

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COMFORT LAKE–FOREST LAKE
WATERSHED DISTRICT
Thursday, December 17th, 2020**

1. Call to Order

President Spence called the December 17th, 2020 regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. by online video conference.

Present: President Jon Spence, Vice President Jackie Anderson, Secretary Jen Oknich, Treasurer Steve Schmaltz.

Others: Mike Kinney, Jessica Lindemyer, Emily Heinz, Garrett Miller (CLFLWD staff); Dr. Meghan Funke, Cecilio Olivier (Emmons & Olivier Resources); Chuck Holtman (Smith Partners); Terry Gorham (Scandia Park and Recreation Committee); Dr. Mark Edlund, Kevin Thiessen (St. Croix Watershed Research Station); Jerry Grundtner (Forest Lake Lake Association); Paul Girard (Forest Lake City Council).

2. Setting of Meeting Agenda

Item 9c – One Watershed-One Plan was added to the agenda.

Manager Anderson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich			X

3. Consent Agenda

- a) **Regular Board Meeting Minutes – November 19th, 2020**
- b) **Special Board Meeting Minutes – November 10th, 2020**

Manager Schmaltz moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Manager Anderson. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich			X

[Manager Oknich joined the meeting]

4. Public Comments on 2021 Budget and Levy

District Administrator Kinney began by stating that as of 2020, five lakes are meeting their 2030 goals: Bone Lake, Forest Lake, Comfort Lake, Heims Lake, and Lake Keewahtin. He added that two lakes are on track to meet their 2040 goals very soon: Moody Lake and Shields Lake. Three lakes need more work: Birch Lake, School Lake, Little Comfort Lake. He also noted that School Lake is mentioned later in the Deep Lake Sediment Core Report, Little Comfort is being looked at by the St Croix Watershed Research Station, and Birch Lake will be looked at on its own in the near future.

Mr. Kinney pointed out that the biggest takeaway from this is that District is 75% of the way toward achieving the cumulative phosphorous load reductions needed to ensure lakes are meeting state standards. He added that the District is on track to meet the state standards for all of its lake by 2025, if not sooner.

Mr. Kinney outlined the cumulative District goal of a 5,570 pound per year reduction in phosphorous which would bring several lakes beyond state standards. The current progress is that in the past ten years, the District has achieved 68% of that goal – the Watershed Management Plan initially estimated 20 years for this. Mr. Kinney fully expects that the District will remain ahead of schedule on this as well. He ended by reiterating that the District is 68% to District goals, and 75% to state standards.

No members of the public wished to comment.

5. Public Open Forum

There were no comments.

6. Citizen Advisory Committee Update

Operations and Outreach Specialist Jessica Lindemyer indicated to the Board that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) met earlier in the month and primarily discussed the timeline for the Watershed Management Plan update. Ms. Lindemyer also mentioned that each community member will review the document on their own, then congregate together on January 12th, 2021 with both Jessica and Emily to compile their feedback into a memo for the board that will be included in the board packet for the workshop the following week.

7. Aquatic Invasive Species Update

- a) **2020 AIS Program Yearend Summary**
- b) **2020 Watercraft Inspection Report & Presentation**
- c) **Blue Water Science Summaries**

Watershed Assistant Garret Miller indicated that he will be doing a short presentation on the year-end Watercraft Inspection Report, and that he will do the general aquatic invasive species (AIS) presentation in January.

Mr. Miller noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a 2-week delay to the start of the program, because of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) working to move its normally in-person class online. Despite the setback, 8 inspectors were hired and were able to perform about 3,700 hours of inspections - 300 less than last year, and 10,363 inspection surveys – 3,294 more than last year. The increase was likely due to an increase of boaters this year, as it is a pandemic-safe activity.

Mr. Miller added that the inspectors focused on weekends. Looking forward to the future, he hopes to be able to hire 8 more inspectors.

Mr. Miller noted that contaminant incidents stayed about the same, but with increased traffic this was a pleasant surprise. There was a spike in exit violations, which is due to the dense vegetation seen in Forest Lake. He went on to break down the number of entering watercrafts that were last in an AIS-infested waterbody. Manager Anderson asked Mr. Miller how much the zebra mussel tracking has increased. He replied that he would need to further analyze previous years' data to get that information. Manager Anderson requested that he follow up with that information.

