

CAC Meeting
August 7, 2018
Meeting Notes
5:00 – 6:30 PM

Committee Attendees: Jerry Grundtner (Chair), Curt Sparks, Bruce Anderson

Other Attendees: Mike Kinney (District Administrator), Peter Brennhofer (CLFLWD Seasonal Technician), Jackie Anderson (CLFLWD Board President)

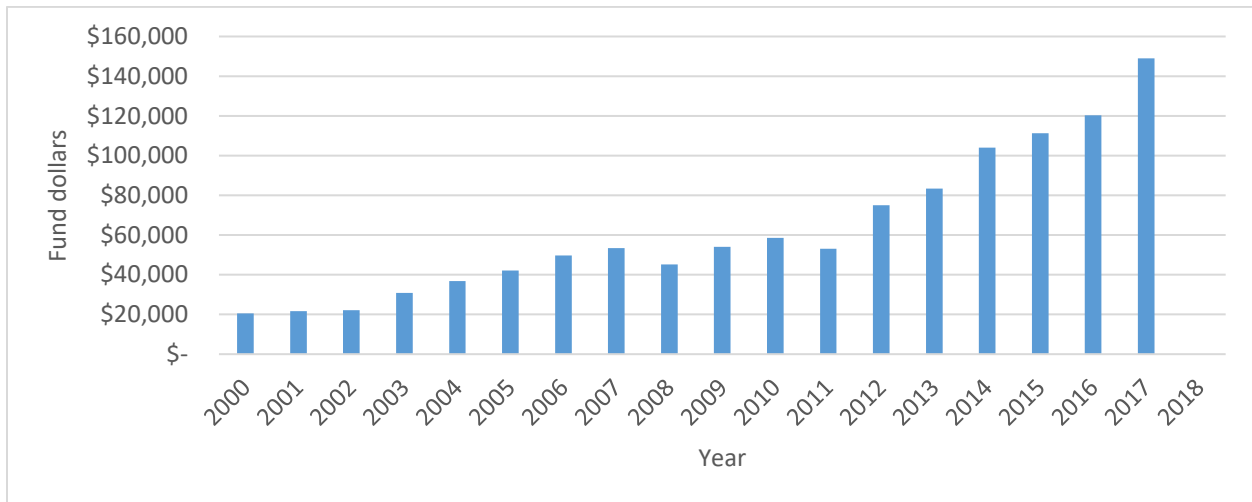
- Update on Watershed District Activities
 1. General
 - The meeting agenda for the August 9th regular Board meeting was handed out along with the invite for the Moody Lake Alum Treatment Project Open House which is scheduled for August 21st. Administrator Kinney explained the purpose of the event is to provide information to the public on the project tasks and goals.
 - Administrator Kinney mentioned that the District will also be holding a Project Open House for the Shields Lake Stormwater Harvest, Irrigation Reuse System & Alum Treatment which is tentatively scheduled for late August.
 2. Administrator Report
 - The July 26th Administrator's Report was distributed.
[Administrator Kinney departs]
- Review of McGregor Lakes Foundation information
 1. Objective
 - Curt Sparks provided the group with an overview of how the Big Sandy Lakes Foundation was started and how it later became the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation.
 - The full summary of the Foundation is attached.
 2. Will it work for CLFLWD?
 - Mgr. Anderson noted that the CLFLWD receives taxpayer dollars for its programs and projects and therefore does not need donations. She noted it would likely have better success if it was set up around the lakes in the area (i.e. Forest Lake Area Lakes Foundation).
 - Curt suggested that if the District is interested in the idea it would be best to reach out to an existing local foundation and see if they would be open to a partnership to develop an environmentally focused element.
 3. Timetable
 - There was discussion among the group that should the District be interested in moving forward with the ideas related to the Foundation that it would likely need to be staggered in relation to the implementation other District activities as it would be a large undertaking to get off the ground.

