



TO: (CLFLWD) Board of Managers
DATE: April 20, 2023
RE: Administrator's Report for the April 27, 2023, Regular Board Meeting

Administration (1000 series)

- 1001 – Board Administration
 - Treasurer Anderson, President Schmaltz, and staff met with the District Accountant and District Auditor to review the preliminary audit findings on April 12th. The audit report is on the April 27th meeting agenda for board consideration.
- 1003 – General Administration
 - The 2024 budget schedule will be brought to the board for consideration at the April 27th board meeting.
 - Staff met with Redpath staff to coordinate District accounting needs in anticipation of the retirement of the District's lead accountant at Redpath.
 - Staff are supporting ISG with their needs assessment and public engagement related to District offices and facilities. ISG staff provided a status presentation to the Board at the April 13th Board meeting.
 - Victoria D'Amico joined the CLFLWD Staff on Monday, April 17th as a seasonal Water Resources Technician. Victoria has a Bachelor's degree in Bioproducts and Biosystem Engineering with an emphasis in Environmental and Ecological Engineering from the University of Minnesota. She will be providing support to the Permitting Program as well as several other areas.

Programs (3000 series)

- 3002 – Permitting
 - See Permitting Update attachment for updates.
- 3003 – Monitoring and Data Assessment
 - The CAT and DIY monitoring efforts are active with the first round of monitoring occurring the week of April 10th.
 - Staff are coordinating and training volunteers for the CAT program. We currently have 5+ citizens interested in the project.
 - Staff are coordinating with CAMP lake monitoring volunteers. The program will begin late April after ice-off.

- 3004 – Non-Point Source Pollution Abatement (Cost-Share)
 - Staff participated in the Natural Shoreland Partnership meeting on March 28th and advocated for additional resources for shoreline restorations at the local level. The DNR requested and CLFLWD provided a letter of support for a grant to the Dept. of Interior to support the DNR’s application and CLFLWD participation in the Protecting Freshwater for the Future – Shoreline Restoration in Minnesota project.

- 3005 – Education and Outreach
 - Operations & Outreach Specialist, Jessica Lindemyer, was interviewed by a group of 5th grade students from Lakes International Language Academy on the topic of littering and the effects it has on our water resources.
 - The District’s vendor application for the 2023 Arts in the Park season has been approved by the City of Forest Lake. The district will host a booth at the event every Tuesday evening from 5:00-9:00pm beginning June 6th and ending August 29th.
 - The District has once again been invited to participate in Forest Lake Area High School’s FFA Ag Day on Friday, May 12th. Staff will host an informational booth at the event from 8:00am-2:00pm.
 - District staff will be visiting the 2nd grade classrooms at Wyoming Elementary during the first week of June to lead educational activities on the topic of watersheds and human impacts.
 - Events
 - Restore Your Shore Workshop (Virtual Event)
Monday, May 8th at 7:30pm
Learn more & register:
<https://www.mnwc.org/events/2023/5/8/restore-your-shore-workshop>
 - An Evening in the Prairie (Walking Tour)
Tuesday, May 9th at 5:00pm
6811 485th St, Rush City, MN
Learn more & Register: www.tinyurl.com/prairiewalk2023
 - Shoreline Workshop
Tuesday, May 23rd at 6:00pm
Scandia Community Center, Scandia, MN
More information & registration coming soon
 - Managing Woodlands for Resiliency
Tuesday, June 6th at 6:00pm
Belwin Conservancy, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN

Learn more & register:

<https://www.mnwcd.org/events/2023/6/6/managing-woodlands-for-resiliency>

- Shoreline Workshop
Saturday, June 10th at 10:00am
Hardwood Creek Library, Forest Lake, MN
More information & registration coming soon

- Publications

- *Bee Lawns and Slow Mow Summer* by Angie Hong. Published online March 30, 2023.
<https://eastmetrowater.org/2023/03/30/bee-lawns-and-slow-mow-summer/>
- *A Healthy Shore is a Happy Lake* by Angie Hong. Published online April 6, 2023.
<https://eastmetrowater.org/2023/04/06/a-healthy-shore-is-a-happy-lake/>
- *The World Comes Back to Life* by Angie Hong. Published online April 13, 2023.
<https://eastmetrowater.org/2023/04/13/the-world-comes-back-to-life/>

