



MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: May 2, 2024
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: Lake Delisting Schedule



District Wide

Background

The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss the District's approach to submitting requests to the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to delist its impaired lakes. The following high priority lakes are listed as impaired for eutrophication due to excess nutrients and are included in the CLFLWD's Six Lakes Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report:

1. Moody Lake (first listed in 2008)
2. Bone Lake (first listed in 2004, to be delisted this year)
3. School Lake (first listed in 2008)
4. Shields Lake (first listed in 2006)
5. Little Comfort Lake (first listed in 2012, after TMDL was published)
6. Comfort Lake (first listed in 2002)

Below is a summary of criteria to be considered for delisting.

1. Water Quality Samples: Meet
 - a. phosphorus standard and chlorophyll-a or Secchi depth standard
 - b. based on at least 8 samples collected from at least 2 years within the most recent 10-year period.
 - c. Chlorophyll-a samples are pheophytin-corrected.
 - d. All State water quality standards are based on growing season (June-September) averages.
 - e. The MN Pollution Control Agency considers 10-year average phosphorus concentrations in addition to the 2 most recent summer averages and the individual samples of the most recent 2 years.
2. Trend/Management: In addition, there must be
 - a. an improving trend in total phosphorus or management activities in place to maintain improved chlorophyll-a or Secchi observations.
 - b. The local entity must provide information that details how the response conditions will be met over time for a lake to be de-listed.



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Discussion

All delisting decisions must first go through the MPCA, then be reviewed and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). District staff worked closely with MPCA staff to develop the Progress Report format to meet the delisting criteria. Staff have reached out to MPCA to ask their staff's opinion on delisting the District's remaining 5 lakes from the TMDL. The impaired waters list is published every two years. The latest list is anticipated very soon in spring 2024. The next list will be posted in spring 2026, and as such, we have time to consider delisting requests.

Recommendation

There are multiple factors at play with respect to lake water quality: planned projects, pending grant applications, weather and climate conditions, and shallow lake dynamics. Staff and EOR recommend the following approach:

- This year is shaping up to be a wetter year compared to the last couple of years which were relatively dry. Dry conditions mean less runoff, and generally better water quality readings. Water quality readings during a wet year, such as 2024, will be important to consider.
- Lakes that are well positioned to be delisted, regardless of this year's wet conditions:
 - Comfort Lake (has had good water quality for several years now)
- Lakes that we recommend collecting more data, and revisit next spring:
 - Moody Lake (shallow lake)
 - Shields Lake (shallow lake)
 - Little Comfort Lake (projects pending)
 - School Lake (projects pending)
- Nielson Lake, a landlocked basin near Bone Lake, is also listed as impaired for eutrophication due to excess nutrients. This lake is not one of the District's 9 priority lakes, does not have a public access, does not have surface drainage to other CLFLWD lakes. Administrator Kinney has had communications with a nearby landowner regarding a potential future acquisition and restoration. Staff recommends the District pursue improvements to Nielson Lake as opportunities arise, but this lake is lower priority than many other District initiatives.
- Note that while Bone Lake is being removed from the impaired waters list for nutrients, it has recently been added to the list for fish bioassessment impairment for aquatic life. Staff is in communication with MPCA regarding this impairment and the path to delisting. The District's ongoing program work supports these improvements.

Hyperlinks

- [Six Lakes TMDL Study](#)