4. Funding
 - Curt Sparks provided an overview of how the McGregor Lakes Foundation is funded. He noted that the annual event functions as a fundraiser with a \$50 cost for attendees. Very little is purchased for the event itself as food and drink are donated. These donations allow for the majority of attendance fees to go directly to the Foundation. Curt also noted that the Foundation did not start by asking businesses to donate money but rather business choose to donate for the promotional opportunities. Recently the Foundation has begun looking into setting up the option for legacy donations as well.
 5. Next Steps
 - Jerry believes that foundation needs to be a discussion outside of the watershed district. He noted that partnering with existing foundations in the area would be a good place to start. However, the Water Institute could be something pursued by the CLFLWD itself.
 - Mgr. Anderson inquired about the CLFLWD and/or lake associations setting up community scholarships for individuals going into the environmental field. She noted that this topic would likely need to be discussed with the District's Attorney before moving forward.
 6. Foundation Champion
 - The discussion to nominate a CAC 'champion' to spearhead the project was tabled for this meeting.
- Other Discussion
 1. BMP Program
 - Mgr. Anderson expressed her disappointment with the District's Best Management Practices (BMP) Program. She noted that the purpose of the program is to educate the community and she feels the program has languished for several years.
 - She informed the CAC that the Agricultural BMP Program is being implemented this coming year and will be utilizing a tiered system to prioritize potential projects and available funding. She stated that she would like to see this approach applied to the other BMP programs such as the residential, community, and municipal programs.

25 years - The Big Sandy Lake Foundation now the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation DRAFT 8/4/18

The Big Sandy Lake Foundation (BSL Foundation) was started in 1992 as a separate entity but in service to the Big Sandy Lake Association (BSLA). The three founders initiated this Foundation to raise money to build an endowment fund that would fund projects through other non-profit organizations that benefitted Big Sandy Lake and the surrounding area. The founders were Lynn Elling an insurance broker who founded The World Citizen, Inc. His enthusiasm was contagious. James Mikkelson was an educator who brought clarity to the organization. Both were long time owners of property on Big Sandy Lake. Dave Robinson was a lawyer. He was a very kind gentleman who often gave his expertise without any fanfare. He was the quiet one in the background that kept the organizations in the right direction from legal standpoint. These three gentleman had a vision that has carried on for over 25 years. All three founders have passed away leaving the work of the BSL Foundation to new board members with the same vision and purpose to serve the Big Sandy Lake area.

The BSL Foundation became part of the Minnesota Foundation, an affiliation which allowed the BSL Foundation to act as an entity with all the tax and other benefits of a not-for-profit foundation. The donations given to the BSL Foundation were housed with the Minnesota Foundation in separate fund categories. An Endowment Fund was invested by the Minnesota Fund and interest earned was transferred to an Operating Fund to be used for grants to projects and other programs in the Big Sandy area. The Operating Fund tracked all expenses and distribution of funds transferred from the Endowment Fund. Annually, grants were made to selected projects and programs based on the foundation legal procedures, the bylaws of the BSL Foundation and merit. Below is a listing of the Endowment Fund growth over time.



In August of 2016 the BSL Foundation launched an Environmental Education Campaign to build the Endowment fund to \$200,000 so that grants of approximately 10,000 would be perpetually available every year. The concern over sustainable funding for important environmental education activities of the ISD #4 including the summer Big Sandy Water Institute was the driving force for this Campaign.

At the same time a Business Sponsor Program was initiated so that donor dollars would be matched by Business Sponsor contributions. About \$40,000 was raised by this campaign. This is significantly more donor dollars than previous efforts of the BSL Foundation. It also showed that the area residents and businesses were in support of the efforts to make Environmental Education a priority for the grants given by the BSL Foundation.

In 2016 the name of the BSL Foundation was changed to the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation (MLAF) to convey a broader purpose and a greater service area. There was continued public confusion over the Big Sandy Lake Association and the Big Sandy Lake Foundation. These two entities had different but complimentary purposes. The similarity in the names was the biggest factor for this confusion. The Big Sandy Lake Association is a property owner membership organization charged under its bylaws to work on behalf of the lakeshore owners for the benefit of Big Sandy Lake. The BSLA has been a very important and extremely successful entity advocating for lake management. In the early years of the BSLA, it had no tax exempt (501 C3) designation. One of the original purposes of The Big Sandy Lake Foundation was to allow contributions that were tax exempt to be given to projects and programs of the BSLA. The BSLA through amendments to its bylaws is now a tax exempt entity.

