MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: November 10, 2026
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: 2026 Education and Outreach Summary



District Wide

Background/Discussion:
The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the 2026 Education and Outreach Summary for Board review and approval.

The 2026 Education and Outreach Summary is attached, and brief presentation will be provided at the November 19 Regular Board Meeting.

Recommended Action:
Recommended Motion: Manager _____ moves to approve the 2026 Education and Outreach Summary. Seconded by Manager _____.

Attached:
2026 Education and Outreach Summary Report
2026 Education and Outreach Summary PowerPoint

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2026 Education and Outreach Summary

The District's Education and Outreach Program connects residents and community partners with information and practical opportunities to protect local lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. This report summarizes 2026 classes, public events, direct mail, digital communication, and a focused natural shoreline outreach campaign.

Participation and communication highlights

Measure	2026 result
Attendance and booth contacts	1,268
Community education classes	19 classes • 273 attendances
Watershed Connections	4 events • 104 attendances
Direct mail	5,684 household mailings
Website monthly average	1,084 users • 3,756 views
Facebook monthly average	2,929 views • 84 interactions
Reported email subscribers	360

Program foundation

The 2022–2031 Watershed Management Plan calls for education that builds understanding of local water resources and encourages stewardship. The program supports two continuing goals: increasing public knowledge and appreciation of human impacts on water and natural resources, and communicating District programs, projects, and initiatives clearly, consistently, and equitably.

The District carries out this work through community education partnerships, events and tours, printed materials, its website, Facebook, and email communication. Partners extend the program's reach and help make educational opportunities accessible and relevant to local audiences.

Reporting scope

Participation totals count attendances and contacts rather than unique individuals; repeat participation is possible. Lake association figures reflect meeting attendance, while Art in the Park figures reflect booth contacts. Mailing totals count distributions, including repeated outreach to the same households.

Data note: Full-year digital totals include November–December estimates based on January–October trends. Attendance for five classes held October 15–November 5 uses registration counts. Subscriber and follower counts are the latest available figures.

Community Education Partnership Program

Community education programs combined practical landscaping and native plant guidance with family activities, including lure making, bee houses, and Butterfly Bombs for the LINK group.

Year	Community education classes and participants
2024	18 classes • 228 participants
2025	28 classes • 492 participants
2026	19 classes • 273 participants

Compared with 2024, the District offered one additional class in 2026 and reached 45 more participants, increases of approximately 6% and 20%, respectively. Compared with 2025, 2026 had nine fewer classes and 219 fewer participants, decreases of approximately 32% and 45%.

Partners included Hardwood Creek Library, Forest Lake and White Bear Lake Community Education, and Chisago Lakes Community Education. Depending on the class, participants received handouts, native plant books, plants or trees, and activity supplies to help apply what they learned.

Date	Class	Attend.	Partner
2/5	Living Fencelines	11	Forest Lake / White Bear Lake CE
2/11	Butterfly Bombs — LINK family class	12	Forest Lake CE
2/23	Butterfly Garden Design	7	Chisago Lakes CE
3/26	Bee Houses	8	Forest Lake / White Bear Lake CE
4/13	Spring Perennial Plan and Plant	16	Hardwood Creek Library
4/20	Landscaping Septic Systems	12	Chisago Lakes CE
4/23	Build Your Own Lures	30	Forest Lake / White Bear Lake CE
5/11	Native Fruit Trees and Shrubs	26	Hardwood Creek Library
6/8	Native Plant Walk and Talk	22	Hardwood Creek Library
6/18	Build Your Own Lures	21	Hardwood Creek Library
9/17	Plants for Wet Areas	20	Hardwood Creek Library
9/21	Fall Lawn Care	8	Forest Lake / White Bear Lake CE
9/28	Fall Perennial Preparation	10	Chisago Lakes CE
10/5	Build Your Own Lures	22	Forest Lake / White Bear Lake CE
10/15	Bee Lawns	10	Chisago High School
10/19	Fall Perennial Planting	10	Forest Lake High School
10/26	Saving Your Seeds	8	Chisago High School
10/27	Bee Lawns	10	Hardwood Creek Library
11/5	Native Plants for Shade	10	Chisago High School
	Total attendance	273	

Events and Tours

Presentations, public meetings, tours, and special events created opportunities to explain District work, answer questions, and connect residents with water resource topics. Ten presentations, meetings, tours, and special events accounted for 303 attendances.

