

1 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE**
2 **COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT**
3 **Thursday, March 12, 2026**

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5 **1. Call to Order**

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7 President Anderson called the March 12, 2026, regular board meeting to order at 6:30
8 p.m. at the CLFLWD office, 44 Lake Street South, and via online video conference.

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10 **Managers Present:**

11 Jackie Anderson, President
12 Steve Schmaltz, Treasurer
13 Jim Schottmuller, Vice President
14 Dave Bakke, Secretary (virtual attendance)
15 Douglas Toavs, Assistant Treasurer (virtual attendance)

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17 **Staff Present:**

18 Mike Kinney, Administrator
19 Tori Philippi, Office Manager
20 Emily Heinz, Planning Coordinator
21 Blayne Eineichner, Project Coordinator
22 Aidan Read, Land Management Specialist
23 Jackie Bussjaeger, Technician
24 Matthew Hendrickson, Technician

25
26 **Others Present:**

27 Anne Wilkinson, Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR)
28 Erik Megow, Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR)
29 Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners
30 Ted Hanson, Community Advisory Committee
31 Michael, virtual attendee

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33 **2. Setting of Meeting Agenda**

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35 Administrator Mike Kinney suggested an addition to the agenda to discuss a meeting
36 with representatives from Washington County under 4b, Old Business.

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38 Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Manager
39 Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			

Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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3. New Business

a) 2026 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention & Management Plan

Technician Matthew Hendrickson provided a presentation of the 2026 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention & Management Plan, which was also made available in video format on YouTube.

The presentation included an overview of the seven lakes that will be managed for AIS in 2026. Annual surveys for AIS will continue in 2026, and planned AIS treatments are based on delineation surveys, management efforts from 2025, and historical average treatment acreage for individual lakes.

Mr. Hendrickson reported that the budget for watercraft inspections has been reduced by \$5,000, but the number of hours of inspections performed will likely remain around the same as the 2025 total, since the temporary Minnesota Conservation Corps service member will act as an additional member of the watercraft inspections team, performing inspections weekly at Forest Lake Launch 1.

Manager Schmaltz noted that it is not clear from the charts in the presentation that CLFLWD funds Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) delineation surveys, while lake associations typically pay for EWM treatments. He asked that this be shown more clearly.

One new AIS initiative in 2026 is the implementation of a biocontrol method for purple loosestrife. In some areas, a species of beetle that feeds on purple loosestrife has been strategically released into established purple loosestrife stands to control the spread. Mr. Hendrickson said the District will test this method in 2026 and may continue it as a potential community science project going forward if successful.

President Anderson suggested including more detail about the Comfort Lake whole-lake Eurasian watermilfoil treatment performed in 2022, which included two separate treatments that were performed through a DNR grant obtained by the Comfort Lakes Association. She also mentioned that the Comfort Lakes Association is currently applying for an AIS grant through Chisago County, which is intended to go toward a point intercept survey in 2026. She added that bryozoans have been seen in Comfort Lake in 2025, which is a sign of improved water quality.

80 Mr. Hendrickson reported that the University of Minnesota has shared its zebra
81 mussel research data with the District, and this research is currently transitioning into
82 a long-term population study that will hopefully provide insights for future research
83 and management. Manager Schottmuller asked about treatment methods. Mr.
84 Hendrickson explained that it is difficult to treat zebra mussels without detrimental
85 effects on other organisms in the lake.

86
87 Mr. Hendrickson explained that the District has consulted with outside organizations
88 on rough fish management and is currently seeking grant funding to conduct a carp
89 movement study to build upon the Comfort Lake population study conducted in
90 2024. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is also planning a full fish survey
91 on Comfort Lake in 2026.

92
93 Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the 2026 CLFLWD AIS Prevention and
94 Management Plan. Seconded by Manager Schottmuller.

95
96 Manager Bakke pointed out that the estimated AIS expenses exceed the budget for
97 Forest Lake and Comfort Lake. He is aware the expenses are estimated but would like
98 the board to keep this in mind.