Mr. Miller stated that Bone Lake recorded 1,049 inspections this year; up from 689 inspections last year, with the same number of hours worked. Forest Lake recorded 8,093 inspections; up from 5,496, with similar hours worked. Comfort Lake recorded 1,221 inspections, up from 884 last year. With the COVID-19 pandemic likely continuing into next season, Mr. Miller indicated he expects another busy season. The planned improvements for next year are to start the season earlier, improve the online schedule, distribute informational handouts, implement a behavior change project (received grant money for this), and hire a lead inspector. Manager Schmaltz suggested that Mr. Miller show that the DNR helped out with this effort, as DNR personnel performed 280 inspection hours. Mr. Miller responded that DNR hours are mentioned later in the report. Manager Anderson suggested that a footnote be created that would say where the money/help comes from. President Spence agreed that there should be a section in the report that breaks down partner contributions.

Jerry Grundtner added that the Forest Lake Lake Association will share the report with its members. He also mentioned that all signs at FL2 (Forest Lake middle basin) and FL3 (Forest Lake east basin) were stolen, and that there is an opportunity to work with the DNR to provide updated information for the signs. Mr. Miller will reach out to the DNR on this.

Manager Schmaltz noted the clarity has declined in Lake Keewahtin, and that clarity in Forest Lake Third has increased, but phosphorus level is static. Manager Anderson added that the latter is true of Comfort Lake as well. Manager Schmaltz hopes that Steve McComas or Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR) can investigate it. Manager Anderson agreed, then added that a parenthetical should be added to recognize that the District's

previous zebra mussel response was guided by its own rapid response plan. She suggested that all point intercept survey reports include a history of when AIS species appeared in the lake and ceased to appear, to compare the native plant community changes over time.

Manager Anderson moved to approve the Watercraft Inspection Report with the suggested edits. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

8. New Business

a) 2021 Board Meeting Schedule

Manager Anderson moved to approve the 2021 Board Meeting Schedule as presented. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

b) Bone Lake North City Park

Scandia Parks & Recreation Committee Chair Terry Gorham was present to speak to the Board about this topic.

Mr. Kinney began by outlining the area as being north of Bone Lake, near the boat launch, adding that the City and local volunteers have done work trying to establish trails around the lakes. CLFLWD staff went out and looked at the site and determined that there are quite a bit of wetlands in the area. He suggested that this area, between Moody and Bone Lakes, fits within the corridor concept the District is exploring.

Mr. Gorham explained that a comprehensive plan has not yet been developed, and that there are existing paths along Lofton Ave. that the Committee is interested in expanding. He explained that within the wetland there could be a boardwalk, as well as some informational signage. He asked if the District is aware of existing grant opportunities.

Manager Schmaltz asked Mr. Gorham what a partnership between the City and the Watershed District would look like. Mr. Gorham indicated that the City is open to working with the District to get on the same page regarding what this partnership would look like. Mr. Kinney indicated that Ms. Heinz can assist with pursuing more grants for

the project. Manager Anderson thanked Mr. Gorham for coming in and stated that this is exactly what the Board seeks as an opportunity to work with partners around the District. She also touched on the fact that this is a great opportunity to educate people about wetlands, and that there are many grant opportunities.

Mr. Gorham asked for further explanation on greenway corridors. Mr. Kinney responded that they are biological greenways with multiple functions: water quality, habitat, and recreational opportunity. He added that if a boardwalk is not feasible for the Bone Lake park, there are other opportunities like bird watching within a wooded walkway. He expanded on wetland functions such as water quality, flood protection, etc., adding that these corridors are prioritized for protection.

Mr. Gorham asked how the City and District should move forward on detail planning ideas, and additionally formalize how they would like this relationship to work moving forward. Manager Anderson suggested that the City and District authorize a scoping document, and that EOR has landscape architects on staff that can do a preliminary report on the site, adding that the concept is good, but more detail is needed. President Spence requested that Dr. Funke return to the Board with a proposal for a feasibility report. Manager Schmaltz suggested the District look at the Greenway Corridor as a big picture. Is there another piece of land to acquire where the District could connect a corridor between Moody Lake and Bone Lake? He asked Mr. Kinney to confirm this. Mr. Kinney explained there are larger greenway corridors in the District, and that he could envision one around Moody Lake and Bone Lake. He noted this would likely be a slow-moving process. He added that communication will be important between both the City Engineer and the District Engineer.

Manager Anderson suggested that discrete elements that would fit within a broader greenway undertaking can be pursued independently. Mr. Kinney concurred and indicated he could ask the City Administrator to document the City's interest in a cooperative exploration.