- 3006 – Technical Resource Sharing and Interagency Communication

- Staff facilitated the second quarter coordination meeting with the City of Wyoming on Tuesday, April 11th. City staff stated their interest in the wetland dumping outreach program.
- City of Scandia's new city administrator started on April 17th. Staff will be facilitating an introduction and beginning quarterly coordination meetings.
- Staff attended a coordination meeting with City of Forest Lake staff and engineers and Rice Creek Watershed District staff on April 5th. A follow-up meeting was held with city staff on April 12th to discuss the planned alum treatment and stakeholder engagement collaboration on dead end street efforts, and wetland management in the City. The City is currently the LGU for wetlands and holds an unknown number of wetland easements. The city council established a moratorium on wetland banks (in 2022) and is considering lifting the moratorium but adding restrictions on the types of wetlands eligible for wetland banking.

- The next Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership Policy Committee meeting is on Monday, April 24th. More information at <https://www.lsc1wlp.org/meetings-committees>.

See 3009 Grant Research and Preparation section below for an update on Lower St. Croix Watershed Based Implementation Funding.3008 Measurement of Progress

- The draft 2022 Progress Summary was on the April 13th agenda for review and will be on the April 27th agenda for approval.
- 3009 – Grant Research and Preparation
 - District staff are coordinating with City of Forest Lake staff to develop a potential grant application to the Department of Natural Resources Expedited Conservation Projects grant in order to restore native vegetation and habitat in some of the dead end street properties that the City owns around Forest Lake.
 - Staff completed final reporting and invoicing for the remainder of CLFLWD grant-funded work under the Lower St. Croix (LSC) Watershed Partnership's Watershed Based Implementation Fund grant: Sunrise River Wetland Restoration (\$300,449), Wyoming Tree Canopy Assessment and Enhanced Street Sweeping Plan (\$5,700), and Work Planning/Progress Reporting (\$8,000). The District had already completed and billed for work under two other WBIF-funded activities: Forest Lake Internal Loading Analysis (\$16,500) and Sequential Diagnostic Monitoring Protocols (\$3,000). As of now, all of the CLFLWD grants under the LSC WBIF are completed and paid out.
 - District staff worked with City of Wyoming staff to prepare and submit a grant request to the Lower St. Croix (LSC) Watershed Partnership for incentive funding for enhanced street sweeping. The request is for a total of \$15,000 (paid \$5,000/yr over a 3-yr contract) to the City of Wyoming. The LSC Steering Committee will review funding requests against the available grant budget and make a decision on Wyoming's and several other cities' funding requests at the April 26th Steering Committee meeting.
- 3010 – Operations and Maintenance
 - Moody and Shields Lake aerators were deactivated the week of April 3rd. The DNR was notified with 24 hours of deactivation as per the requirements of the DNR permit.
 - Staff are regularly checking the Bone Lake outflow and removing any debris that may be limiting discharge. Lake levels remain high throughout the district.
- 3011 – Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Management
 - Staff continue to interview, hire, train and prepare for the 2023 watercraft inspection season, as outlined in the 2023 AIS Prevention and Management Plan.
- 3012 – Land Acquisition

- Continued landowner outreach regarding the Southern Bone Lake property and the Heath Avenue gravel pit property. A second appraisal for the Southern Bone Lake property may occur this spring.