99
100 President Anderson asked whether any of the funding comes from grants. Mr.
101 Hendrickson explained that the District has obtained a Washington County grant for
102 watercraft inspections, as well as funds to treat curly-leaf pondweed and flowering
103 rush. He added that the Tri-Party Agreement can also assist in funding.

104
105 Administrator Kinney added that the estimated numbers represent an average, and
106 adjustments will be made throughout the calendar year in response to actual
107 conditions.

108
109 Manager Schottmuller stated that since it is still early in the year, the projected
110 expenses should fit within the budget at this point, before funds have been spent on
111 AIS activities. Manager Schmaltz responded that the board has the ability to adjust
112 the budget numbers.

113
114 Planning Coordinator Emily Heinz stated that the graphs in the presentation may
115 make the numbers look artificially elevated, as they combine expenses from multiple
116 line items in the CLFLWD annual budget. This includes AIS Management line items for
117 multiple lakes, the Watercraft Inspection Program line item, and the Staff
118 Management & Coordination line item.

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120 Manager Toavs noted that it likely won't be known whether treatments are required
121 until delineations are performed later in the year. He stated that the District must
122 make allocations for unpredictable circumstances that may occur.

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President Anderson requested that the plan show how much of the funding is coming from grants and how much from the levy. Manager Toavs responded that it may make things more complicated to repeatedly change how the numbers are broken out. Administrator Kinney stated that the numbers are displayed this way at the board’s request.

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

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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b) 2026 Water Monitoring Plan

Project Coordinator Blayne Eineichner presented the 2026 water monitoring plan, which he said has been streamlined to reduce expenditures while retaining core data acquisition efforts to inform project development and make management decisions.

The program will focus on three main initiatives this year: Community-Assisted Monitoring Program (CAMP) through the Metropolitan Council, the Community-Assisted Tributary (CAT) and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) diagnostic sampling programs, and monitoring reporting by EOR.

The CAMP program will be reduced from a total of 12 lakes in past years to 9 lakes in 2026. The smaller lakes that have been sampled on rotation in the past will be put on pause for 2026. The scope of the CAT and DIY programs will also be reduced, focusing on a select sample of micro-drainages to inform future nutrient load reduction projects.

The District will not conduct stream monitoring in 2026, as there is a robust dataset from past years. Previous monitoring plans had included sediment core sample data from Shields Lake, which will be paused until next year. The District will also pause its project effectiveness monitoring through bottom water sampling for the 2026 season. Mr. Eineichner reported that this plan will come in under the allocated budget, spending \$100,590 out of a budgeted \$102,000.

158 President Anderson asked who will collect lake samples, and whether it will have an
159 impact on legacy data.

160
161 Mr. Eineichner responded that staff and volunteers collect samples, which go to the
162 Metropolitan Council for analysis. EOR then uses results to create the final report. Dr.
163 Anne Wilkinson of EOR added that moving toward a more rotational, less-frequent
164 stream monitoring to save costs should be fine for the long-term dataset.

165
166 Manager Toavs asked whether staff would collect samples after large rain events
167 causing excessive runoff. Mr. Eineichner responded that staff have the capability to
168 collect samples and submit them for analysis.

169
170 Administrator Kinney noted that the changes to this program were based on data
171 collection from last year, especially the data indicating nutrient loading in the Shields
172 Lake area. This monitoring plan will allow the District to identify where there are
173 possibilities for project implementation within that system. He added that potential
174 grant funding may also change what action the District is able to take as the year
175 progresses.

176
177 Manager Bakke moved to approve the 2026 Water Monitoring Plan as presented in
178 the memo. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-
179 0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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182 Manager Bakke moved to authorize the Administrator, on advice of counsel, to enter
183 into an agreement with EOR to complete the 2026 Monitoring Report in accordance
184 with the 2-27-2026 scope of work and in an amount not to exceed \$9,990. Seconded
185 by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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188 **c) 2026 Cost-Share Program Framework**

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190 Land Management Specialist Aidan Read presented the 2026 cost-share framework
191 for the Board’s approval.

