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TO: Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) Board of Managers
DATE: April 11, 2019
RE: District Administrator's Report for the April 18th Regular Board Meeting

General Fund – Administration (1000 series)

- 1001 – Board Administration
 - At the last regular board meeting, there was concurrence of the benefit of a Board level visioning session to consider future office and space needs. It is anticipated that this would be best served by a special meeting of the Board for this purpose. After a recent meeting with Mgrs. Anderson and Schmaltz regarding office options, scheduling this meeting in the
- 1003 – General Administration
 - Watershed Assistant, Garrett Miller, is the newest addition to our team. He started on April 1st.
 - The 2018 draft audit review was held on Tuesday, April 2nd. Those in attendance included myself, district staff, Manager Schmaltz, the District's 2018 Accountant from Redpath, the District's 2019 Accountants from Clifton, Larson, Allen, and the Auditor.
 - The District's draft 2018 Annual Report was handed out at the March 28th meeting. Managers were encouraged to start reviewing the report early on and provide any comments or questions to staff, preferably via email or in another written format. No comments have been received to date. The final draft, which is the same as the first draft, is included in the April 18th board packet. It must be submitted to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) by April 30th.
 - Staff are in the process of meeting with CliftonLarsonAllen and Sage Intacct representatives to evaluate Sage Intacct as an alternative budgeting software for the 2020 budget. The District has always used Microsoft Excel, which seems to be the standard for all other organizations such as WDs, SWCDs, and others of our size. However, in a constant effort to review and improve our internal operations, it seems that this District is outgrowing Excel for our budgeting process. More information will be presented after additional meetings and discussions are held to see if there is another tool available at a reasonable cost.

Programs (3000 series):

- 3002 – Permitting
 - See Permitting Update Attachment
 - The first meeting of the Metro Watershed District Regulatory Group was held on March 27th. There were 14 group members in attendance representing 10 different metro area watershed districts. This meeting was initiated and organized by Erin Edison as a result of our recent rules update along with ongoing internal questions related to process improvement. Some selected outcomes of this initial meeting included:
 - The group decided to create a smaller work group to work toward streamlining database and workflow software (planning and grant writing)

- The group will be compiling some guidance on what processes work well for us so that information can be available to the others
- The group will be setting up a workshop to go through and create a flowchart of every District's permitting workflow so that we can compare them and come up with ways to help streamline across districts. Districts will need to do some things differently due to differences in rules, but we are going to try to only differ where necessary so that we can make it easier for applicants to go through the permitting process. Mark Doneux (Capitol Region Watershed District, Administrator) has been a part of some conversations with entities like MnDOT that have expressed frustrations with how different the permitting processes are across districts, so he is planning to provide some additional guidance for us from that perspective.
- Olson's Sewer Service will be excavating 10 cubic yards of sediment from a private ditch on the east side of I-35, just north Hwy 8. The blockage has been causing flooding on the neighboring property. This project does not require a permit from the District, but staff has been working closely with the City on the WCA regulations because this excavation will take place within a wetland area. All sediment removed will be spread in an upland area and all disturbed areas will be stabilized and seeded with the state wetland rehabilitation seed mix. District staff has communicated with both state and federal agencies to ensure all proper permits and regulations were being followed.
- Staff received a call from a citizen of Scandia reporting oil discharging into a wetland off Kirk Avenue. Staff worked with the City of Scandia and the MPCA to get the discharge cleaned up.
- Staff was contacted about excavation work for a new home which did not have its erosion control features in place. The matter was addressed immediately and prior to any of the recent precipitation.
- 3003 – Monitoring & Data Assessment
 - The District's monitoring equipment was recently inventoried and tested by the WCD staff. A few pieces of equipment need either repairs or replacement, but all systems will be ready to be deployed at the usual schedule later this month.
 - In a recent call with LimnoTech regarding the monitoring related work the Board approved for them to do, the components for the IO Rodeo devices have been purchased and they are working on putting together both the units as well as the protocol and training materials to be used by staff and volunteers. One of the values of the IO Rodeo devices is that citizens and staff can be sampling during these early runoff events well before the automated samplers can be deployed since the latter are subject to freezing. For Task 2 related to evaluating current equipment, a meeting is being scheduled with the WCD to discuss the next steps since they house, maintain and deploy the equipment for us. For Task 3, this will be the set-up of new wetland well monitoring and stream monitoring stations. Of interest when discussing this item was the ability for some of this equipment to remain deployed throughout the winter.
- 3004 – Non-Point Source Pollution Abatement Program
 - The District has started receiving requests for site visits for the year. Tara Kline, Natural Resource Specialist with Washington Conservation District, is in the process of creating a schedule to perform these initial site visits.
 - Ag BMP cost-share update: The CWF for the Bone Lake SWA agricultural prioritization efforts has been executed by BWSR so we can start working on these areas. I have suggested that in each of the fields in which a structural BMP has been recommended by the SWA desktop analysis, that each associated field should be viewed also through the rural Conservation Planning effort being funded by BWSR for the Lower St. Croix Basin which is intended to provide recommendations for either cropping and/or management changes on a field by field basis. By first reviewing each field through this effort, such recommendations may be

calculated to see if they're more cost effective and/or may lead to not needing a structural BMP. It's unclear if the SWCD offices are interested in evaluating these fields further through this process, but I am planning to engage them again on this process to see where it might lead so as to maximize both the CWF grant dollars as well as the District's.