The BSL Foundation now the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation (MALF) had no boundary limit and focused on more community activities that were strongly tied to the lake management needs. As the MALF grew it began to show more interest in the social and the environmental needs of the area. A focus on environmental education is a cornerstone of its activities as expressed in the BSL Foundations original and the now amended MALF bylaws.

In 2017 the (MLAF) left the Minnesota Foundation and formed a new partnership with the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (GRACF). This streamlined the financial management, decreased the cost of operation and tied the operations to a partner who was closer geographically and closer in makeup to the MALF. A better understanding of the purposes of a Big Sandy Lake Association and the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation has opened up greater opportunities for the residents and landowners in the area to community activities of a non-profit nature. The best of both organizations can be used to serve the community maintaining emphasis on the lake and water resources needs.

A beauty of a foundation is the Endowment Fund that gives the foundation the ability to perpetually fund important programs and activities through growth of an invested fund. The MALF Endowment Fund grows through additional contributions and by interest made in the investment of those funds. Many of the activities and programs in a community rely on continued funding. At a minimum, the MALF will invest in our community to the level of its invested fund profits. With a larger Endowment Fund there are more resources and the fund can perpetually invest in the community. Below is a history of funding by the MALF in the community programs and activities.

History 25 years

\$42,000 Big Sandy Water Institute
\$23,625 for the 5th and 6th Grade Environmental Education
\$2500 McGregor Area Growth Study
\$1,000 Angels
\$1,000 BSLA Brian Herbrandson Memorial
\$70,125 in total grants

Last year

\$3000 Big Sandy Water Institute
\$1000 5th and 6th grade education
\$1,000 Riverwood Expansion
\$500 Angels
\$500 Operation Christmas
\$500 Shamrock Fireworks
\$7,000 in grants

The Big Sandy Water Institute (BSWI) was an idea recommended by a member of the Big Sandy Lake Association. Jim Carlson and others worked with the ISD #4 to create a summer program that has served, since its inception, approximately 6000 students from 7-12 year old. It focuses on youth education through recreational programs. In 2002 the BSLA and the BSL Foundation began funding Big Sandy Water Institute. The institute receives funds from several sources including the Foundation. The concern of the Foundation Board was that one single source, if lost in the funding of the Institute, could cause a major setback in this successful summer youth program. The Institute programs hands on experiences provide important lifelong memories. The Foundation Board believes that these experiences help us prioritize what is important to us. And that among all of the societal needs some people place a high priority in leaving a legacy that will protect these acquired environmental values.

Below are excerpts of a discussion of the BSLI provided by the Community Education Program of ISD #4.

The Big Sandy Water Institute – That in the end we only conserve what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we are taught. Baba Dioum, New Delhi 1968

Big Sandy Water Institute is a summer educational, recreational program using primarily non-motorized watercraft, focusing on teaching the students how to enjoy and preserve local waterways through boat and water safety, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, snorkeling, environmental education and swimming lessons. It is sponsored by the McGregor Schools ISD#4 and a variety of area agencies and organizations. The activities are open to all students age 7 and up, including children and grandchildren of summer and weekend residents of the lake. For any additional information, please call Lisa Kruse at 768-2111 ext 233.

Youth from all over participated in the Big Sandy Water Institute Summer Program through McGregor Community Education. The program has helped youth discover and learn about their natural resources and environment surrounding them...while having fun. This "hands on" approach to learning is so beneficial to a number of youth. They are certainly not aware that they are in a learning environment because they are having so much fun while filling their inquisitive, inquiring minds with so much information.