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193 The updated framework includes language clarifying eligibility for applicants who
194 have open permits, language clarifying eligibility for education projects, removal of
195 property tax pre-payments as a reimbursement or payment method, and a
196 renaming of the “Property Tax Credit Payment Program” to “Legacy Payment
197 Program.” The incentive rates will remain the same as in 2025.

198
199 Manager Bakke questioned whether it is a conflict of interest for a board manager to
200 participate in the cost-share program. Legal Counsel Chuck Holtman responded
201 that the while it is not a conflict of interest, the manager who would benefit from the
202 program must abstain from board consideration of the matter, and the board vote
203 must be unanimous.

204
205 Manager Schmaltz questioned whether the shoreline habitat flat-rate incentive
206 covers both plant costs and labor. Mr. Read responded that it allows reimbursement
207 for labor in a way that does not require tracking actual time, as the District has a
208 calculated formula estimate of the cost of shoreline restoration by square footage.

209
210 President Anderson asked whether there have been public outreach events to
211 approach residents about this, especially from an individual lake approach. Mr. Read
212 responded that there were lake-specific meetings, as well as seminars that included
213 this information, but there has not been a general cost-share seminar. He stated that
214 2025 is the first year the District has spent its entire cost-share budget, and he
215 suspects that increased outreach efforts by Education & Outreach Coordinator
216 Adam Hjelm played a role.

217
218 Manager Schmaltz suggested that the Board receive updates on the cost-share
219 program similar to program and year-end reports presented by other District
220 programs.

221
222 Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the CLFLWD Cost-Share Policy. Seconded by
223 Manager Bakke. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

Jackie Anderson	X			
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d) FY27 Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant Applications

Administrator Kinney provided background on the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Clean Water Fund grants, which are now open for proposals for fiscal year 2027. In January it was announced that proposals would be due March 25.

The District initially identified three potential proposals to submit: one for Bone Lake Northeast agricultural practices, one for the Broadway Iron Enhanced Sand Filter replacement, and one for the Forest Lake dead-end streets projects. However, after discussion with city representatives, it was determined that the dead-end streets project would best be delayed for a future time.

Manager Schottmuller inquired if the District is at a disadvantage to receive further grants since it has received grant funding from BWSR many times before. Administrator Kinney responded that the project proposals are backed by real data, which is a more relevant metric in assessment for suitability for grant awards.

Manager Schmaltz noted that the proposed sand filter replacement will reduce total phosphorus loading by an estimated 12 lbs per year, which would end up costing around \$65,000 per lb. He questioned whether funds would be better spent on flood mitigation and green space rather than phosphorus reduction. Ms. Heinz stated that the estimates were recalculated recently and that instead of 10-12 lbs per year, the actual result will be closer to 27-29 lbs of phosphorus reduction per year. For a 25-year life span, that will reduce 1,000 lbs over time. This would represent \$1,000 per lb of phosphorus removed, which is on the higher side compared to past projects, but the District has already implemented most of the projects with highest cost-effectiveness within its power. Manager Schmaltz is concerned that the life expectancy of the filter media is only 10 years and would require further spending later in time.

Administrator Kinney stated that the District has implemented multiple types of iron enhanced sand filters, and that the optimal design has changed since the original Broadway project was installed. This project would allow for an outdated project to be updated to a more efficient, better scientifically informed model. He said the intent is to take core samples to understand how much longer the system can effectively last as it is.

Manager Bakke asked for clarification on whether this would be three separate grant proposals. Administrator Kinney responded that it would be two separate proposals, as the dead-end street proposal is no longer under consideration.

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President Anderson moved to authorize the District Administrator to submit grant applications to the FY27 Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant Program and to execute the grant agreement, if awarded. Seconded by Manager Schottmuller. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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e) GreenCorps Host Site Application Resolution

Administrator Kinney presented a resolution to submit an application to the GreenCorps Host Site Program, which will allow a service member to join District staff and perform duties on a temporary basis at no cost to the District.