Date	Activity	Attend.
1/22	Washington County Master Gardener presentation • Zoom	50
1/26	Watershed Connections — Loons	50
2/9	Watershed Connections — PFAS	18
3/16	Watershed Connections — Trees	20
3/30	Bone Lake South property informational meeting	62
4/27	Watershed Connections — Zebra Mussels and Mercury	16
6/9	North Shore Trail Nature Area Walk and Talk	20
6/17	Comfort Lake delisting event • Lord of the Lakes Church	41
7/27	Heath Avenue informational meeting	6
8/10	Hooks and Heroes event	20
	Subtotal	303

Watershed Connections

Four Watershed Connections programs at the Forest Lake Senior Center drew a combined 104 attendances. Topics included loons, PFAS, trees, and connections between zebra mussels and mercury. Partners included the National Loon Center, MPCA, University of Minnesota, and Forest Lake Senior Center.

Community events and lake association meetings

Activity	Attendance or contacts
Bone Lake Association annual meeting	20
Forest Lake Lake Association annual meeting	300
Comfort Lakes Association annual meeting	25
Art in the Park • season booth contacts	92
Chisago Waterfest • September 17	150
State of the Watershed • September 29	105
Subtotal	692

Combined with 273 class attendances, the 303 event attendances and 692 additional meeting/event attendances and booth contacts total 1,268 instances of participation.

Website and Facebook

Website improvements and use

Website work in 2026 focused on usability, functionality, security, and tracking site activity. General information attracted interest across the site, followed by board meeting materials, events, and staff and board contact information. Reported access was approximately 75% desktop and 25% mobile.

Average monthly metric	2024[1]	2025	2026[2]
Users	503	928	1,084
Views	2,330	3,368	3,756
Engagement rate	57%	55%	54.3%

[1] The 2024 website baseline covers September–December only. [2] The 2026 averages cover January–October. Comparisons use different reporting windows and may reflect seasonal differences.

Compared with the 2025 monthly averages, users increased approximately 16.8% and views increased 11.5%. Engagement decreased by 0.7 percentage points. Full-year website views total approximately 45,072, including 3,756 views each in November and December. Monthly users are not added into an annual unique-user count.

Facebook outreach

Facebook communication paired District-created educational posts and project information with relevant partner content. Native plant profiles illustrate the practical, visual educational materials used to engage residents.

Metric	2024	2025	2026
Average monthly views	2,100	2,845	2,929
Average monthly interactions	58	21	84
Average monthly link clicks	18	19	22
Reported follower count	503	528	583

Against the 2025 averages, monthly views rose approximately 3%, interactions increased 300%, and link clicks increased 16%. The reported follower count increased approximately 10%. The interaction increase means the 2026 monthly average was four times the 2025 average.

Full-year Facebook totals are approximately 35,148 views, 1,008 interactions, and 264 link clicks. November and December each account for 2,929 views, 84 interactions, and 22 link clicks at the reported monthly pace. The reported follower count is 583.

Email Marketing and Direct Mail

Constant Contact

The District used Constant Contact to distribute board meeting materials and share news, events, and program information. Email communication accounted for 10,013 sends, an 83% delivery rate, a 47% open rate, and 360 unique subscribers.

Subscription list	Subscribers
Board Meeting Materials	163
Bone Lake South Property News	17
General News and Events	355
Natural Shoreline News	80

Contacts may subscribe to more than one list, so list counts are not summed into a unique subscriber total. Full-year email sends total approximately 12,016, including approximately 1,001 sends each in November and December. Delivery and open rates are reported.

Household mailings

Four mailings provided residents with focused information on water quality, natural shorelines, and available assistance. Together, they accounted for 5,684 household mailings. This represents distributions, not a count of unique households reached.

Mailing	Household mailings
Urban stormwater runoff and its effects on fish and lakes	2,945
Shoreline Pocket Gardens handout	913
Natural Shoreline brochure	913
Soil-testing flyer	913
Total	5,684

The pocket garden handout introduced Shoreline Sanctuary, Loon Landing, and Goose Be Gone designs with plant lists and planning guidance. The shoreline brochure explained erosion protection, runoff reduction, habitat benefits, free site visits, and cost-share assistance. The soil-testing flyer promoted soil testing; the urban runoff mailing connected developed landscapes with fish and lake water quality.

Coordinated communication

Printed materials, digital posts, the website, email, and in-person education offered several ways for residents to learn about District programs. The natural shoreline campaign described on the following page brought these approaches together around a focused homeowner audience. Campaign distributions are not added again to the mailing total without confirming whether they overlap with the records above.