Projects (5000 series)

- 5200 Lakes
 - Moody Lake:
 - Capstone project: Continued outreach with landowners and mortgage companies to get project easements in place. EOR is developing project designs.
 - Bone Lake:
 - Little Comfort Lake:
 - Infiltration basin: Continued outreach with landowner regarding purchase of the gravel pit parcel. EOR is continuing efforts on the feasibility phase of the project. Anticipated completion of the feasibility phase this June.
 - Shields Lake:
 - Shoreline planting: Restoration of the outflow channel shoreline to begin this spring as conditions allow.
 - Lake Keewahtin:
 - Forest Lake:
 - Alum Treatment: This topic will be on the May 11th agenda, including a project ordering public hearing. Staff received a letter of approval from the MN Pollution Control Agency for the treatment; this step is required in place of a formal permit for the alum treatment. The District is still awaiting the boat launch special use permit from the MN Dept. of Natural Resources for access and staging.
 - Staff facilitated a stakeholders meeting on the alum treatment with leaders from the Forest Lake Lake Association on March 22nd. Staff met with City of Forest Lake staff on April 12th to discuss engagement with city leadership.
 - Cr50 IESF: Substantial completion should be achieved by June 1st with the installation of the pumps and control system, powerline connection, and site planting (trees and shrubs). No schedule yet for these project elements.

- Western WJD6 Wetland: Continued outreach with landowner and mortgage company to get project easements in place. Wetland permitting and project design are underway.
- Comfort Lake:
 - Sunrise River Hwy 61 Wetland: Substantial completion should be achieved by July 1st with the connection to the Hwy 61 ditch (direct drilling under the highway) and site planting (trees and shrubs). No schedule yet for these project elements.
- 5400 Wetlands
 - 5420B Wetland Bank Implementation
 - *Wetland banks causing FL council uncertainty* by Hannah Davis. Published in print April 13, 2023. Article attached.

17-006			
Name: Knife River			LMD: Forest Lake
Applicable Rules: 2.0, 3.0, 9.0, 10.0, 11.0		New Impervious: acres	
Project Summary:			
Applied:	Approved:	Active:	Closed Out: 2023-04-04

22-035			
Name: 880 Parking Lot			LMD: Comfort Lake
Applicable Rules: 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, 9.0, 10.0		New Impervious: 0.49 acres	
Project Summary:			
Applied: 2022-10-06	Approved: 2023-04-18	Active: 2023-04-19	Closed Out:

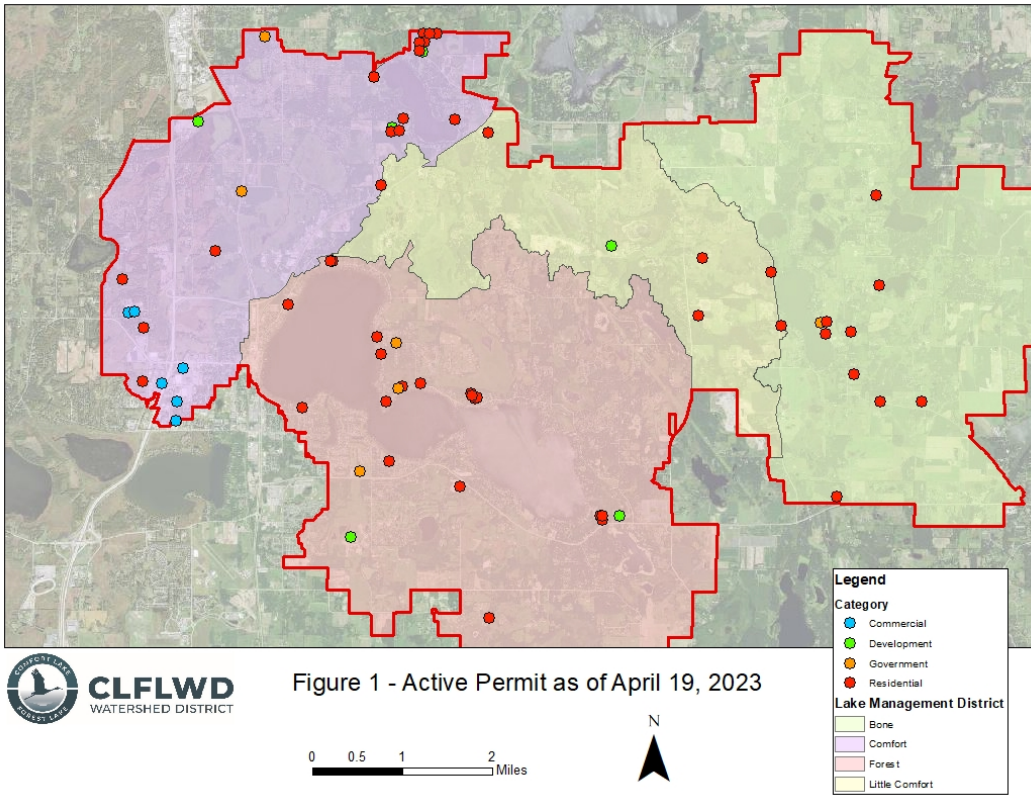
23-003			
Name: McGrath SFH			LMD: Forest Lake
Applicable Rules:		New Impervious: 0.2 acres	
Project Summary:			
Applied: 2023-02-28	Approved:	Active: 2023-04-04	Closed Out:

