

MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

To: Board of Managers **Date:** August 5, 2021
From: Mike Kinney
Subject: Lake Association Grant Program

Background

At the February 25th regular board meeting, it was requested that the Board and staff give input on the eligibility of lake associations to utilize funds from the District's community grant program for aquatic invasive species (AIS) treatments. To start the conversation, staff provided the Board with the Chisago County Lake Improvement District's (LID) lake association grant as a model to reference at the March 11th regular meeting. Following the discussion, staff was directed to prepare a draft cost-share program using components of the LID's program and suggestions made by the Board. Such a document was drafted and brought to the March 25th board meeting. Further discussion occurred and Manager Anderson offered to prepare a draft of an initial framework.

On April 28th, Manager Anderson presented to the Board a draft grant program description that she had prepared. It was requested of the Board to review the document and provide feedback for the following meeting. During the May 13th regular meeting, a motion was made to approve Manager Anderson's grant program description as presented, with suggestions made by the Board, and to work with staff to draft the program outline, application process, and a description for how the review process would take place. These materials were to be brought back to the Board for review. Staff have since been working to research similar grant programs and develop each of the grant's components per the Board's direction.

Using the approved program description, staff worked internally on how to expand upon and develop the grant program considering the desired outcomes as well as appropriate constraints to fit the public purpose element of disbursing public funds. A number of additions were incorporated into the draft which staff felt enhanced the program and added a process for fair application review. One such suggested change is to only have District staff and Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members on the review committee. Members of the review committee that live on or are closely affiliated with the applicant's lake should abstain from the review process to avoid real or perceived conflict of interest concerns. Additionally, to encourage programs and projects that benefit a wider array of taxpayers, the level of funding for an application could be tied to the number of taxpayers who would benefit. Other potential additions to the program that are not currently in the draft presented herein include:

- Landowner tax credits for certain projects (EG. lakeshore stabilization with native vegetation),
- Bringing all AIS treatments (including EWM) in-house again
- Opening up the grant program to other non-profit organizations
- Having pooled funding for all lakes to increase competition for and equitability of these funds

The pooling of funds would also address a major concern that is unaddressed by the current draft program, namely, how to handle the formation of additional lake associations on smaller lakes.

On June 17th, District staff received an application from the Comfort Lake Association (CLA) requesting grant funds for their Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) treatment through the new grant program. At the time of the application's submission, a fully formed program outline, application form, and review process had not been developed and brought to the Board for review.

MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Before proceeding further with any of the proposed changes to the program or taking action on the Comfort Lake Association application, staff is requesting review and input from the Board. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) have also been asked to review and provide feedback. It should be noted that the attached drafts are preliminary and have not yet be reviewed by legal counsel. The principal objective at this time is to provide a draft framework of a more complete grant program for lake associations as a starting point, with the understanding that the District's grant program may likely expand to a variety of other community organizations and non-profits.

Attached:

Draft Lake Association Grant Program Description, Application, and Evaluation Form

2021 Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District

Lake Association Grant Program

Program Background and Who May Apply

As stated in Program 3004D Commercial/Community Cost-Share Program on page 65 of the Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District’s (CLFLWD) 10-year Watershed Management Plan (WMP), the District offers grants for projects on commercial, multi-family residential, and non-profit properties that improve water quality and/or decrease stormwater runoff and/or preserve native plant and wildlife communities affected by lakes, rivers and wetlands. Furthermore, the District is interested in partnering with local lake associations within CLFLWD’s boundaries for projects that protect and enrich the ecological and recreational quality of its water resources, as well as projects that educate and promote the values of water stewardship. Applications will only be considered if submitted by an active 501(c) lake association (i.e., a non-profit organization). To view the District’s 10-year WMP, please visit <https://www.clflwd.org>.

