MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

To:       Board of Managers                            Date: April 20, 2017
From:     Mike Kinney
Subject:  University of St. Thomas Capstone Research Presentations

Background/Discussion

Over the last few months, District staff have collaborated with an undergraduate Environmental Science capstone course at the University of St. Thomas. The course is being taught, in part, by Dr. Kevin Theissen, who has been involved with the deep sediment coring project on District lakes. Other faculty are also involved. The purpose of the capstone class is for the students to gain experience designing and implementing research projects in real-world settings. As such, three groups of 2-3 students each chose to conduct research projects on topics of interest to the CLFLWD.

The undergraduate research groups designed and implement projects related to the following three topics:

- Analyzing the groundwater levels in and around the Bixby Park wetland complex
- Determining the extent of special variability of sediment nutrient levels within Bone Lake and water sampling at two specific inlets
- Comparing sediment composition and chemistry between Forest Lake sites with the invasive plant flowering rush and Forest Lake sites without flowering rush.

This course is holding their final session before final exams on Friday, May 12th from 1:30-3:30 pm at the University of St. Thomas campus. Dr. Theissen has invited District staff, Managers, and interested residents to attend this session, as he is encouraging each research group to provide a 15 minute presentation summarizing the results of their projects. These presentations would be a great chance for Managers to ask questions to the students. The projects were based on our input and based off of current need for research that would lead to either future investigations or provide desired data for decision making purposes. It would also serve as a chance for us to recognize the hard work that each of the students put into answering questions of contemporary interest to the CLFLWD. Staff is currently planning to attend.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Managers schedule a special meeting so that District staff and Managers can learn about the research projects. This will be the day after our currently regular meeting on May 11th and during working hours but posting it as a special meeting would be needed if three or more managers are able to attend.

Proposed Motion: Manager _____________ moves to schedule a special meeting of the Board of Managers for 1:30-3:30 pm on Friday May 12th at the University of St. Thomas campus.