Manager Anderson moved to instruct the Administrator to begin working with the City of Scandia to outline the scope and cost of a preliminary report. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Mr. Olivier noted that the hydrologic and hydraulic study that EOR will complete next month includes this area. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

9. Old Business

a) Phase II Deep Lake Sediment Core Report & Presentation

Dr. Mark Edlund presented the results of the sediment core study. He reminded everyone of the goals of the study, which were to use dated sediment cores to reconstruct the trophic and sedimentation history of Bone Lake and School Lake. Both lakes are currently impaired due to nutrient levels. Cores were collected March through June 2019 and dated using the lead-210 isotope. St. Croix Watershed Research Station (SCWRS) analyzed the biological and geochemical markers in the sediments, in order to track how the sediment has changed since European settlement.

Dr. Edlund presented the results for Bone Lake. The evidence suggests that Bone Lake had poorer water quality in the 1940s-1990s, with improving trends since the 1990s. Recent Diatom-inferred total phosphorus (TP) values show Bone Lake near the 40 parts per billion (ppb) TP state standard. Management recommendations for Bone Lake include continuing the efforts to curb nutrient loading in the lake in order to improve the trend of improving water quality. Then in the future keep the lake below the TP state standard and hopefully reach the District goal of 30 ppb TP. Dr. Edlund further explained that Bone Lake is filling up with sediment. He explained how sedimentation has increased since European settlement, stating that before settlement, the lake filled up at .25 inches per year and is now filling at about .6 inches per year. Bone Lake is 6 ft shallower than it was 160 years ago. Dr. Edlund stated that there has been a large increase of algal pigments since the 1930s, with some groups showing recent declines.

Dr. Edlund presented the results for School Lake. School Lake has long been eutrophic and productive. It was more nutrient-rich in the 1940s and 50s but has seen improvements since the 1960s. Current nutrient levels are similar to the 1920s and earlier. Dr. Edlund recommended the District continue all nutrient control measures to prevent a return to the 1940s-50s conditions. He stated that School Lake may have difficulty reaching nutrient levels consistently below state standards, adding that it's a lake that is poised to have higher Phosphorous concentrations. He then advised that the District might work with the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to set a site-specific standard for School Lake. Dr. Edlund described how sedimentation rates for School Lake have changed over time. Like Bone Lake, School Lake also shows an increasing trend of sedimentation rate. The sediment accumulation before 1900 was about 0.006 inches per year and is now at 0.27 inches per year. He added that the shape of a lake is a strong indicator of how much sediment is deposited. Dr. Edlund explained that there have been no significant changes in diatom community from the 1870s through 2018, and that the lake has been dominated by species indicative of eutrophic conditions. He added that from the 1930s to the '50s the diatom-inferred TP was highest. Dr. Edlund explained that algal production has not changed drastically since the 1800s, adding that algal abundance has slightly declined from the mid-1990s to 2017. President Spence asked if the reason that School Lake acts the way it does is because it's a shallow lake that is classified as a deep lake. Dr. Edlund responded that School

Lake is right at a depth where it can stratify and also de-stratify early which allows algae to bloom rapidly.

Manager Anderson asked about report text stating that water quality was "consistent" over the period 1980-2011. Dr. Edlund replied that parameter values certainly varied over that period, but not significantly. Manager Anderson asked what kinds of effects a gravel mine near the lake could have on sediment values. Dr. Edlund explained it is possible for sediment to be washed directly into the lake, but it is also possible for sediment to be blown into the lake via wind. Sediment analysis can yield evidence of the proportion of sediment loads from these sources. Manager Anderson requested a copy of the presentation. Manager Anderson asked Dr. Edlund for clarification on how accurate they were able to calculate the depth of sediment. Dr. Edlund responded by explaining how detailed the sampling process was. Manager Anderson asked what can affect the amount of mud that is deposited at a particular point in a lake. Dr. Edlund replied that it depends on a lot of variables, including the depth and shape of the lake. Manager Anderson then asked why no diatoms were preserved in Bone Lake prior to 1940. Dr. Edlund stated that it is not common for lakes to not preserve diatoms, and that in cases where there aren't diatoms, typically it is due to silica-starved groundwater. Another way that can happen is if the lake reaches a highly saline or alkaline state. He thinks that what happened with Bone Lake is that the lake was probably silica starved before land clearance. Manager Schmaltz asked Dr. Edlund to clarify what the difference in sedimentation rates between lakes means. Dr. Edlund stated that the sedimentation rates are a way to compare the properties of a lake to itself over time. Not necessarily to compare two different lakes.

Manager Schmaltz asked Dr. Edlund if there is any evidence of the "dust bowl" phenomenon seen in the sediment cores. Dr. Edlund responded that there is currently a research proposal that aims to analyze the source of some of these sediments, adding that it is possible for some of the particles to be linked to this phenomenon.