We cannot begin to name off the highlights of the summer program because every day brings youth and staff new adventures!! Here are some of the activities that take place. Youth spend time at Long Lake Conservation Center exploring snakes, frogs and bogs, bogs, bogs with LLCC naturalists. Lake Minnewawa provides a spot for casting, reeling, trolling and pan fishing. They do catch fish!!! Youth are instructed by Army Corp of Engineer staff and Aitkin County Sheriff on safe use of small watercraft and electric motor boats. MN DNR officers spend a day on the water and in the classroom instructing and training safe use of personal watercraft, Jet Ski and tiller and console operated boats. Students visit the Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge for more fishing and also opportunities with the compass, GPS instruction and birding experiences with binoculars. The kayaks are been put to good use by youth and adults as many have been taught basic skills and safety with certified instructor Brenda Hadrich. They spend a day at Savanna Portage State Park learning about beaver ecology and bog/pond studies. The DNR fisheries staff work with youth teaching them about different fish species and other hands on activities. Some spend their day on the Mississippi for a short kayak trip enjoying the tranquil setting and beautiful scenery while putting their kayak skills to use. Archery is offered in conjunction with a kayak day. Families spend a day at Libby Dam with a variety of activities ranging from kayaking, swimming, to seeing how a sawmill operates. Families built bird houses out of the fresh wood that had been cut earlier. So much to do and so much to learn. This is the Big Sandy Water Institute.

Thanks to staff at the Army Corp of Engineers, Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Long Lake Conservation Center, Savanna Portage State Park, CYC Camp, MN DNR officers, Aitkin County Sheriff Department, DNR Fisheries, Minnaqua, American Legion and all the numerous boat owners and volunteers. All you do makes for tremendous opportunities for youth. Also thanks to all the sponsors that support the program financially. They are Big Sandy Lake Association, McGregor Lakes Area Foundation, Aitkin County Soil and Water, BSALWMP, McGregor Lions Club, Shamrock Township, Minnewawa Sportsmen's Club, McGregor Fire Department Relief Association, Tamarack Sno-Flyers and MLEC Round Up Dollars.

We strive to:

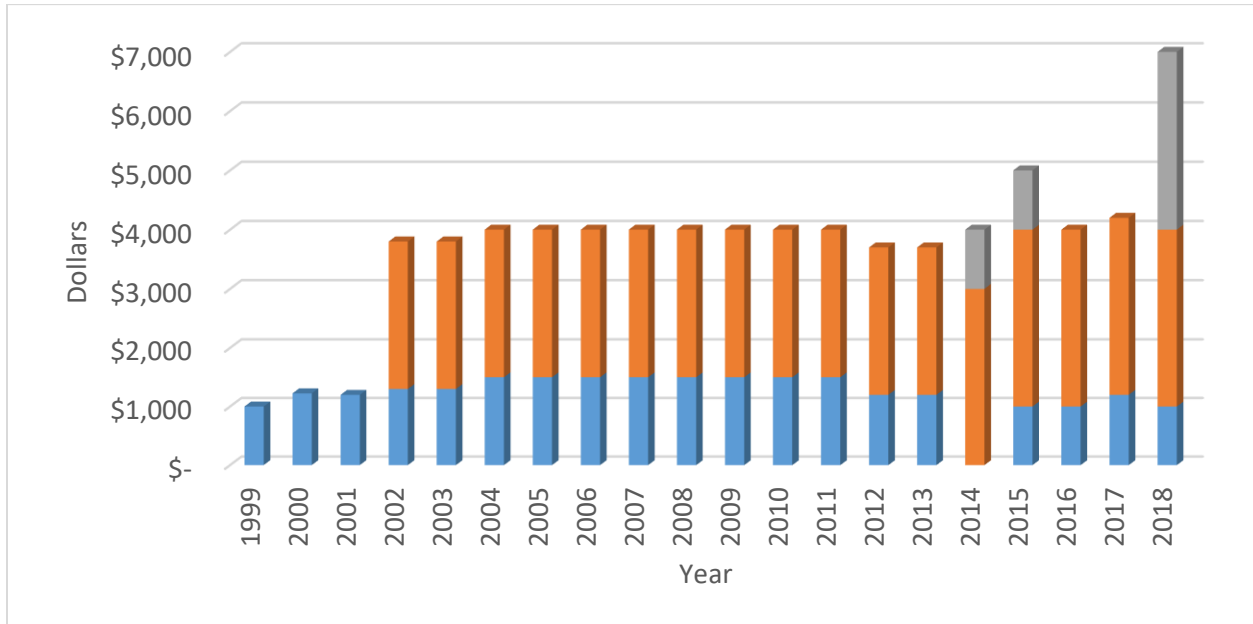
- Develop wise stewards of the environment through experiential learning processes
- Improve and build sustainable communities by developing strong commitments to preserving and conserving our natural resources for use & enjoyment today and in the future
- Develop young children's relationship with nature by providing learning opportunities away from electricity and in touch with what is important and original
- Reduce pollution by teaching youth the value of caring and protecting our environment through service projects and hands-on methodology of teaching
- Investing in our children's health by introducing them to time in nature

