



Why take a fresh look at your ordinances?

- Clear, updated codes save city staff and developers time and reduce confusion.
- Fewer gray areas mean fewer headaches and lower costs for all parties.
- Strong, consistent standards help protect the clean water and open spaces we've already invested in.
- Being proactive now keeps your community ahead of growth, not catching up to it.

The payoff of acting now...

Updating your ordinances pays off in more predictable development reviews, smoother projects, and less time spent sorting through outdated or unclear language. It helps protect the lakes, rivers, and wetlands that define our landscapes — while keeping our communities ready for growth.

Contact us!

You've already invested in clean water - let's make sure local codes support that work for decades to come. Contact Barbara Heitkamp at bheitkamp@mnwcd.org for a presentation and introduction to the consultant team. To learn more about the LSC Watershed Partnership, visit www.LSC1W1P.org.