Natural Shoreline Education and Outreach Campaign

The District completed a focused Natural Shoreline Education and Outreach Campaign with Moore Engineering, supported by an MPCA Local Climate Action Grant. The project ran from June 2025 through May 2026 and encouraged lakeshore homeowners to consider manageable shoreline improvements that protect property, reduce runoff, and support wildlife.

Approach and implementation

The campaign connected shoreline restoration with homeowner priorities such as views, lake access, appearance, maintenance, and property protection. It combined targeted mail, personal conversations, a

refreshed Natural Shorelines webpage, and short Facebook videos. Three customizable pocket garden designs made the options more concrete: Shoreline Sanctuary, Loon Landing, and Goose Be Gone.

Fall 2025 work established the campaign's starting point. Of 104 priority Forest Lake properties identified, 91 homes received doorstep outreach and staff made 30 direct resident contacts. Among contacted homeowners, the report classified 50% as open to restoration, 37% as not ready, and 13% as ready to act. These are prior-year campaign results, included for context rather than counted as 2026 participation.

In 2026, the campaign continued with ten videos released between January and May, spring postcard outreach, and follow-up emphasizing free soil testing and site visits. The spring refresh was designed to reconnect with approximately 60 households not successfully contacted in the fall and offer practical next steps to residents considering restoration.

Results and program indicators

All ten videos exceeded the goal of 100 views per video; reported views ranged from 155 to 435. On the Natural Shorelines webpage, monthly users increased from 38 in January to 45 in April, and views increased from 49 to 79. January–April engagement rates ranged from 64.7% to 71%. These webpage measures describe the program page, not the entire District website.

Broader program tracking recorded six shoreline projects approved or pending approval in the first four months of 2026. The campaign report also noted that project completion times averaged about seven months in 2025, compared with approximately two years in 2023. Multiple factors may have contributed; these indicators do not establish that outreach alone caused the changes.

Lessons and continued use

Homeowner conversations showed the value of clear examples, trusted local voices, and reassurance about appearance, maintenance, views, and access. Free soil testing and site visits provided approachable starting points. Future outreach can build on the campaign's photos, videos, mailers, garden designs, and talking points, while continuing to track how residents move from initial interest to site visits and projects.

Additional detail is available in the May 18, 2026 Final Natural Shoreline Outreach Campaign Report with Appendix. Campaign metrics are presented here as a focused project summary and are not added again to District-wide digital totals.

Annual Summary

In 2026, the District delivered a broad education and outreach effort spanning classes, public meetings, community events, household mailings, digital education, and individualized shoreline engagement. Partnerships helped deliver practical programs and materials, while coordinated communication offered residents several ways to learn about and participate in water resource protection.

Classes, events, and booth contacts account for 1,268 instances of participation, including 273 across 19 community education classes and 104 attendances across four Watershed Connections events. Four direct-mail efforts account for 5,684 household mailings. Website use and Facebook interactions increased compared with the 2025 monthly averages, while the natural shoreline campaign produced resources for continued homeowner outreach.

Report Sources

2024 and 2025 Education and Outreach Summary reports; the 2026 class and event log; household mailing counts and outreach materials; website, Facebook, and Constant Contact analytics slides; and the May 18, 2026 Natural Shoreline Outreach Campaign Report with Appendix.

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2026 Education and Outreach Summary



Education & Outreach Guiding Documents

Watershed Management Plan



10-year

- Provides general areas of focus
- Dictates program goals

Comprehensive Education/ Outreach



5-year

- Provides strategies
- Identifies program strengths & areas of improvement

Education/ Outreach Implementation Plan



1-year

- Provides specific actions & activities
- Tracks program metrics

Background

2022–2031 Watershed Management Plan

The program builds understanding of local water resources and encourages stewardship.



Goal 1

Increase knowledge of human impacts on water and natural resources and encourage actions that protect them.

Goal 2

Communicate District programs, projects and initiatives clearly, consistently and equitably.