Manager Schmaltz moved to approve resolution 26-03-01 authorizing Minnesota GreenCorps host site application. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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f) Heath Iron Enhanced Sand Filter Bid Solicitation

Erik Megow of EOR presented plans for the Heath Iron Enhanced Sand Filter implementation.

Mr. Megow gave an overview of the project, describing its location and scope. The iron enhanced sand filter will be constructed on a District-owned parcel southwest of Little Comfort Lake. He noted 960 acres of sub-watershed drain through this parcel through the stormwater conveyance system, which flows to Little Comfort via a City of Wyoming stormwater pipe.

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The design is a pumped filter that directs water to a pump station, where two pumps work at 48-hour intervals between two basins after rain events. The parcel will also be planted with native trees and a buffer established for the delineated wetland on the property.

This project is estimated to reduce total phosphorus by 75-86 lbs per year, which represents 22-25 percent of the Little Comfort Lake treatment goal. Final completion of the project is anticipated by June of 2027.

There was discussion about upgradient surface drainage constraints. A question was raised as to whether the facility’s operation would be disturbed if the City were to enlarge the pipe. Mr. Megow explained that the diversion structure includes a weir, so there would be no disturbance so long as the pipe invert elevation doesn’t change.

Administrator Kinney commended District staff for their work in acquiring the parcel where the filter will be installed.

President Anderson moved to adopt resolution 26-03-02 approving plans and directing solicitation of bids for the Heath Ave Iron Enhanced Sand Filter Project. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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g) MN Lakes and Rivers Letter of Support

The Minnesota Lakes and Rivers (MLR) organization operates a Lake Steward program throughout the state that focuses on shoreline restoration and protection through civic organizing. MLR submitted a proposal to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for funding in 2027.

Manager Schmaltz moved to have the Board president sign the attached letter of support on behalf of the Board of Managers and direct staff to forward the letter of support for the MLR proposal to the LCCMR for funding of its Lake Steward Program. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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335 **4. Old Business**

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338 **a) 2026-2028 Forest Lake Cooperative Aquatic Invasive Species Agreement (Tri-Party Agreement)**

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341 Manager Schottmuller asked for clarification on whether the District is committed to increasing its contribution to the agreement in future years. Administrator Kinney responded that the District has spent beyond its \$63,750 yearly contribution to the agreement in the past few years.

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346 Manager Schottmuller asked for clarification that this agreement does not require the District to spend the full contribution. Administrator Kinney explained that it is an agreement of how expenditures will be divided. Unspent funds up to the limit will be set aside for the following year in the event of overage.

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351 Legal Counsel Holtman added that it is a commitment to spend the dedicated amount or, if a party doesn't do so, to provide reimbursement to the other parties so that the percentage spending allocations are maintained.

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355 Manager Schottmuller asked whether the amount is cash or can be given in staff hours. Counsel Holtman stated that the agreement includes staff costs as an eligible contribution.

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359 Manager Schmaltz moved to authorize the District Administrator to execute the 2026-2028 Funding Support Agreement for AIS and Lake Management Activities on Forest Lake (Tri-Party Agreement) on advice of counsel and with any final, non-substantive changes. Seconded by Manager Toavs. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0.

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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			

Jackie Anderson	X			
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b) Washington County Meeting

Administrator Kinney notified the Board that he recently met with a representative from Washington County to discuss a concern he had about a recent contractor workshop organized by the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership. He expressed disappointment that CLFLWD was not contacted or invited to attend this workshop, despite having hosted and participated in similar events in the past. He suspected this may be due to the fact that the District is no longer a member of the East Metro Water Resources Education Program (EMWREP). However, he pointed out that CLFLWD is still located in Washington County and has been contributing to watershed outreach and communication in the community. He expressed a desire to appeal to county representatives that CLFLWD should be made a whole member in EMWREP and recognized for its independent contribution to watershed education. He noted that there are various ways for an organization to become a member, but none have been offered to CLFLWD.

