



## Minutes of Meeting February 14, 2022, 10:05am-12:05pm

Present: Laurie Westerland, Chair, Aitkin County Commissioner; John Pearson, citizen south Mille Lacs; Todd Hass, Pres. Camp Lake Assoc.; Dianne Jacobson, Crow Wing SWCD Supervisor; Andre LaSalle, Mille Lacs SWCD Supervisor; Barb Eller, Secretary, citizen Rum River Watershed; Bob Janzen, Aitkin SWCD Supervisor; Janet Smude, Aitkin SWCD Staff; Mary & Nick Tinker, Mille Lacs Wahkon; Ross Brink, intern Crow Wing SWCD; Perry Bunting, Director, Environmental Programs, MLBO DNR; Chad Weiss, Water Resource Manager, MLBO DNR; Steve Rye, Pastor Baxter Church, Mississippi River; Pat Murphy, Pres. Aitkin County Lakes & Rivers Association, Ann Brucciani Lyon, ViceChair, Mille Lacs Area Community Foundation MLACF), east Mille Lacs; Margaret Voss, citizen Eastside Mille Lacs

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

2. **Agenda, no corrections:** M. John 2<sup>nd</sup> Bob Approved.

### 3. Consent Agenda

- December 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes M. Bob 2<sup>nd</sup> Andre Approved.
- Financial Report. M. Barb 2<sup>nd</sup> John to approve as is, but to include general funds to be used for Community of Stewards Picnic at March meeting. Approved. See attachment 1.

### 4. Activity Updates and Discussion

#### Compass Program and Other Preservation and Improvement Activities

- Mille Lacs Compass Program: John noted this has been quiet over the last few months. Mille Lacs SWCD staff, Lynn Gallice, is focused on the Rum River 1 Watershed 1 Plan. *[correction: Harmony Maslowski is primarily focused on the Rum River 1W1P project; Lynn notes she is available to assist with the ML Compass]* The Compass Program was defined for participants. See also <https://millelacswatershed.org/compass-program-provides-landowners-with-good-stewardship-options-for-preserving-lake-health/> Crow Wing, Aitkin, Mille Lacs SWCD technicians do site visits, Shoreland Stewardship Plans based on landowners goals dependent on SWCD resources.
- Community of Stewards Picnic (Barb): Planning Committee includes Barb, Laurie, Bonnie Finerty, MPCA, Margaret. Confirmed venue Fr Hennepin State Park, Lakeview Picnic Shelter, confirmed Dan's Catering, local foods on the menu lunch ~11:30-12:30, Invitation to Compass members with Harmony's help due May, need assist with networking for native seed exchange with actual seed exchange in fall at HLHL event, Rep. Erickson, Mille Lacs & Virgil Wind, Dist 1 MLBO confirmed. To followup with Sen. Ruud. They've been asked to say a few words at about 12:15. Story teller not yet confirmed. Suggestions requested. Names & followup include Jim Cummings, Kelly Applegate, Travis Zimmerman. Bonnie Finnerty to pickup Sandy Soil MNL for drawing. Marketing will include joint marketing with Isle Days, Facebook, Website, Press Release. SWCDs to attend. Goal is to get 4 Mille Lacs Compass projects plus DIY projects to use in promotion. Park entrance is discounted from usual day pass \$7 to \$5 for participants. Laurie/John/Margaret suggested we find funding to allow free entry. Barb to followup. Suggestions include

MLEC Operation RoundUp, Community Ed. Type grant, Arts Legacy Fund (for storyteller), other sponsor.

- Rum River One Watershed, One Plan (Andre): Public comments are in review with final decision February 24. The Mille Lacs SWCD is meeting with partners and tentative schedule for Mille Lacs County Commissioners' approval is pending.
- AIS grant 2022 (Janet): Aitkin County AIS grant round is open & due April. John and Janet to apply for expenses related to Healthy Land, Healthy Lake Expo fall 2022, website and SEO maintenance, annual expenses related to CD3 (Clean, Dry, Drain, Dispose) units annual maintenance costs (Perry to send costs to Janet). Chad and Perry have 1 unit (ML County purchased/MLBO maintenance) at Sha-Bosh-Kung Bay access and working with MN DNR to allow 2 additional MLBO units at public accesses. Perry notes poor usage currently. Agree that a CD3 unit and demo can be done at both July 9 Community of Stewards Picnic and fall Healthy Land, Healthy Lake Expo to increase visibility. Additional education and outreach to include demos, on-site volunteers (Ann volunteered) to demo, repost Chad's You Tube video : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4yut53xWM0>  
Placement of units is dependent on weather and landing use. If Chad/Perry can keep Barb updated, she will put on ML Tourism calendar site. Pat noted that making use of the CD3 unit as part of a standard operating procedure for boat launch & docking increases use.
- Stop Spiny Campaign (Janet): Aitkin SWCD still has Swedish line-wiping clothes. Barb to do continued Facebook posts with Spiny videos. Will bring towels to all events. Send links to Ann. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yDuwqkTu6Q>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0-WaN15Frg> and from MN AIS Research Center <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqNVftaGbQ8&t=6s>. Other videos available on MAISRC website: <https://maisrc.umn.edu/webinars>
- Get the Lead Out Tackle Exchange (John): MPCA pleased with our efforts and note continued presence at events is best way to generate interest. John to make available at all events, run story on lead this spring.

