MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: November 4, 2026
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: 2027 Education and Outreach Implementation Plan



District Wide

Background/Discussion:
The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the proposed 2027 Education and Outreach Implementation Plan for Board review and approval.

Recommended Action:
Proposed Motion: Manager _____ moves to approve the 2027 Education and Outreach Implementation Plan. Seconded by Manager _____.

Attached:
2027 Education and Outreach Implementation Plan

CLFLWD
WATERSHED DISTRICT

2027 Education and Outreach Implementation Plan

Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District

Purpose and goals

In 2027, the District will focus education and outreach on helping residents understand local water resource issues and take practical steps to protect lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. Public relations and ongoing communication will also be a key part of this work, helping the public and community partners stay informed about CLFLWD programs, projects, and activities, understand the benefits of the District's work, and learn about opportunities to participate, access assistance, and collaborate. This plan organizes the work around six priorities, identifies deliverables and timing, and establishes how staff will evaluate progress. Routine program support remains part of the work but is listed separately from priority initiatives.

The plan supports the District's 2022–2031 Watershed Management Plan goals:

- Goal 1: 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.
- Goal 2: Communicate District programs, projects and other initiatives to the public in a clear, consistent and equitable manner.

2027 priorities

Priority area	Focus for 2027
Land use and water quality	Use clear explanations and practical examples to show how landowner decisions—including fertilizer use, salt application, and shoreline alterations—affect local water quality.
Landowner projects and assistance	Help landowners throughout the District plan stormwater, shoreline, and other projects that protect water quality.
Public relations and District awareness	Keep residents and partners informed about CLFLWD programs, projects, and activities.
Community education	Offer practical classes, events, and Watershed Connections programs.
School and youth education	Bring local watershed learning into classrooms and youth programs.
Partnerships and program evaluation	Coordinate outreach with partners and use results to improve the program.

Implementation responsibility

Education and Outreach staff will coordinate this plan with program and project leads. Staff will confirm schedules, technical content, available resources, and partner roles before implementation and review priorities quarterly. Activities dependent on construction, funding, or partner availability will follow approved schedules.

Land use choices and water quality

Desired outcome: Residents and landowners understand how activities on their properties affect lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater and know how to reduce those impacts. Connect familiar decisions about yards, shorelines, driveways, and other land uses with the movement of nutrients, sediment, and salt into local waters.

- Explain how excess or poorly timed fertilizer use can carry nutrients into water. Promote soil testing, applying only what is needed, and keeping fertilizer off pavement and away from water.
- Explain how shoreline alterations, including riprap and removal of native vegetation, can affect runoff, habitat, and shoreline conditions. Encourage landowners to contact District staff before making changes and explore natural shoreline practices suited to their property.
- Show how excess deicing salt reaches surface water and groundwater. Promote shoveling first, using only the amount needed, and choosing methods suited to pavement temperature and conditions.
- Address other common sources of runoff and pollution, including bare soil, grass clippings and leaves in streets, and extensive paved surfaces. Share practical ways to retain vegetation, prevent erosion, and keep pollutants out of storm drains.

Use seasonal social media posts, email updates, classes, partner communications, and property visits to share these messages. Provide a clear next step, such as requesting a soil test, discussing a shoreline project, or learning about runoff reduction options. Review participant feedback and inquiries to identify topics needing more explanation.

Help landowners protect water quality on their properties

Desired outcome: Landowners throughout the District receive support to plan and complete projects that protect water quality. Outreach will connect people with practical options for their properties, including rain gardens, runoff reduction, and stormwater improvements in town; natural shorelines and erosion control along lakes and streams; and conservation practices on rural properties. Promote technical assistance, site visits, soil testing, and available cost-share opportunities to help landowners get started.

Apply the campaign lessons

The May 18, 2026 Natural Shoreline Outreach Campaign Report, especially Lessons Learned and Recommendations and the Sustainment Plan on pages 12–13, guides this work. Apply its lessons about personal relevance, repeated contact, and reassurance to landowner outreach throughout the District. Tailor messages to each property and landowner's interests, such as attractive yards, wildlife habitat, managing runoff, reducing erosion, and maintaining shoreline views and access.

- Time outreach for spring, early summer, and preparation for fall planting. Maintain winter interest while preparing the next season's contacts.
- Offer soil testing, loon or other wildlife workshops, and brief conversations as approachable first steps. Connect these to pocket garden examples, design assistance, site visits, and applications when residents are ready.
- Outline video themes before filming and capture a mix of local stormwater, shoreline, and other water-friendly property projects during summer. Favor fewer, distinct stories; approximately five videos is a planning option, with production adjusted after reviewing existing assets.
- Reuse campaign materials and strengthen personal follow-up. With permission, collect landowner stories, photographs, and short interviews that show achievable examples on properties in town, along shorelines, and in rural areas.

