



Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District Sunrise River Highway-61 Wetland Enhancement Project

This project will provide water quality treatment to water entering Comfort Lake, restore the ecology and hydrology of a wetland, and improve wildlife habitat.

The Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District's (CLFLWD) water quality monitoring program identified the Heims Lake drainage ditch as a significant source of excess nutrient loading to Comfort Lake and the Sunrise River. This project was developed to remove these excess nutrients, which degrade water quality, by filtering the ditch water through a wetland located on District owned property.

Project Name:

Sunrise River Highway-61 Wetland Enhancement Project¹

Project Sponsor:

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Target Waterbodies:

Comfort Lake
Sunrise River

Project Timeline:

Winter 2022-2023

Financials:

Clean Water Fund Grant	\$492,000
Section 319 Grant	\$100,000
Lower St. Croix Partnership	\$300,499
CLFLWD Grant Match	\$640,885
Total Budget	\$1,533,384

Project Contact:

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Project location is indicated by a red star on the above map

Project Description:

Nutrient-rich water from the Heims Lake drainage ditch will be directed through a wetland where the suspended soil particles will settle out and the excess nutrients will be removed. Utilizing the natural filtering ability of the wetland will allow for cleaner water to re-enter the ditch network before it enters Comfort Lake and the Sunrise River.

Project Location:

This project is being implemented on a 41.7-acre property currently owned by the CLFLWD. It is located approximately 1.5 miles north of downtown Forest Lake along Highway 61 (red star on map).

The project is being constructed on CLFLWD-owned property and will not impact any of the properties along the Heims Lake drainage ditch or those adjacent to the project area.

Project Outcomes:

This project is estimated to reduce phosphorus loading to Comfort Lake by 65 lbs/yr and the Sunrise River by 89 lbs/yr². This nutrient reduction will improve water quality and clarity in the Sunrise River and help Comfort Lake reach and maintain state water quality standards. The project will also provide increased wildlife habitat and add 18.3 acre-ft of flood storage to the area. The project will not impact the water level of Heims Lake.



¹This project has previously been referred to as the "Tax Forfeit Project" and the "Sunrise River Wetland Project"

²Phosphorus is a nutrient commonly found in the environment. However, when excess amounts of phosphorus make their way into our waterways, each pound of additional phosphorus can support up to 500 pounds of algae growth. The project estimates have been updated from the original concept and are based on the final project design.

*Fact sheet updated January 31, 2023