#### **Outreach and Education**

- Healthy Land, Healthy Lake Expo 2022 : Group agreed in December to proceed. Setup subcommittee March meeting.
- Topics (John): Spring topics to include SWCD availability of trees. Secretary's note: Barb thought we did a FB post, but it was in the MLACF 1 Feb Newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/0105051238bc/grant-recipients-6129298>  
John invites topics from all, he will edit, and send to media outlets. Crow Wing SWCD is excellent resource.
- Community event presence: June 18, 9am-2pm (tentative) Rivers and Lakes Fair (Janet): To be at the Long Lake Conservation Center, Palisade. Booth is free. We have lots of materials to distribute. Laurie volunteered (tentative).
- Outreach to lake associations and resorts: Janet will do information packets & goody bags from our stock for resorts, but need volunteers to actually deliver them before fishing opener. Laurie & Dianne volunteered. The goal is to reach all with ML Compass info, AIS info, MLLWVG visibility, plus encourage resorts to take shoreland conservation action. Todd noted Camp Lake Assoc does newsletter; Pat noted Aitkin Lakes & Rivers Assoc has 20 lake association reps. John to follow up with Todd & Pat.
- Website (John): Picnic site is up with RSVP form. Requests all use this to ensure functionality. Especially important for updates and catering.  
<https://millelacswatershed.org/>

- Facebook (Barb): Like each other's pages. Post and share.

### **Tracking and Posting Water Quality Data**

- Report on current monitoring activity (Barb): Draft in progress. ArcGIS is MPCA tool for water quality data. Perry notes is good tool to show trends as well as snapshots. Can look at different ways to use for public education. Topic for March meeting.  
<https://mpca.maps.arcgis.com/home/group.html?id=df27cf6ee06641be9ccf3be06f3f4ea4b#overview>
- Summarize/Update MLBO DNR data (Chad/Perry): Sampling begins June and September for this year. Involved now with wild rice density monitoring with DNR, Nature Conservancy, U of M. Also looking at eDNA of wild rice.

### **Organization**

- Create "Annual Summary Report" (John): Draft is out. Would like to include raw numbers for ML Compass projects. Requests Janet & Dianne include for Aitkin & Crow Wing SWCDs. Received from Mille Lacs SWCD. Please send comments to John/request copy of draft if needed.
- Identify potential funding sources : See above discussion.

**6. New Business:** Participation in "Keep it Clean" ice-fishing cleanup campaign (John): See attachment 2. "Keep It Clean" Campaign Overview, includes opportunities & risks.

- Ann from MLACF is spearheading effort and provided a summary of actions to date. Lake of the Woods (Joe Henry), Red Lake (Robin Dwight), and most recently Mille Lacs (Ann) have joined this public relations campaign. Logo is done and shared with Mille Lacs. "Keep It Clean" has evolved to year round campaign. Short-term goal is to rally LOW, Red Lake, and Mille Lacs around this campaign. Long-term goal is to have other lakes join the effort.
- Geofencing ad is currently running through Mar 1 on Mille Lacs' perimeter due to insistence from Steve Dubbs, Muggs on Mille Lacs that it start now & continue through the summer. An anonymous donor has paid for 125,000 impressions (\$1000). It can also provide data on lake traffic and where people are traveling. Pop up advertising has Learn More button that takes folks to MLACF website: <https://mlacf.org/keep-it-clean/> Perimeter will be adjusted for 2022-23 season. Pat notes geofencing may be fundraising source.
- Ann is currently identifying funding for the 2022-23 season kickoff. She notes this can be a coordinated, well advertised effort to bring multiple individual cleanup efforts together under "Keep It Clean" creating a culture and expectation of Leave No Trace.
- Eddy Lyback has shared with Ann the usual population of 4500-6000 fish houses has doubled with the advent of wheel houses. Laurie noted 11,000 fish/wheel houses at one point during 2020 season. The infrastructure needs of these ice cities, especially sewage & trash disposal as well as medical and policing needs, may need a legislative solution for the entire state.
- Ann has Idea Brief to Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (CRSDP) to help collect data, define the problem, and develop solutions. If accepted, she will do full proposal for University of MN support and funding.
- Others have piloted dumpsters, port-a-potties, trash services and noted dumpster thieves take advantage. LOW discontinued dumpster service due to this. Now putting more dollars into public relations. Most Mille Lacs resorts provide dumpster service, Red Lake, Agate Bay, Red Door, Hunters, Lybacks have port-a-potties.