Actions and deliverables

Action and deliverable	Timing	Staff and partners
Review existing shoreline and stormwater webpages, videos, pocket garden designs, postcards, and site visit materials; prepare a coordinated seasonal outreach calendar for landowners throughout the District.	Q1	Education and Outreach; nonpoint source staff
Follow up with interested households from the earlier shoreline campaign and connect with landowners interested in stormwater and other water quality projects; record readiness, preferred contact timing, and next steps. Maintain follow-up for new inquiries.	Q1–Q4	Education and Outreach; technical staff

Action and deliverable	Timing	Staff and partners
Coordinate mailed and digital contacts with workshops, soil testing invitations, and site visit opportunities before planting decisions.	Q2–Q3	Education and Outreach; class and lake partners
Prepare video themes before filming; capture summer footage and landowner examples with permission. Publish distinct stories with clear invitations to request assistance.	Plan Q1; capture Q2–Q3	Education and Outreach; landowners; production support as available
Review inquiries, services requested, applications, and completed projects; use results to adjust messages and arrange future follow-up.	Quarterly; year-end review	Education and Outreach; nonpoint source staff

Keep the public and partners informed

Desired outcome: Residents and partners understand the District's programs, projects, and activities, the benefits of this work, and opportunities to participate, access assistance, and collaborate. Project communication will explain purposes, schedules, and anticipated benefits.

Project or focus	Planned communication	Timing
Heath Avenue Iron-Enhanced Sand Filter	Construction and webpage updates; treatment process and Little Comfort Lake benefits; resident notices; tours or completion outreach when feasible.	At milestones; tour as conditions allow
East Comfort Pond	Project purpose, stormwater benefits, partner roles, and design or construction updates.	At approved milestones
Greenbelt and Shallow Pond	Conservation and restoration planning, wetland benefits, public access information, and recognition of Wild River Audubon Society stewardship.	At planning and management milestones
North Shore Trail Nature Area and Bone Lake South property	Habitat and wetland restoration updates; invasive plant management; prescribed burn notices and access changes when scheduled.	As work is scheduled
Floodplain resiliency and water storage	Staff-reviewed information about flood risk, residential mitigation, and Water Quality and Storage Grant modeling and feasibility findings.	As findings become available
General lake outreach	Current project information, agricultural BMP updates, monitoring results, and verified impairment status announcements, including Comfort Lake as applicable.	Throughout year

Work with project staff to determine the appropriate outreach for each project, including landowner contacts, neighborhood updates, public meetings, website updates, signage, and partner communications.

Connect community education to action

Desired outcome: Participants gain useful knowledge and leave with a practical next step. Classes will connect familiar interests such as gardening and wildlife with actions that benefit local water resources.

Implement scheduled winter and spring community education classes and the early 2027 Watershed Connections series. Develop later offerings using partner deadlines, registration trends, and participant feedback. Maintain a mix of native plant, rain-friendly yard, shoreline, soil health, wildlife, and seasonal care topics.

Action and deliverable	Timing	Staff and partners
Deliver scheduled classes and Watershed Connections; coordinate speakers, venue, meals, registration, promotion, and evaluation.	Q1–Q2	Education and Outreach; community education; libraries; speakers
Offer interest-based wildlife or loon programs alongside practical planting education. Provide a clear invitation to soil testing, design support, or a site visit.	Throughout year	Education and Outreach; technical staff; presenters
Finalize summer and fall offerings; use short evaluations and enrollment trends to refine the next schedule.	Q1–Q3 planning; Q2–Q4 delivery	Education and Outreach; education partners
Coordinate State of the Watershed and Watershed Champions nominations, selection, recognition, and follow-up communications.	Plan Q1–Q2; deliver as scheduled	Education and Outreach; District staff; award reviewers

Engage schools and young people

Desired outcome: Schools and youth groups have practical ways to include watershed education in their programs. Emphasize reusable resources and relationships that can support repeated participation.

Action and deliverable	Timing	Staff and partners
Update the school contacts file and identify teacher interests, curriculum connections, and scheduling needs. Confirm feasible classroom and field opportunities.	Q1; update throughout year	Education and Outreach; school contacts
Prepare age-appropriate watershed and AIS activities. Assess reusable teaching or checkout kit options, including purchase, upkeep, and staff needs.	Q1–Q2	Education and Outreach; AIS and monitoring staff
Deliver agreed school and youth activities; record attendance, educator feedback, and opportunities for repeat programming.	Q2–Q4, by school schedules	Education and Outreach; educators; youth partners

Strengthen outreach coordination and evaluation

Desired outcome: Outreach is consistent, staff effort is focused, and evaluation shows which activities lead to participation and action.