23-004			
Name: Caruth SFH			LMD:
Applicable Rules:		New Impervious: 0.09 acres	
Project Summary:			
Applied: 2023-04-06	Approved: 2023-04-19	Active:	Closed Out:

23-005			
Name: 1468 Bay St SE SFH			LMD:
Applicable Rules:		New Impervious: 0.02 acres	
Project Summary:			
Applied: 2023-04-07	Approved:	Active:	Closed Out:

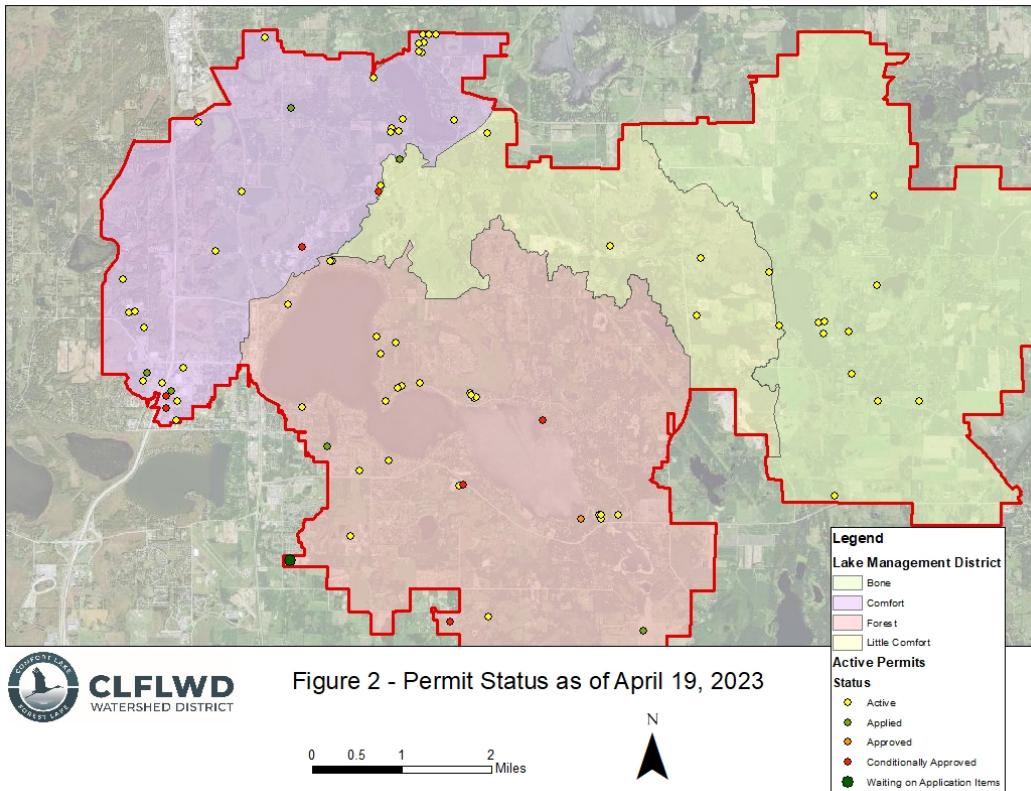
	Comfort	Little Comfort	Forest	Bone	Total ³
<i>Current Residential²</i>	16	5	19	10	50
<i>Current Developments⁴</i>	3	1	2	0	6
<i>Current Commercial</i>	6	0	0	0	6
<i>Current Governmental</i>	2	0	3	1	6
<i>Total Current Sites¹</i>	27	6	24	11	68
<i>Total Inspections in 2022*</i>	21	6	40	19	86
<i>Average Inspections per Site in 2022*</i>	0.8	1	1.7	1.7	1.3
<i>Total Non-Compliant Inspection Items in 2022*</i>	2	0	0	0	2
<i>Average Percentage of Non-Compliant Items per Inspection in 2022</i>	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%