- Mike Hurst, LOW DNR has developed video on Keep It Clean. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfTfohaKdP4>
- Right now, focus will be on the public relations campaign with later action items, sharing resources with LOW and Red Lake, developing creative solutions, establishing best practices. Group agrees.
- Perry noted the longstanding history of the trash problem. Notes this is an opportunity to do better. The Rum River 1W1P technical advisory committee discussed this at length to include modeling costs to do similar LOW program on Mille Lacs. Barb questioned if it made it into the draft plan. If there, funding starts 2023.
- Barb noted concern over the plastics and pollutants effect on the ecology of the lake.
- Pat noted use and economics of wheelhouses. They are self-contained units that do not use local businesses.
- Perry noted that policing is a critical component. Laurie noted the DNR is responsible for policing, monitoring, follow up, and fines for littering.
- Laurie notes effects of pandemic on local businesses may make it difficult for them to financially participate.
- Group commends MLACF and Ann for the “Keep It Clean” campaign, invites MLACF to participate at our events, agrees with Attachment 2. assessment of our participation.

**7. Meeting adjourned 12:05 pm. Thanks to all for participation!**

- **8. Next meeting: ~~Mar 21, 10 am-11:30am~~ April 18, 10 am-11:30 via Zoom.**  
Secretary’s Note: From Minutes 12.20.21 The Group agreed on the 2022 Meeting Schedule: Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday(due to Pres.Day), remainder 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in Apr, June, Jul, Aug, Oct, Dec. 10am-11:30 am likely via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Barb Eller, Secretary

Attachment 1. Financial Report

<b>MLLWMG Financial Report</b>		<b>December 2021 - January 2022</b>		<b>Budget Balance</b>
	<b>Spent Previous Periods</b>	<b>Spent This Period</b>		<b>Current Balance</b>
<b>MLLWMG FUNDS</b>				
<b>All previous combined</b>		<b>\$1,119.36</b>		<b>\$1,119.36</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,119.36</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$1,119.36</b>
<b>Community of Mille Lacs Stewards Picnic - Initiative Foundation</b>				
<b>Space Rental</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>		<b>\$50.00</b>	
<b>Catering / Meal</b>	<b>\$750.00</b>			<b>\$750.00</b>
<b>Speaker Stipend</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>			<b>\$200.00</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,119.36</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$2,119.36</b>

**Attachment 2. “Keep It Clean” Campaign Overview**  
**“Keep It Clean” Campaign Overview**  
**February 11, 2022**

### **Background Notes**

- The “Keep It Clean” campaign (KIC) is an effort to reduce waste left on lakes by ice anglers. It was initiated by concerned property owners on Lake of the Woods a couple years ago and is being adopted on Lower and Upper Red Lakes. Ice-fishing hours at LofW and Red Lake are similar to those on Mille Lacs Lake.
- There is concern for both trash and human waste, both which are left on the ice in significant amounts.
- Resorters at LoW have tried different tactics (providing dumpsters, etc.) from which others can learn.
- There is some uncertainty about applicable regulations and enforcement responsibility.
- Advent of wheelhouses has increased hours spent on ice and a commensurate increase in waste.
- Interest in the effort seems to be increasing rapidly.
- Money is being spent on geo-targeted advertising to reach anglers when they’re on the ice.
- Mille Lacs Lake has been described as a participant, and there is a Mille Lacs version of the logo.

### **Opportunities for MLLWMG**

- Campaign is consistent with “healthy land, healthy lake” goals.
- Issue is a common concern of lakeshore property owners.
- May help MLLWMG create and strengthen relationships with resorters and other business and government entities.
- MLLWMG can gain visibility as a partner.
- More?

### **Risks for MLLWMG**

- Need to be mindful of resource commitments.
- KIC’s primary target audience of anglers is not same as our target of property owners (although there is overlap).
- More?

### **Potential Actions for MLLWMG**

- Integrate into a topic that we post and distribute.
- Provide info and links on our website.
- Provide visibility at our events.
- MLLWMG members bring messaging to their professional, personal, and political contacts.
- More?