- Maintain a shared outreach calendar and tracking file. Coordinate seasonal Facebook, Constant Contact, mailings, webpages, classes, and personal contacts so messages reinforce one another.
- Coordinate Community Advisory Committee and Farmer-Led Council agendas, materials, meetings, and follow-up. Arrange a Heath Avenue project learning opportunity when conditions allow.
- Review results with program staff quarterly; adjust outreach timing, methods, and follow-up. Complete the annual summary and use findings to develop the 2028 plan.

Measures of success

Use 2026 year-end results as the comparison for 2027 and retain earlier-year comparisons where methods are consistent. Establish a baseline for new measures. Education and Outreach staff will maintain records with program leads and review them quarterly; annual reporting will distinguish communication reach, expressed interest, participation, and completed actions.

Focus	Measure and 2027 expectation	Evidence
Landowner projects	Track inquiries, soil tests, design assistance, site visits, applications, approvals, and completed projects separately. Review movement between stages and outreach source quarterly.	Shared contact and follow-up log; program records
Landowner follow-up	Record readiness, agreed next step, preferred timing, and follow-up status for interested households. Carry unresolved interest into the next season.	Contact log; quarterly review
Community education	Continue the 10 percent quarterly participation growth goal, compared with the same quarter of the prior year. Report class counts and attendance separately from other events; compare annual totals with 2024–2026.	Registration and attendance records
Learning and action	Collect brief feedback on usefulness, intended actions, and topic interests. Use practical follow-up opportunities to learn whether participants took action.	Participant feedback; service requests
Land use awareness	Use brief class feedback and resident questions to assess understanding of fertilizer, shoreline, salt, and runoff impacts. Track related requests for information or assistance.	Participant feedback; inquiry records
School and youth engagement	Track participating schools or groups, sessions, attendance, educator feedback, and repeat requests. Establish baselines for new activities.	Activity records; educator feedback
Digital communication	Continue the 10 percent quarterly Facebook interaction growth goal against the same quarter of the prior year. Track reach, video performance, email subscribers, opens and clicks, and relevant webpage use.	Platform analytics; consistent reporting periods
Project communication	Review whether webpages, notices, signs, and partner communications match approved milestones and recognition requirements.	Project outreach records; staff review
Resource use	Review staff effort and production costs alongside inquiries and resulting actions. Reuse effective assets and adjust methods that produce limited follow-through.	Time and cost records; quarterly review

Evaluation practices

Ask how residents learned about a program when collecting inquiries or registrations. Recognize that several contacts may contribute to one decision and that landowner projects can take more than one year. Avoid treating video views or workshop attendance as completed behavior change. Review unusual website traffic with the website provider before using analytics to judge results.

Annual review

The year-end Education and Outreach summary will report activities, outcomes, progress toward targets, and recommended changes. Use the review to set realistic future targets, refine seasonal outreach, and identify staffing or funding needs.

Ongoing program support

The following responsibilities continue alongside the six priority initiatives. Program numbers provide an internal reference for coordination and reporting. The appropriate program lead will review technical information before public distribution.

Program	Continuing responsibility
3001 Rules and Rulemaking	Explain adopted rules and revisions; support public information meetings and plain-language guidance.
3002 Permitting	Maintain regulatory and new landowner information; support stormwater BMP inspection and maintenance guidance and education.
3003 Monitoring and Data Assessment	Promote staff-identified CAMP, CAT, tributary, and chloride volunteer needs; share monitoring findings and maintain lake information.
3004 Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement	Promote natural shoreline assistance, cost-share, soil testing, runoff reduction, and water-friendly landscaping; coordinate landowner follow-up for stormwater, shoreline, and other water quality projects.
3005 Education and Outreach	Maintain education partnerships, branding, event information, registration links, website content, and accessible public materials.
3006 Interagency Communication	Coordinate advisory groups and share outreach opportunities with cities, counties, lake associations, and regional partners.
3007 Research	Communicate District-supported findings as requested; no separate research outreach initiative is proposed.
3008 Measurements of Progress	Share verified water quality progress, Annual Reports, Progress Reports, and the annual Education and Outreach summary.
3009 Grant Research and Preparation	Identify outreach funding opportunities; include follow-up, production, and evaluation needs in proposals; retain required documentation and acknowledgments.
3010 Operations and Maintenance	Maintain consistent identification on equipment and signs; communicate maintenance activities, access changes, and owner responsibilities.
3011 AIS Prevention and Management	Coordinate survey and treatment notices, prevention and reporting information, access and event materials, youth activities, and partner communications.
3012 Land Acquisition and Management	Maintain property information and signage; explain stewardship, public access, recreation, and restoration activities.
3013 Planning and Resiliency	Support flood risk, residential mitigation, wetland storage, and resiliency communications with planning staff.