Background

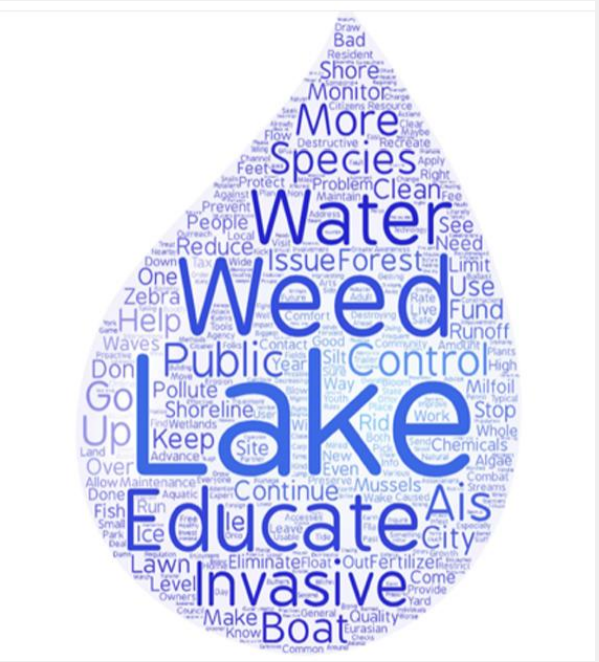
Comprehensive Education / Outreach Plan

The program connects education with resident action and understanding of District work.

Build knowledge that supports environmental practices.

Explain District programs and available assistance.

Help residents and partners understand specific projects and activities.



2026 Approaches

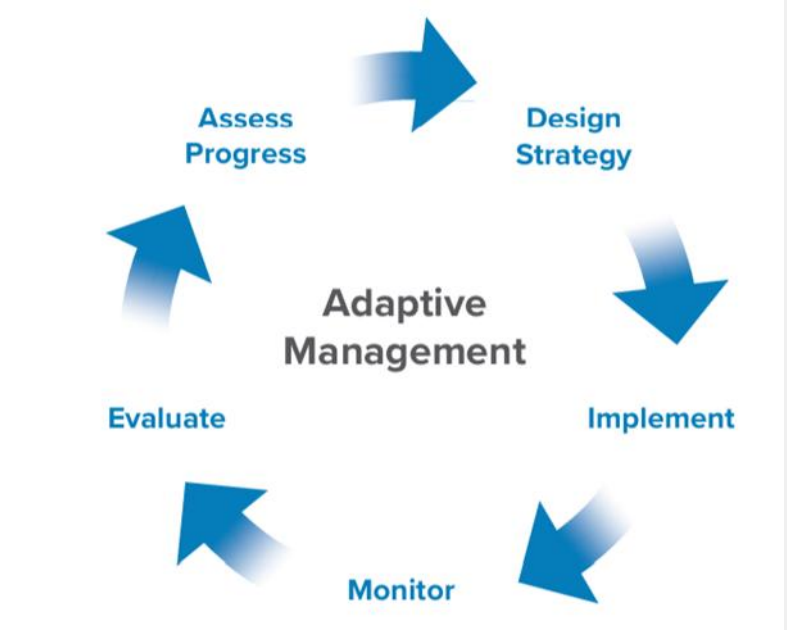
The District combines several approaches and adjusts outreach based on audience needs and results.

Community education workshops and classes

Public events, meetings and tours

Website and Facebook communication

Email marketing and household mailings



Workshops and Classes

19 classes
273 attendances

Practical native plant and landscaping guidance, plus family activities such as lure making and bee houses.

Year	Classes	Attendance
2024	18	228
2025	28	492*
2026	19	273

*ice ridge workshop attendance 260+

Date	Class	Attend.
2/5	Living Fencelines	11
2/11	Butterfly Bombs	12
2/23	Butterfly Garden Design	7
3/26	Bee Houses	8
4/13	Spring Perennial Plan and Plant	16
4/20	Landscaping Septic Systems	12
4/23	Build Your Own Lures	30
5/11	Native Fruit Trees and Shrubs	26
6/8	Native Plant Walk and Talk	22
6/18	Build Your Own Lures	21
9/17	Plants for Wet Areas	20
9/21	Fall Lawn Care	8
9/28	Fall Perennial Preparation	10
10/5	Build Your Own Lures	22
10/15	Bee Lawns	10
10/19	Fall Perennial Planting	10
10/26	Saving Your Seeds	8
10/27	Bee Lawns	10
11/5	Native Plants for Shade	10

Five Oct 15–Nov 5 classes use registration counts.

Events and Tours

Events created opportunities to explain District work and answer residents' questions.

Program or activity	Attendance / contacts
Four Watershed Connections programs	104
Other presentations, meetings, tours and special events	199
Lake association annual meetings	345*
Art in the Park booth contacts	92
Chisago Waterfest	150
State of the Watershed	105
Total events, meetings and booth contacts	995

Together with 273 class attendances, these activities total 1,268 participation instances. * estimated attendance.

Technology Platforms: Website

2026 work focused on usability, functionality, security and tracking site activity.