Acceptable Expenses

This grant program will provide cost-sharing to the applicant association as described in the “Funds and Distribution” section below. Funds from this grant are to encourage and assist with projects that align with the District’s 10-year WMP. Such projects include providing education by demonstrating innovative and small-scale practices, constructing stormwater management facilities to reduce nutrient and sediment loads to District waterbodies, or improving shoreline condition and habitat. Additionally, funds are available for projects that improve water quality, preserve or improve native aquatic plants/animal diversity, or improve the recreational quality of the waterbody. The aforementioned examples are not a comprehensive list, and lake associations are encouraged to submit applications that differ but relate to the general themes and objectives of these examples.

Examples of Unacceptable Expenses

- Herbicide treatments conducted by non-licensed professionals
- Reimbursements for time spent completing approved project
- Food and beverages
- Mileage and fuel reimbursements
- Expenses incurred prior to the approval of the grant application
- Expenses not detailed in the application

Approval Process

Complete applications will be reviewed and voted upon by a joint committee consisting of District Staff and Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members. Priority consideration will be given to projects based on their potential for improving and protecting water resources or to projects that provide significant environmental education opportunities, with the highest priority being given to projects that are relevant to all District taxpayers. For the highest chance of approval, applications should have defined objectives, clearly outlined work plans, and a realistic expectation for tangible results. To ensure unbiased review, members of the review committee will not be allowed to vote on projects directly tied to waterbodies

they reside on or are otherwise closely affiliated with. Applications will be scored using a numerical point scale and will be approved if certain point thresholds are met. If several competing applications achieve the threshold, funds will first be allocated to the highest scoring application with the remaining balance being awarded to the next highest application. No funding or partial funding may be given if applications fail to meet the minimum requirements.

Funds and Distribution

The CLFLWD will provide awarded applicants up to 75% of the cost for the project (not to exceed the maximum allowed for the waterbody, see table below). Only projects deemed highly beneficial to many taxpayers by the review committee will be awarded 75%, with all other awards being 50% and lower (See “scoring criteria” on the Application Evaluation document). The maximum value is based on the number of basins of the lake that are supported by the appropriate 501(c) lake association within the CLFLWD’s boundaries (see following table). If awarded, lake associations will receive 75% of the awarded grant amount prior to project implementation, with the remaining 25% paid following the submission of project deliverables. **Expenses accrued prior to application approval are not reimbursable.** Lake associations have one year from the approval date to complete their project and submit a request for reimbursement. Prior to reimbursement, project deliverables listed below in section “Reporting Requirements Following Project Completion” must be submitted along with reimbursement request. Failure to comply with deadlines and requirements may jeopardize future awards or lead to forfeiture of grant monies. All invoices and/or receipts must be properly submitted prior to reimbursement.

Lake Association	Littoral (Acres)	% of Total Grant Dollars Available	Maximum Grant Award*
Forest Lake Lake Association	1531	60%	\$45,000.00
Comfort Lake Association	90	20%	\$15,000
Bone Lake Association	124	20%	\$15,000
Total	1745	100%	\$75,000

*The Board may adjust terms of funding at any time as the Board determines is necessary. Limits on grant funds and amounts will be designated annually by the CLFLWD Board.

Prior to project approval, the following items are required

1. Completed CLFLWD Grant Application
2. Cost estimate of work to be completed or quote from contractor and/or lake association
3. List and/or copies of all necessary permits needed to complete project
 - CLFLWD Permits
<https://www.cflwd.org/permitting.php>
 - DNR’s Aquatic Plant Management Permit Information
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/apm/aquatic-plant-types.html>
4. Professional surveyor’s project delineation map (if applicable)

5. Long-term maintenance plan (if applicable)
6. Monitoring plan and preliminary data (if available)

Reporting Requirements Following Project Completion

1. Itemized list of expenditures, including copies of all invoices and receipts.
2. Copy of all grant contracts indicating additional monies received.
3. Project report indicating dates, locations, and description of work performed.
4. Invoice formally requesting reimbursement from the Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District

The above listed items are to be submitted as one complete report following the completion of the approved project. Failure to produce deliverables by the approved deadline may lead to forfeiture of grant monies (not being reimbursed the final 25% of the grant) or jeopardize future grant awards.

