

Comfort Lake/Forest Lake Watershed District News

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News on the activities of our watershed district
from your Comfort Lake/Chisago County representatives,
Jon Spence & Jackie Anderson

Special points of interest:

- Legislation secured to change status from rural watershed district to metro watershed.
- Change allows District to fund projects through an ad-valorem tax & budget process rather than petition process. This has resulted in a big improvement in project planning.

2008 accomplishments

Shoreland planting & management program started

Project plan adopted

Website launched

TMDL study begun

Status change to Metro B Watershed

Permit program adopted

Education program enhanced

Watershed District Rules implemented in February 2009

After eight years of study and two years of planning and stakeholder meetings, the Watershed District adopted District wide rules that are the foundation for a District wide permitting program.

The rules were adopted in December 2008 with implementation set for February 2009.

All municipalities within the District, as well as representatives from the MPCA, DNR, Chisago and Washington Counties and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) participated in the year long process of stakeholder meetings, where proposed rules were formulated and discussed.

The final product established a set of rules governing quality and quantity issues surrounding our shared water resources that will be applied consistently across all communi-



ties with the District's boundary.

Once the rules were in place, the District could then establish a permit program which now allows the District to review and provide recommendations

on projects within the District's jurisdiction.

The Watershed Board members were pleased and impressed with the unprecedented level of cooperation by all communities and stakeholders.

Everyone is committed to protecting and restoring the water resources for all to enjoy.

The complete Rules and Permit program is available for downloading on the District's website:

www.cflwd.org, or by calling the District Administrator, Randy Anhorn, at 651-209-9753.

2008 Area Lakes Water Monitoring Report Released

One of the standard benchmark programs conducted by the District each year is the Water Monitoring Study.

Each year the District contracts with the Washington County Conservation District to perform quality and flow studies of the major areas of concern within the District.

The District has computer equipment placed at various critical points within the District which track flow and supplements this with grab and visual surveys of the lakes and rivers at critical times during the year, particularly during spring run-off season.

With 10 years of history at selected locations, the

District is able to identify trouble spots within the District and to use this data for planning projects and benchmarking the projects' success at improving conditions.

This year's report has just been released and is available on the District's website. (See Comfort Lakes studies on back page.)

“The 2009 wetland projects near Moody and Bone Lakes and Forest Lake’s third lake inflow are anticipated to reduce phosphorus leaving Forest Lake by 150 pounds/year. That’s 150 pounds less phosphorus entering Comfort Lake.”

2009 is a Watershed year for District.....

The ability to actually plan projects and budget for them was a radical change for the District in 2008.

This change was the result of a successful battle to change the District’s status from a rural watershed following 103D rules to a metro watershed which operates under the 103B rules, as well as 103D.

With nearly 70% of the District’s land and market value in Washington County, this change made sense and was a long time coming.

Most of the frustration over

the past 10 years from citizens was not seeing the District accomplish projects.

The Board was equally frustrated by the limitations imposed by the project initiation process in the 103D Statute.

Following the successful granting of 103B status, the District Board wasted no time in updating its capital improvement plan and working on the 2009 budget, which for the first time included projects.

The Board is required to formulate a 10-year project plan

that implements the District’s goals and objectives for resource protection and improvement.

In 2009, the District will begin the first two projects which include improving wetland retention near Moody and Bone Lakes and at the entry to Forest Lake at the east end of 3rd lake.

These projects are expected to reduce the amount of phosphorus leaving Forest Lake by up to 150 pounds/year. Forest Lake empties into the Sunrise River which travels to Big Comfort Lake, the end point in the District.

Full budget and project plans are available on District website

Rather than reprint the full reports here, the District has posted all engineering reports, budgets and details on projects on the District’s website.

Some of the reports are very large, so be prepared to have them take some time to access, unless you have high-speed internet service and large file capacity!

The information is valuable so you can stay informed on what it is being done each

year.

As much as we would like all projects to happen as fast as possible, the District has taken a studied approach to the process.

After identifying the projects needed to improve each of the six major lakes in the District, the Board decided to begin at the headwaters of the District—Moody and Bone Lake in 2009 and to monitor the impact of each of these projects on the downflow

lakes.

If the projects results are favorable as predicted, then subsequent projects can be modified to take advantage of those favorable outcomes, resulting in less cost for District taxpayers.

All projects and land-use changes will be monitored and adjustments made as needed to the project timeline and scope. Full details can be found at, www.clflwd.org

Little Comfort and Big Comfort receive B grades in 2008

The annual lake quality report on Big and Little Comfort have been released by the MPCA and the CLFL Watershed District.

Big Comfort received a B grade and Little Comfort a B- for 2008.

Big Comfort received its 2nd best rating to date, beating the 2002-2006 period, and slightly below the rating received in 2007.

Big Comfort is listed as an impaired lake on the MPCA’s Impaired Waters List and is rated as a mesotrophic lake.

Little Comfort is not currently listed as impaired by the MPCA, but is expected to be listed in 2010.

Little Comfort is considered a eutrophic lake.

Both Comfort lakes have an extensive problem with curly leaf pondweed, which is an

invasive aquatic plant.

Curly leaf can be found growing to the water surface in spring and then repollinating itself in early summer. The best way to eradicate the plant is by pulling it out at the roots and disposing of it far from the shoreline.

The recap of each lake’s 2008 water quality study is reprinted here.