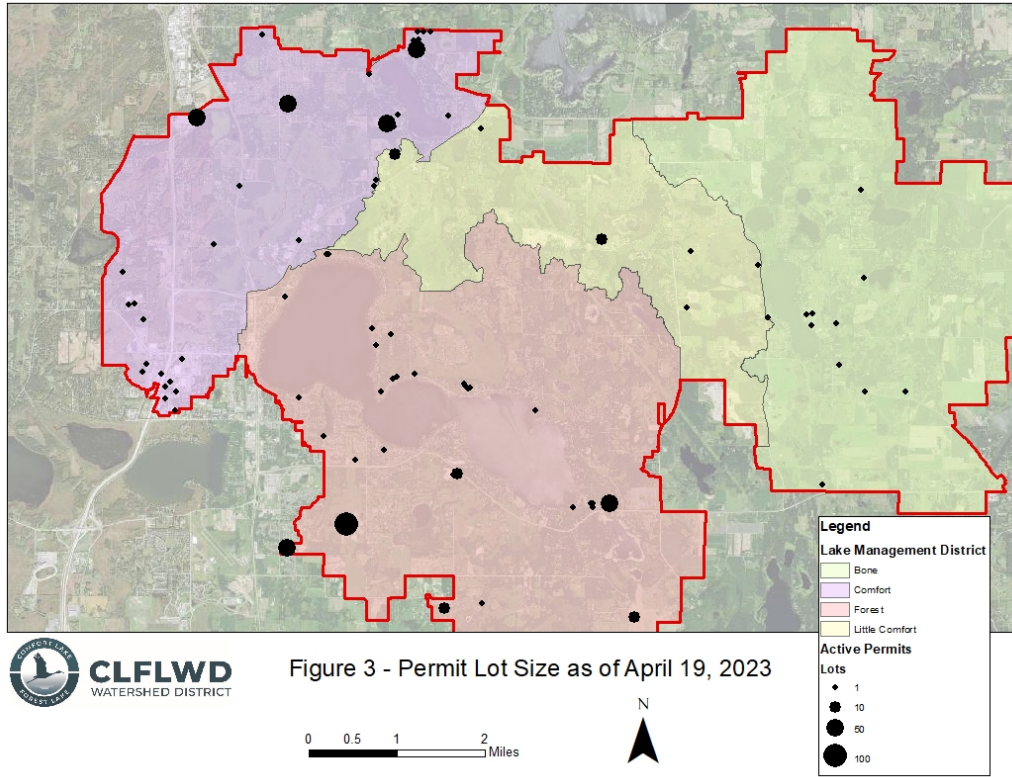
Permitting Program Metrics
YEAR TO DATE METRICS- 2023



Notes:

1. As of 07/16/20 residential numbers include any homes within residential developments/subdivisions if a permit transfer took place. This gives a more accurate representation of the number of permits staff are processing.
2. Totals may not equal the sum of each Lake Management District's numbers. Some projects are in more than one LMD and are counted for each applicable LMD.
3. The inspection numbers for Little Comfort LMD seem disproportionate to the number of sites because one inspection is counted for each Liberty Ponds home, but the development of Liberty Ponds is counted as one site for the purpose of maintaining consistency with the other developments.