Application Submission

All grant applications must be submitted electronically (via email) before 4:30 pm on February 28, 2022 to be considered. Applicants are encouraged to discuss projects with CLFLWD staff prior to applying. All applications will be reviewed within 30 days of the application deadline and grants will be awarded by 4:30 pm on April 15th of the application year.

Applications and questions may be directed to:

Garrett Miller, Watershed Assistant
Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District
Garrett.miller@clflwd.org
(651)-395-5854



44 Lake Street South, Suite A, Forest Lake, MN 55025

Phone 651.395.5850 Fax 651.395.5851 www.clflwd.org

CLFLWD Lake Association Grant Program Application

Applicant Information

Organization		
Mailing Address		
City	State	Zip Code
Email or webpage	501(c) Employer Identification Number (EIN)	
Organization Contact	Project Manager	
Organization Contact Phone	Project Manager Phone	
Organization Contact Cell Phone	Project Manager Cell Phone	
Organization Contact Email	Project Manager Email	

Project Information

Project Name		
Project Location Address or Description		
City	Township/Range/Section	Waterbody
Project Start Date	Project End Date	
Project Type (e.g., AIS treatment, innovative practice, shoreline restoration, buffer enhancement, etc.)		
Total Cash Contributions From Partners Other Than Applicant	Total In-Kind Contributions From Partners Other Than Applicant	
Total Grant Funds From Other Sources; if any	Estimated Overall Project Cost	
Application Submittal Date	Grant Funds Requested	
% of Total Cost That Can Be Considered "Match" From the Applicant		

CLFLWD Lake Association Grant Program Application (*continued*)

Work Plan

Address each line item in the outline below in either a narrative or outline format. Items B and C may be brief in the initial application and developed further later in the project planning and development process.

A. Proposed Work Plan

1. Describe the type of project proposed and the specific water resource issue or need addressed.
2. Briefly describe the assistance needed for implementing the project (any technical assistance/engineering requested of the District may accrue charges that will be subtracted from the awarded grant funds).
3. Describe the estimated cost-benefit of the proposed project.
4. Describe the anticipated water resource impacts or other outcomes that will occur if funding is not awarded.
5. Indicate and cite the local comprehensive or lake management plan that the proposed project has been identified in or describe the context of the project if it is a continuation or expansion of an existing project.
6. Provide a timeline for project implementation, including any deadlines or time-sensitive issues.
7. Describe how the project will be evaluated for success. What goals need to be reached, how will they be measured, what are the expected outcomes of the project?
8. Describe the public notification and outreach associated with this project? Is there public buy-in for this project? Will an official public notice and/or signature waivers be required from residents?

B. Project Operation and Maintenance (a maintenance agreement *may be* required for the project). The maintenance agreement must address the following:

1. Required maintenance activities and timelines for the project as detailed in the required maintenance agreement
2. Landowner and other parties responsible for the maintenance activities
3. Funding source(s) for short- and long-term maintenance

If required, a copy of the District's maintenance agreement can be obtained by contacting the District office or visiting our website at <http://www.clflwd.org/permitting.php>.

C. Project Budget

1. Could this project be completed without requested dollars? If not, describe why not.



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2. Provide an itemized budget for the project. This may be in table format. Include the following information:

- i. Budget category (i.e., engineering, materials, labor, oversight)
- ii. Brief description of the category
- iii. Funds requested for each category
- iv. Partner contributions for each category
- v. Total grant amount requested

Category	Description	Funds Required	Partner Contribution	Total Budget	Grant Dollars Requested
Total		\$	\$	\$	\$
					% of total project costs

vi. Total budget for the project (Use table below)



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Community-Based Grant Program Application (*continued*)

Permit Information (project may not begin until all **required** permits are received)

Permit	Required	Date Submitted	Date Received	Permit #
CLFLWD	Y or N			
City/Township/County Grading	Y or N			
DNR Aquatic Plant	Y or N			
DNR Public Waters	Y or N			
Wetland Conservation Act	Y or N			
MPCA Feedlot	Y or N			
MPCA NPDES	Y or N			
Army Corps	Y or N			
Other	Y or N			



CLFLWD Lake Association Grant Program Application Evaluation Document

Is the application complete? Yes _____ No _____. If No, application review is terminated.

