



MEETING MINUTES

Call-in/ZOOM Meeting Monday, March 15, 10:00 – 11:33 a.m. CT

Members present: Jake Janski, V.Chair & Supervisor Mille Lacs SWCD; Perry Bunting & Chad Weiss, MBO DNR; Barb Eller, Farmer Mille Lacs Co; Bob Janzen, Supervisor Aitkin SWCD; ; John Pearson, Citizen South Harbor Mille Lacs Lake; Janet Smude, Aitkin Co. SWCD; Margaret Vos, Citizen East Side Mille Lacs Lake

Members absent: Laurie Westerlund, Chair & Aitkin County Commissioner; Barb & Mike Macioch, Citizens NE Mille Lacs Lake; Dave Oslin, Mille Lacs County Commissioner

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Bob Janzen welcomed all and called meeting to order

2. **Approval of the Agenda:** No additions/deletions. Motion Margaret V. 2nd Jake J. approved.

3. **Consent Agenda**

- a. December 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Motion John P. 2nd Barb E. Approved
- b. Financial Report- We have not seen and is not available here. Tabled until we can review.

4. **Discussion and Action**

a. **Water quality trends and reporting**

- Summary of 2019 surface water monitoring activities report for website (Perry Bunting & Chad Weiss) - Perry and Chad provided a draft report.
 - Highlights: Drinking water monitoring activities have been removed as of less interest and may contain sensitive information. Perry & Chad consistently monitor surface water at 16 locations June, July and August/September within the ML watershed on long-term basis and provide data and summaries to the EPA. 6 of those locations are deep water sites that show the lake is well mixed with only short-lived seasonal stratification occurring around July. Initial diagnostic assessment done in 1991-1992. Data is available back to the 1970s. Note computer glitch this year in Phosphorous and Chlorophyl-a. Noted there is an annual seasonal shift in algal populations based on water temperature, with dominating blue-green algae occurring in late summer. Zebra mussels and spiny water fleas may influence. There is an increasing trend of more blue-green algae growth. **Chad & Perry will clean-up draft and do introductory summary for posting on the MLWMG website.** Perry & Chad can also do 10- year trend charts summarizing data/comparison to diagnostic studies. They agree that annual posting is possible. The group concurs that this impressive, long-term work is valuable, pertinent information for the public. **To be completed by April meeting.**
- Survey of current monitoring activity (Barb Eller)-Barb reviewed the many organizations involved in water quality monitoring and has not finalized a complete list.
 - Highlights: The best summary of pertinent studies is found on our website: <https://millelacswatershed.org/water-quality-studies/>
 - Most common water quality measures and missing data are listed in the summary. Note: Mercury and methylmercury are no longer measured due to cost, but fish consumption advisories are still in effect..
 - **Key Water Information Catalogue** This catalogue provides easy access to key water information and data from six Minnesota state agencies (MN Board of Water and Soil Resources,

MN Department of Agriculture, MN Department of Health, MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Pollution Control Agency, Metropolitan Council). May be useful for website/facebook page.

- Pollutants of emerging concern to include Pharmaceuticals & Personal Care Products (PPCPs), endocrine active compounds, industrial solvents are being monitored by ecoregion by the MPCA on a rolling 5 year basis. Reports for 2009 and 2013 are included. Of note, our ecoregion is “mixed wood shield region” and PPCPs were found in 3-5% of samples. Perry & Chad noted a recent, similar study done by the Grand Portage Band showing PPCPs found all over. **Perry will share with the group.** Noted: 100% of samples all contained DEET. All studies indicate an alarming number of chemicals found, probable adverse effects on ecosystems, but additional research is needed. Some of the endocrine disrupters, even in small amounts, may affect the physiology of fish. Theories of how these chemicals are getting into even remote, undeveloped areas include atmospheric transmission, septic systems. Margaret queried if fish houses are contributing and noted public education is needed to prevent chemicals from getting into the environment. **Barb to look further into how chemicals are getting into the water.**
- USGS and MPCA published additional study on PPCPs, 2009.
- DNR does Watershed Health Assessment Framework and Watershed Report Cards.
- Additional organizations involved in generating/using water quality data are included in the attached summary (draft).
- Chloride management at county level (Margaret Vos)
 - Highlights: Margaret spoke to professionals at MnDoT and in Mille Lacs, Crow Wing, and Aitkin Counties who are responsible for salting roadways. She was impressed by the mindfulness of all of environmental concerns about chloride pollution. “Smart Salt Training” is followed by all, especially Crow Wing County. There is a tough balance between safety and the environment. Roadway salting is based on science and managed carefully. See report attached.
 - Motion John P./Margaret 2nd Barb E. to recognize these County professionals via a Thank you or letter of commendation. **Margaret will draft.**

b. Outreach and education efforts planning

- Informational Topics of the Month : Jan and Feb posted. John recommends summary topic on Perry & Chad’s work for March. Perry & Chad will do. **Call for additional topics for upcoming month-volunteers needed.**
- Barb, John, Margaret met to discuss outreach and education in January.
 - Community event presence: Discussed focus on one or two local community celebrations like Isle Days, Garrison Play Days, County Fairs. Note: The Aitkin Rivers and Lakes Fair is canceled for 2021. The return on investment in past Mille Lacs County Fairs was negligible. Jake will check if ML SWCD will be participating this year. **All should look for community opportunities and volunteer to attend and represent us and with partners.**
 - Healthy Land, Healthy Lake approach for 2021: Propose a combination of Zoom and in-person events. The success of the native plant sale truck was noted and the group agrees we should follow the trend of residents planting more and potentially do a spring and fall event. Jake notes we need more people available to answer questions during this event. **Jake will check into feasibility of doing this May.** Potential locations: Eddy’s, other MLBO, VFW lot at Hwy 27 & 169
- Outreach to lake associations and resorts: Laurie & Dave to do. Tabled.

c. Compass Program activity: Ongoing. **Suggest Lynn or Harmony give update in Spring.** Note: MN Lakes & Rivers has new Lake Steward Program. MLR is potential partner in outreach for our local Compass Program.

d. “Stop the Spiny”, an effort by the AIS Research Center- Janet requests and information tabled until April.

5. Updates

a. Media & Communications: Barb volunteered to be one of admins on FB to do more posts. John has instituted security, google tracking, and SEO on our website. To be discussed in April.

b. Fundraising / Grant Writing / Membership: Janet Smude is keeping look out for appropriate grants. Aitkin AIS grant application due April. This has been used to advertise Healthy Land, Healthy Lake event, buy trinkets (closet is currently full). Also, upcoming website expenses have been covered in the past. Need to

focus on using the MLWMG trinkets we have. Care packages for delivery to resorts would use some of these. Other needs: Larger banner to advertise plant sale-generic sign, reusable. **Janet and John will develop application for AIS grant.**

c. Rum River One Watershed, One Plan: Jake update-In process of finalizing the Joint Powers entity agreement. Would like the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe to participate. Perry is discussing with the Commissioner. Chad and Perry are on the technical committee. Plan will go out for review in June.

6. New Business: MPCA is seeking places for the public to drop-off lead tackle. John will give more detail when available. Jake offered Mille Lacs SWCD office as potential location.

7. Public Comment : none

8. Meeting Evaluation and Next Steps: Going 2 months without a meeting is too difficult. Bob found it hard to lead the meeting over phone only, but did excellent job nonetheless.

9. Next Meeting Plan : April 19, 2021, 10 am-11:30 am. Zoom meeting. John will send out.

10. Meeting adjourned 11:33

Respectfully submitted,
Barb Eller (Temporary acting secretary)