Forest Lake Times

April 13, 2023 | Volume #120 | Issue #48 | 651-464-4601 | ForestLakeTimes.com | \$1.50

Wetland banks causing FL council uncertainty

Council seeks public input

Hannah Davis
News Editor

The Forest Lake City Council is struggling to determine whether or not to put a ban on wetland banks within the city after it put a yearlong moratorium on the practice. The council is seeking input before voting on the topic, which went into effect in June 2022.

The moratorium was put in place last summer because there had been interest in prime developable land in Forest Lake.

Wetland banking is a practice by which land developers can purchase credits that help offset any destruction to natural wetlands during the construction and development process. This is often done by big companies taking "high and dry" land, mostly former agricultural land, and creating a new, permanent, wetland preserve. That new wetland then is designated with a certain number of "credits," which can be sold to residential or business developers

in a designated area who want to purchase those credits as a way to offset any destruction to natural wetlands or other unmet wetland requirements.

After the Forest Lake city staff recommended to the council during the Monday, March 27 meeting to approve an outright ban on the practice, the council wanted to discuss options. There are a number of issues that city staff — including Community Development Director Abbi Wittman, City Administrator Patrick Casey, and City Engineer Ryan Goodman — indicated why their recommendation was an outright ban on the practice in the city. But, likewise, members of the council had other considerations that they wanted to address before approving an outright ban.

Tax base

One of the issues that makes the situation tricky is the fact that wetland banks, by nature, provide often no — though perhaps a small amount of — tax revenue to the city.

"But we still have to provide services to those properties

[wetland banks] — roads, potentially utilities, public safety, fire," Wittman said in an interview with The Times. "So properties that have little to no tax revenue or generate little to no tax actually costs the city."

With the city struggling to find funding for infrastructure upkeep and a projected need for increased fire and police budgets, it's one of the reasons Wittman and the other members of the city staff recommended the ban.

"The thing we are concerned about is 60 acres [of wetlands] has no tax base whatsoever, whereas a 60-acre home development or industrial building has quite a bit more value to it and tax base to it," Casey said.

Housing density requirements

A unique challenge to allowing wetland banks is the city's requirements of density. The requirements are set by the Metropolitan Council, which oversees the seven-county metro region, and are set into the city's comprehensive plan. Those requirements include housing

density standards, which are set at six to eight units per acre.

One of the issues, city staff said, in allowing wetland banks would be that it would take residential developable land and permanently turn it into wetlands, especially when more than a third of the city is wetland, and oftentimes when a development gets going, there is more wetland found, and oftentimes, the units per acre in a subdivision decreases.

"The amount of wet acreage and unknown acreage reduces the developable land area," Wittman said. She said that there is some concern that creating new natural resources would create an imbalance with the community's comp plan and development guidance, adding, "It's one of the challenging parts in a comp plan is balancing things like housing density with natural resource protection."

The lack of the city's control over the size of potential wetland banks and the permanency of the wetlands was what concerned Mayor Mara Bain.

Wetland see page 2

The Forest Lake City Council is seeking public input on a potential moratorium over wetland banks in Forest Lake. A public hearing will first be held at the planning commission meeting on April 26.

Scandia Council extends negotiation period with waste hauler

Natalie Ryder
Community Editor

The Scandia City Council extended its negotiation period with Waste Management, intending to potentially finalize a contract with the hauler but needing time to iron out the finer details.

got the surface on the basic parameters," said interim City Administrator Anne Hurlburt.

The City Council deemed that these early negotiations could yield an effective contract in the future, despite a rough start to Waste Management expanding in the area.

they're invested in trying to get things better," council member Heather Benson said.

After Waste Management merged with SRC, the second trash hauler in the area, complaints from residents arose about this transition related to pricing, a change in recycling service and missed pickups.

Submitted photo

Wetland

from page 1

"The part that really gives me pause on allowing these is the permanent nature of the property impairment or the land impairment," she said.

Council member Hanna Valento also reminded the council that any ordinance banning wetland banks could be appealed in the future, but if wetland banks are allowed, it cannot be removed.