Monthly average	2024[1]	2025	2026[2]
Users	503	928	1,084
Views	2,330	3,368	3,756
Engagement rate	57%	55%	54.3%

Users increased 16.8% and views increased 11.5% compared with 2025 monthly averages.

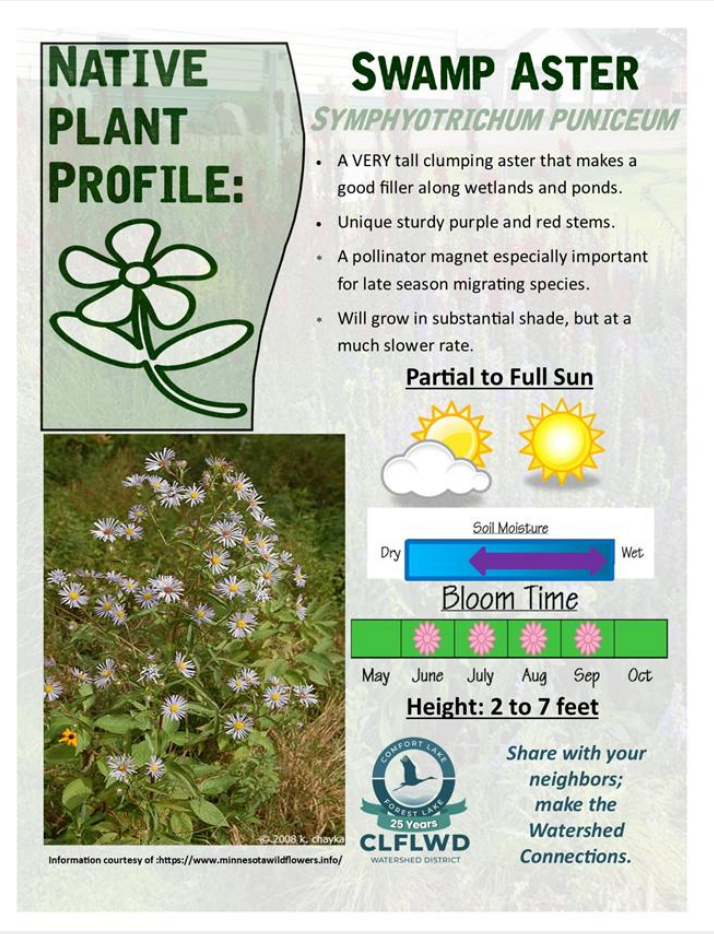
Approximately 75% desktop / 25% mobile access.
[1] Sep–Dec 2024. [2] Jan–Oct 2026. Reporting windows differ.

Technology Platforms: Social Media

District-created educational posts and project updates complemented relevant partner content.

Facebook interactions increased to four times the 2025 monthly average.

Metric	2025	2026
Monthly views	2,845	2,929
Monthly interactions	21	84
Monthly link clicks	19	22
Reported followers	528	583



Example of District educational content

Email Marketing: Constant Contact

Constant Contact shared board meeting materials, news, events and program information.

360 unique subscribers

47% open rate
83% delivery rate
Approximately 12,016 full-year sends

Full-year sends include November–December estimates.
Subscribers may appear on more than one mailing list.

Natural Shoreline Outreach Campaign

A focused campaign with Moore Engineering, supported by an MPCA Local Climate Action Grant

The campaign ran June 2025–May 2026 and paired homeowner conversations with mail, short videos and practical pocket garden designs.

2026 activity or indicator	Result
Short shoreline videos	10 videos, each above the 100-view goal
Reported video views	155–435 views per video
Natural Shorelines webpage	Views increased from 49 in January to 79 in April
Shoreline projects, January–April	6 approved or pending approval

Project indicators reflect several possible influences and do not establish outreach alone as the cause.

Household Mailings

Four targeted mailings connected household decisions with water quality and available assistance.

Mailing	Distributions
Urban runoff and its effects on fish and lakes	2,945
Shoreline Pocket Gardens handout	913
Natural Shoreline brochure	913
Soil-testing flyer	913
Total household mailings	5,684

Distributions may reach the same household more than once. Campaign mailings are not added again without confirming overlap.

2026 Education and Outreach Summary

1,268 attendances and booth contacts
19 community education classes
5,684 household mailings

Partnerships helped deliver practical education and materials. Website use and Facebook interactions increased compared with 2025 monthly averages.

Continued outreach can build on clear project examples, trusted local voices, free soil testing and site visits.

Totals count attendances and distributions. Full-year digital figures include Nov–Dec estimates.