- 3005 – Education and Outreach
 - 3005A Ongoing Initiatives
 - Events
 - Staff continue to work diligently to prepare for the State of the Watershed Public Meeting scheduled for April 30th.
 - CAC Member, Jack MacKenzie, continues to host the educational Turf Talk workshops. Upcoming dates include April 23rd and May 4th. More details: <https://www.clflwd.org/education.php>
 - More than 34 residents attended the Blue Thumb gardening workshop in Wyoming on April 4th.
 - Publications
 - *Put time on the water to good use this summer: Get free training to become a volunteer AIS Detector* By Angie Hong. Published April 2019 online and in print. <https://eastmetrowater.org/2019/03/28/put-time-on-the-water-to-good-use-this-summer-get-free-training-to-become-a-volunteer-ais-detector/>
 - *4 fun ways to protect water this spring* By Angie Hong. Published April 11th in the Forest Lake Times.
- 3006 – Technical Resource Sharing and Interagency Communication
 - The revised Forest Lake Local Water Management Plan (LWMP) is included in this month's board packet for consideration of approval. The Scandia LWMP was conditionally approved on March 4th. Staff is working with the City to ensure the conditions are met.
 - 3006F Watershed Management Plan Update: This item is included on the April 18th agenda.
- 3007 – Research
 - Staff has continued to work on the LCCM grant for the Claros work as well as starting the work related to the approved work.
- 3008 – Measurement of Progress
 - Staff have received comments on the draft 2018 Progress Report from Managers Schmaltz and Moe. The comments will be incorporated into the final draft which will be brought to one of the May meetings for consideration of approval.
- 3009 – Grant Research and Preparation
 - Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR): As of April 10th, staff have still not received feedback from LCCMR on the draft grant proposal. LCCMR has indicated that they are busy reviewing many submissions. We will connect with LCCMR prior to the April 15th final proposal deadline.
 - Clean Water Fund (CWF): The grant agreement for the District's FY19 CWF grant, Bone Lake Subwatershed Assessment Implementation, is now executed and we have received the first 50% payment of \$72,000.

- MN Department of Health (MDH): Staff submitted a proposal to the MDH's Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) grant program to plan and implement an outreach program similar to Adopt-a-Drain, but more tailored to the landscape of the District which doesn't always have many storm drains in residential areas that are easy for people to adopt. This is an initiative that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) has been discussing recently. The proposed project would have staff work with the CAC and MDH to create and implement the outreach program. The grant request is \$8,000 with an \$8,000 proposed match for a total project budget of \$16,000. The CEC grant program prioritizes grants with higher proposed match amounts.
 - Staff have been in communication with two private foundations regarding their grant programs: Mortenson Foundation and Butler Family Foundation. The next Butler grant round for which the District is eligible will open in 2020. A proposal will be submitted to the Mortenson Foundation for their current year program by the deadline of May 1.
 - The St. Croix River Association (SCRA) has opened a request for proposals for grants to "1) identify sources of phosphorus nutrient loading to Lake St. Croix and 2) to implement best management practices to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake St. Croix to help meet Lake St. Croix TMDL phosphorus reduction goals." Staff is working on preparing a proposal for this program, due May 15th.
- 3010 – Operations & Maintenance – District-Wide
 - The Moody Lake aerator was deactivated on April 9th, and thin ice signs will be removed once they are completely free from ice. Installation of the stop logs at the Bixby Park weirs is scheduled for the week of April 15th, as long as any additional snowfall has melted by then.
 - 3011 – Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Management
 - Staff will be meeting with Susanna Wilson Witkowski, Chisago County Water Resource Manager, on April 16th to discuss plans for the 2019 joint watercraft inspection program. We are currently accepting applications for watercraft inspectors for the 2019 inspection season (May-October). The posting is available on our website and Conservation Job Board. It has also been shared with local lake associations and posted on social media. <https://www.cflwd.org/job-openings.php>

Projects (5000 series):

- 5200 Lakes
 - 5226 Shields Lake: The Notice to Proceed for construction of the Shields Lake fish barrier is ready to be issued. Dunaway Construction will begin fabricating the barrier soon, with installation to occur no later than July 1. As a reminder, a mailer was sent out earlier this year to all nearby residents which provided an update on the project and other Shields Lake initiatives such as the stormwater harvest, alum treatment, and carp removal.
 - 5228 Forest Lake: Mailers have been sent to landowners in the WJD6 and Castlewood subwatersheds regarding upcoming projects.
- 5800 Interagency Communication
 - One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) – Lower St. Croix (LSC) River Basin
 - The next Policy Committee meeting will be Monday, April 29th. Mike K. continues to participate in both Planning Team meetings as well as Steering Committee meetings.



Above: Over twenty residents attended the Turf Talk sessions on April 6th at Forest Lake City Hall lead by CAC member, and Master Watershed Steward, Jack MacKenzie.