The program is designed to teach students by methods of hands-on activities based on environmental education and natural resources. The main focus of the program is teaching through experiential learning processes while having fun at the same time. Youth will "adopt a river" and spend time cleaning it up as part of their role in taking care of the environment and learning how pollution affects our surroundings. Youth will continue to take part in caring for the gardens that have been planted at the different host sites. Educators and specialists who care about the environment and care about teaching youth will spend valuable time, sharing their knowledge and expertise in their natural surroundings. The wise instruction and examples of the instructors are important mentors and role models for our youngest and our future. Youth will spend time at local host sites on the water, in the water, in the woods, bogs and off shore; learning that time spent with nature is part of a healthy lifestyle.

In addition to the Big Sandy Water Institute ISD #4 has every year instruction focused on watersheds. In 2011 The Big Sandy Lake Association provided instructional watershed text books for the 5th and 6th grades. Later the text books were collected and continue to be use in the McGregor Schools.

New members have been added to the MALF board over time. These board members have foundation experience and environmental backgrounds. This has helped support a growing interest in expanding grants to the area.

In 2018 the MALF, as a result of a generous gift, was able to expand its grants to new grantees in the McGregor area. Below are grant dollars given by year with the categories colored. Blue represents 5th and 6th grade environmental education. Orange represents the Big Sandy Water Institute and Grey represents other non-profits.



Funding goals of the MALF Board and the many donors and business sponsors provides opportunities to expand and reach more community programs with larger dollar amounts. Funds for grants from the Endowment Fund become perpetual and help sustain long term funding efforts. The goals of the MALF are:

1. Increase the grants to a greater number of beneficial activities and programs.
2. Grow the Endowment Fund to \$200,000 so it would provide \$9,000 in grants in perpetuity to environmental and social programs.
3. Grow the Endowment Fund to \$1 million so it would provide \$45,000 in grants in perpetuity to environmental and social programs.
4. Increase the awareness of other area lake groups that the MLAF helps all area lakes and people through the ISD #4 environmental education and other non-profit organizations that we assist.
5. Continuously expand our grant making capability with a goal of a sustaining fund of grant dollars to local activities and programs

Leaving a Legacy is possible when you pass on funds through wills, trusts or beneficiary designation

It's not hard to figure out what is important. Creating things that last that we can pass on becomes a legacy. At the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation our endowment fund grows so that we can gift funds every year into perpetuity. The McGregor Lakes Area Foundation has worked to protect the environment through our Environmental Education Campaign where your commitment to invest in our work ensures that our lakes, land and way of life will be enjoyed for generations to come. As we have grown, we have expanded grants to local organizations that help families, elderly and important community services do their job better.

When creating or updating your will, and beneficiary forms you can have a lasting impact on our community by leaving a gift to support the McGregor Lakes Area Endowment Fund. Leaving a gift in your will, trust or by beneficiary designation cost you nothing now and allows you to remain in control of your assets during your lifetime, allows you to provide for your loved ones and protect what is important to you. You retain control of your assets during your lifetime and can change your beneficiaries at any time. Thank you for considering leaving your legacy through the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation, care of the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation.

Contact us if you need help or have questions on how to best help our community through a charitable tax deductible gift to the McGregor Lakes Area Foundation.

The current members of the MALF Advisory Board are: Jim Carlson, Katie Nelson and Curt Sparks