Overall Project (Total of 5 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded:

Project poorly developed and there would be little recreational, ecological, and/or educational value.	Project somewhat described but without enough detail to gauge value or value deemed low.	Project well described with clear direction and impactful goals. Likely to somewhat improve recreational, ecological, and/or educational value.	Creatively developed project with high potential for success. Likely to significantly improve education, recreation, and/or ecology.
(0)	(1-2)	(3-4)	(5)

Project Goals and Objectives: (Total of 10 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded:

Project goals are unclear or inappropriate; not related to the objectives of water stewardship and/or the CLFLWD.	Project goals are clear; objectives listed are weak or lack specificity. Relates somewhat to the objectives of water stewardship and/or the CLFLWD.	Project goals are well described and adequate, but objectives could be strengthened to be more impactful. Clearly related to the goals and objectives of water stewardship and/or the CLFLWD.	Project goals are exceptionally defined: objectives are clearly targeted and will likely lead to success. Project will help reach the goals/objectives of water stewardship and/or the CLFLWD.
(0-2)	(3-5)	(6-8)	(9-10)

Project Success Evaluation (Total of 10 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded:

Evaluation measures and methods are lacking or not clear. Measures are unable to gauge success of the project.	Evaluation measures and methods are offered but could be enhanced or improved. Elements of success poorly defined.	Evaluation measures and methods are adequate; elements of success are strongly identified.	Evaluation measures and methods are well defined and crafted; application displays extensive knowledge of how they define success.
(0-2)	(3-5)	(6-8)	(9-10)



Project Maintenance Plan. (Total of 10 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded:

If a Project Maintenance Plan is not required, evaluate the long-term goals and objectives of the application's proposed project.

Project maintenance plan is severely lacking clear and defined short and long-term maintenance strategies. Project likely to degrade after implementation.	Project maintenance plan is offered but could be enhanced or improved. Project longevity is severely limited.	Short and long-term maintenance plans are adequate: project work is likely to persist short-term but is at risk of long-term degradation.	Short and long-term maintenance plans are thoughtfully detailed with a defined schedule and clear objectives; likely to ensure long lasting improvements from project.
(0-2)	(3-5)	(6-8)	(9-10)

Ecosystem Benefit of Project (Total of 10 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded:

Project has limited or short turn ecological benefit.	Project has definite short turn benefits but would need to be implemented on an annual basis	Short and long-term ecological benefits likely to be realized from this project.	Long term ecological benefits will be realized from this project.
(0-2)	(3-5)	(6-8)	(9-10)



Is CLFLWD Grant Funding Necessary to Implement Project? (Total of 10 Points Possible) Total Points

Awarded:

Project implementation expenses are easily covered by organization's dues and other obtained grants and revenue sources. No CLFLWD funding is necessary to fully implement project.	Project implementation expense could be covered by organization but would drain a substantial amount of their funds.	CLFLWD funding is necessary to fully implement the project as presented in the application. Without aid, project would be significantly limited.	Without additional CLFLWD aid the proposed project would be impossible to implement for the organization.
(0-2)	(3-5)	(6-8)	(9-10)

Next Question Determines the level of funding:

Who Benefits Most from Project?

Project benefits only one or a few residents and has little to no impact for anyone else in the watershed.	Project would benefit many local residents but would be isolated to smaller geographical areas (ex. single lake basin, single street, part of shoreline).	Project enhancements are likely to benefit all who live within a large radius of the project such as in a neighborhood or on a waterbody.	Enhancements are likely to be seen and felt throughout the entire watershed and beyond. A large number of local taxpayers would benefit from this project.
15%	25%	50%	75%



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Application Scoring and Review Results

Name of Application Reviewer(s):

Date of Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting:

Comments or suggestions for the applicant:

Total Number of Points: _____ out of _____ 55 _____. Must receive a minimum of 35 points to be considered for funding.

Recommendations for Award:

Percent of project funded _____%