He suggested a meeting be set up among himself, interested members of the CLFLWD board, Commissioner Fran Miron, and Washington County staff. He asked whether any board managers would like to participate.

President Anderson recommended that the county representatives speak at an upcoming CLFLWD Board meeting. Manager Schmaltz commented that a smaller work group may be a more effective approach.

President Anderson stated that the board’s decision to quit EMWREP membership made sense. Manger Toavs recommended keeping the discussion group small, while Manager Bakke stated that the board already made its decision about quitting its EMWREP participation, and it is up to EMWREP decisionmakers what they want to do and who they want to include. Manager Schottmuller hesitates to meet with Washington County representatives as a board meeting agenda item, as it is sometimes difficult to be candid in the setting of a public meeting.

By consensus, the board authorized Administrator Kinney and Administrator Schottmuller to meet with Washington County representatives on the matter of education and outreach and EMWREP and report back to the board.

5. Program/Project Update

a) Project Update

405 Mr. Eineichner stated that the two main project updates are that solicitation of bids
406 for the Heath Avenue Iron Enhanced Sand Filter will now go forward, and that some
407 funding for a project on the Sunrise River has been moved to a downstream location
408 near Comfort Lake, where staff are working with landowners to propose a stormwater
409 project. Once the landowners approve, the project can proceed to the design phase.

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411 **b) Program Update—Permitting**

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413 Technician Jackie Bussjaeger provided a summary presentation of the 2025
414 Permitting Program, which was also made available in video format on YouTube. The
415 presentation included inspection totals and average compliance, and identified all
416 current watershed permits and maintenance declaration installations by category
417 and status.

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419 **6. Report of Managers**

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421 Manager Bakke mentioned that he met with Administrator Kinney and President
422 Anderson to review and revise the Administrator’s 2026 SMART Goals. These goals will be
423 used to conduct administrative quarterly reviews. Each manager will be asked to
424 participate in one of these reviews, and the SMART Goals will be distributed to each
425 manager when completed. President Anderson added that materials for the review
426 process will also be distributed to managers, and a meeting will be held for managers
427 to discuss and better understand the process.

428

429 President Anderson noted that she will represent the District at the Lower St. Croix (LSC)
430 Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) metro convene meeting on March
431 24th. She asked Ms. Heinz to display the table showing how the Board of Water and Soil
432 Resources (BWSR) calculated the WBIF amount for the Lower St. Croix Metro Watershed
433 Allocation Area (WAA). The table indicated \$190,506 was calculated for the Comfort
434 Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District Sub-Unit Area. Ms. Heinz noted that BWSR staff
435 stated that this amount is not an allocation to the CLFLWD, but is part of the calculation
436 to get to the total for the entire WAA. President Anderson noted that Clean Water Fund
437 competitive grant programs are receiving less funding each year, so it is increasingly
438 important for the CLFLWD to utilize WBIF grant funding for its programs and projects.
439 President Anderson indicated she plans to request grant funding in the amount of
440 \$190,506 at the upcoming convene meeting for projects within the CLFLWD.

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442 **7. Summary and Approval of Board Direction**

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444 The following board directives were summarized:

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- 446 • Manager Schmaltz asked that the AIS Plan differentiate between delineation
- 447 surveys organized by the CLFLWD versus herbicide treatments organized by lake
- 448 associations
- 449 • President Anderson asked that the AIS Plan make reference to the Eurasian
- 450 watermilfoil control history on Comfort Lake and note the observance of a bryozoan
- 451 colony which indicates good water quality.
- 452 • Manager Schmaltz asked that staff provide an update on last year’s cost-share
- 453 program implementation
- 454

455 **8. Adjourn**

456 **a) Next regular board meeting – March 26, 2026**

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 458 Manager Schottmuller moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager
 459 Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-0, and the meeting was
 460 adjourned at 9:00 p.m.
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Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Jim Schottmuller	X			
Dave Bakke	X			
Doug Toavs	X			
Stephen Schmaltz	X			
Jackie Anderson	X			

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Dave Bakke, Secretary -----