Manager Anderson moved to accept the Phase II Deep Lake Sediment Core report as presented. Seconded by Manager Oknich. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

b) Watershed Management Plan – Preliminary Draft

Watershed Technician Emily Heinz noted that this draft of the plan is very preliminary. She recommended the Board focus on reviewing the content of the plan, as more formatting (including addition of more pictures) will be completed later. Ms. Heinz explained the layout of the plan: Section 1 – Executive Summary, Section 2 –

Introduction, Section 3 – Issues Identification and Prioritization, and Section 4 – Implementation. She added that Sections 5 -10 include greater detail on specific topics. Ms. Heinz provided a high-level overview of each section of the plan, highlighting what is new compared to the previous plan. Ms. Heinz then showed a table containing goals for each program and project area noting that this format will be how the District aims to conduct annual progress reporting. Ms. Heinz described how the Board of Managers can access the plan and provide comments. She then provided a timetable of upcoming events and checkpoints in the plan update process. Managers discussed how they plan to review the document and timing. President Spence indicated he would provide high-level comments by January 6th. Managers agreed to provide comments to staff prior to the January 19th workshop. Ms. Heinz will print paper copies of the presentation given to the CAC, and Ms. Lindemyer will share that presentation with the managers electronically.

c) One Watershed-One Plan (1W1P)

Mr. Kinney noted the date for the Policy Committee meeting has been pushed back to January 25 to allow the Planning Team and Steering Committee more time to work on the Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) work plan. He noted the work plan must be approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) by the end of March, otherwise the grant funding will be redistributed to other entities. Mr. Kinney added that he has been working with Dr. Funke to compile a list of projects in the Lower St. Croix on which grant funding can be spent.

10. Report of Staff

a) Administrator

Mr. Kinney stated the latest round of Clean Water Fund grants has been announced, and the District's two applications are recommended for full funding. He added that staff has continued to perform field work, stating that Blayne Eineichner has worked on the DCB Wetland project. Mr. Kinney added that he was able to be a part of an agricultural discussion forum and was glad to have the opportunity to speak on the District's process and results.

Manager Anderson asked for an update on the status of the manager computers. Ms. Lindemyer responded that she is in the process of working with Rymark IT, and that the laptops are on pace to be distributed to the Board in early 2021.

Mr. Kinney added he plans to meet with some of the District's partners to discuss project identification around Bone Lake and Moody Lake. He then mentioned that he and Mr. Eineichner met with a landowner recently that has some gullies on his property that the District may find it beneficial to work on.

Manager Anderson requested that the land acquisition topic be added to the January board meeting agenda.

b) Emmons & Olivier Resources

Dr. Funke provided an update on projects occurring around Bone Lake. She noted that the Moody Lake Alum Treatment appears to be working well. She added that the sediment core study confirmed that the middle basin of Forest Lake does have the highest phosphorus content in its bottom sediment.

c) Smith Partners

Nothing to report.

11. Report of Treasurer

a) Approval of Bills and Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Schmaltz reported income for the period of \$559.81 and expenses in the amount of \$134,910.38.

Manager Anderson moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report and pay the bills in the amount of \$134,910.38. Seconded by President Spence. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

12. Report of Officers and Managers

Manager Schmaltz noted that the Forest Lake Lake Association receives property tax money each year from lakeshore owners that is used for lake water quality projects, but that this year the City undertook to move those revenues to the City's surface water management fund, which typically and, the FLLA believes, by intent, is intended more for City stormwater management efforts under its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program. The FLLA is requesting that the City return those tax revenues to the General Fund, at least next year, and to their traditional use. He also added that the City is getting more interested in what is being spent on the lakes.

13. Summary and Approval of Board Direction

Directives from the meeting were summarized:

- Mr. Miller will reach out to the DNR regarding the Bone Lake signs.

- Mr. Miller will make the requested edits to the AIS Report.
- St. Croix Watershed Research Station presentation slides will be posted to the District website.
- Staff will post and print the watershed management plan update presentation slides.
- EOR will move forward with the preliminary scope for the Bone Lake Park.
- Staff will add Land Acquisition Protocol to the January board meeting agenda.

14. Adjourn

a) Next regular board meeting – 1/14/2020

Manager Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Manager Schmaltz. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Manager	Aye	Nay	Absent
Jon Spence	X		
Jackie Anderson	X		
Stephen Schmaltz	X		
Jen Oknich	X		

Jen Oknich, Secretary _____