During the meeting, Goodman stressed that the city will likely experience significant issues for further development if a wetland bank were to be created in the area that had been of interest by a wetland banking company before the moratorium was passed.

"It's that important to reserve that land for this development if you want to meet your density requirements you guys have set forth [in the comprehensive plan]. That's the reality. Do you want the land be developed or do you want it to be wetland? That's what's going to happen," Goodman said.

Casey followed by bringing the argument back to the tax base, saying, "I think we should continue down that road on a total ban or having these in conservancy only, because you really don't

want to start losing 40, 50, 60 acres in a shot, because then you start to lose your tax base."

This doesn't mean that developments don't have the opportunity to have some sort of a wetland issue remediation if they run into problems.

"We want to give them the opportunity if they have a wetland issue to do what they have to do, so we allow some kind of remediation or a creation of wetland in a different spot. We need to continue to have that because it's important to development, but I think we need to also need to ban any outside projects coming in," Casey said during the March 27 meeting.

Who can create wetland banks?

Most wetland banks are created by development companies, and aren't necessarily even in-state companies. There is especially more interest right now, at a time when building development costs are high due to limited supply, and interest rates are also high.

"This is what people do for a living," Goodman said. "They find land that they can get for cheap, and convert it into a bank that doesn't have high inventory. They're willing to sit on this stuff because these are big companies," he said, then comparing them to the television show "Yel-

lowstone."

"It's when those corporations [are] coming in and trying to develop. ... That's what's going to happen here. ... That supply and demand game, that's what they play," he said. He noted that the projects done by these companies are typically dozens of acres.

"They're coming in, they're going to take a swath of land and they're going to convert that to unbuildable [land]. And that's right where your sewer service is, and everything you guys had planned and ramped up for your comp plan," Goodman said, noting that many of those companies aren't in the state. Those credits are also not necessarily sold to developments in Forest Lake.

However, wetland

banks could also be created by current land owners - say, a Forest Lake property owner who may have been able to develop their own land into a wetland, and then sell "credits" as a way to profit off their land.

But a city ordinance, whether allowing wetland banks or banning them, can't be targeted to certain landowners. An outright ban would prevent both investment companies and local landowners to profit from the land, and an allowance of wetland banks means the sale of land to wetland banks to big investors and area homeowners alike.

That was a concern for council member Leif Erickson, who said: "Personally, I hesitate to put an outright moratorium on it, just limiting landowners'

use. That doesn't appeal to me, although I can appreciate the challenge."

One of the alternatives proposed was to only allow wetland banks in private land that's already zoned for conservancy, and the creation of wetland banks would only be allowed through the improvement of such wetlands.

"It could help those land owners potentially generate income off their natural resources," Wittman said in an interview with The Times. But that would still not allow anyone in the MxR1 zoning district (single-family homes) to develop any owned land for wetland banks.

What next?

The planning commis-

sion is expected to hold a public hearing on this topic during its Wednesday, April 26 meeting. It is expected, Wittman said, that the proposal set for the planning commission would still suggest an outright ban anywhere within the city, but that could be altered, as well.

"I am always willing to talk with any landowner or organization about the topic and hear comments, concerns, and questions that will help feed into the community conversation," Wittman said.

Following that, the City Council will also hold a public hearing on the topic before any final approval of any ordinance.



**Free Food & T-Shirts* on
Friday, April 21st
8:30 am - 4:30 pm**

*When bringing in Scrap. While supplies last.

**SPECIAL PRICING
APRIL 17th - 22nd, 2023**

- Insulated Wire
- Copper
- Brass
- Radiators
- Cat. Convertors
- Aluminum Cans
- Stainless Steel
- Aluminum



Put Your Passion in
ACTION

Become a Tutor!
Join.ReadingandMath.org



**ESTATE SALE
LOG HOMES**

PAY ONLY THE BALANCE OWED!

JUST RELEASED: AMERICAN

LOG HOMES is assisting estate

& account settlement on houses