



Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group

Healthy Land, Healthy Lake

Minutes of Meeting Saturday, September 23, 2023

Present: Margaret Vos, Chair, East Mille Lacs; Jake Janski, ViceChair, Mille Lacs SWCD Board; Barb Eller, Secretary, Rum River Watershed; John Pearson, South Mille Lacs, Communications; Janet Kohlstedt, Pres. Clear Lake Assoc; Pat Murphy, Long Lake, Pres. ACLARA; Veronica Lundquist, Aitkin SWCD Watershed Coordinator; Dick Weber, Big Pine Lake Association; Lynn Gallice, Mille Lacs SWCD; Kelly LaBrosse, Mille Lacs Area Community Foundation; Perry Bunting, Dir, MLBO Environmental Programs; Tony Young, Isle; The Stockwells

1. Meeting called to order at 1:30 pm

2. Agenda – abbreviated to allow time for discussion/questions

3. Activity Updates and Roundtable Discussion

- **Mille Lacs Compass Program** was developed to build a community dedicated to protecting the lake. To become a member need only to call Lynn Gallice 320-983-2160, Mille Lacs SWCD to begin the process of identifying goals for your property. The Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group (MLLWMG) connects people to resources. Crow Wing and Aitkin SWCDs also participate in the ML Compass Program. John suggests a Spring '24 tour of our ML Compass program participant projects. More information: [https://millelacswatershed.org/mille-lacs-compass-helps-landowners-improve-their-property/](https://millelacswatershed.org/mille-lacs-compass-program-helps-landowners-improve-their-property/)
- **Rum River Watershed Comprehensive Plan** is currently in year 1 of the implementation phase. It is a 10 year plan. Available on ML SWCD website: <https://www.millelacswwcd.org/1w1p/rum-river-one-watershed-one-plan/> Planning at the watershed level is happening across the state. The next funding cycle has \$1.33 million for project implementation across the Rum River watershed. Project applications go through the partner SWCDs for the ML sub-watershed. Current projects include the Mille Lacs Drone Study by the Aitkin SWCD, Veronica Lundquist. The survey was completed this summer of the entire Mille Lacs shoreline. Data analysis will be completed this winter. Landowners will then be contacted for potential projects. Lynn Gallice notes other projects include a storm water management project with the City of Wahkon to mitigate pollutants from snow storage; the Treasure Cove project for gully erosion control; and Guy Haglund's no mow buffer projects. Guy is an expert in canary grass removal and replacement with native plants. Lynn notes many part-year residents are difficult to connect with. Neighbor to neighbor communication is key.
- **Keep It Clean Campaign** is in its 2nd year originally brought to Mille Lacs by Ann Brucianni Lyon of the Mille Lacs Area Community Foundation. It has gained support across the state and initiated legislation for enforcement of trash and waste on the ice. The Keep It Clean wheelhouse was funded by the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and others and is managed by Beltrami SWCD. It was at the MN State Fair and we are happy to have it here today. Kelly notes discussions have been positive and supportive. She notes reports from ML Resorts indicate reduced trash around the lake. Over 25 Mille Lacs resorts participated in this awareness and education campaign. It will continue the '23-

'24 season. With the help of the MN Pollution Control Agency, [Colin West, Clean Up the Lake](#), Environmental Dive Center Team will be at Mille Lacs next May/June to identify trash hotspots and potentially aquatic invasive species. He is working with the MN School of Diving, Brainerd, MN. Follow on projects will actually remove trash. Results should be widely available:

<https://keepitcleanmn.org/> <https://millelacswatershed.org/>
<https://mlacf.org/> <https://cleanupthelake.org/>

- **Get the Lead Out Tackle Exchange** (John) is a MPCA program. We collect lead tackle, provide nontoxic examples. A large amount of lead collected at June Lunch & Learn went to Ramsey County for recycling. Lake Associations have also been involved. Contact John for how to get started.
- **Loon Platforms** are under discussion for Mille Lacs. The ML Scenic Byway Committee is actively pursuing placement of a platform at the scenic overlook north of Isle. Funding for materials is available from the MN DNR. Platforms provide cover to protect eggs and hatchlings from raptor predation. Pat notes that no babies survived on Long Lake due to Eagle predation for the last 2 years.

4. Strategic Planning Meeting, Thursday, October 19, 2-5 pm. MLBO Government Center Conference Room. We'll be reviewing our 10 year plan, budget and funding sources, by-laws, policies and procedures, outreach projects and partners. It was suggested we look at insurance needs with our fiscal agent, Aitkin SWCD. John will send invite to all with the agenda. Recommendations will be brought before the entire group at our next regular meeting, November 20.

7. Next Regular Meeting : November 20, 10-11:30 am via Zoom

8. Adjourned 2:30 pm. Thanks to all!

Respectfully submitted,
Barb Eller, Secretary
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