

# MILLE LACS LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GROUP BY-LAWS

*Revision Adopted January 22, 2024*

## PREAMBLE

These by-laws describe the structure and operation of the organization working to ensure healthy lands and waters within the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed in cooperation with other regional efforts such as the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Plan.

## ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group (MLLWMG).

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE AND GOALS

**Section 1.** MLLWMG's purpose is to protect and enhance the water quality, ecosystem health, sustainability, and resilience of the waters and lands of the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed (MLLW) through a stakeholder-driven forum that encourages a partnership among individuals; businesses; local and state governmental units; and sovereign nations.

**Section 2.** MLLWMG's goals include the following:

- A. Sustain or enhance watershed ecosystems to maintain or improve high water quality.
- B. Increase upland habitat quality and resilience to changing precipitation and temperatures.
- C. Protect and restore aquatic and terrestrial habitat.
- D. Mitigate the introduction and reduce the impact of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.
- E. Achieve desired outcomes by increasing public awareness of watershed issues, fostering an active community of watershed stewards, and engaging technical resources throughout the efforts.

**Section 3.** MLLWMG pursues its goals through an Ecosystem-Based Management approach. Ecosystem-based management is an environmental management approach that recognizes the full array of interactions within an ecosystem, including humans, rather than considering single issues, species, or ecosystem services in isolation.

## ARTICLE III - BUSINESS OFFICE / FISCAL AGENT

**Section 1.** The MLLWMG fiscal agent shall be Aitkin County. Administration of grants that are assigned to MLLWMG shall be monitored by the Aitkin County Soil and Water Conservation District located at 307 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, Room 216, Aitkin MN 56431 to be certain that:

- A. Expenditures have been approved by the Regular Members.
- B. Financial recordkeeping is appropriate for auditing requirements of funding agencies and foundations and that detailed quarterly financial reports are provided to the Regular Members.

**Section 2.** Changes in budgets and if the item has not been previously approved as part of the budget listed in a grant, expenditures for major items (\$2,000 or more) must be approved by the Regular Members prior to use.

#### **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1.** Membership in the MLLWVG shall be open to those who are committed to sustainable stewardship of natural resources and who have a connection to the Watershed. There shall be two types of members as follows:

##### **A. Regular Members**

Regular Members may participate in a voting capacity and include:

1. Property owners within the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed who shall serve without pay
2. Elected officials from jurisdictions included wholly or in part within the MLLW (the counties of Aitkin, Crow Wing and Mille Lacs including townships, municipalities, districts and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.
3. Other interested parties as approved by the Regular Membership

##### **B. Advisory Members**

Advisory Members participate in a non-voting capacity and include professional resource managers in:

1. Aitkin, Crow Wing and Mille Lacs counties
2. State agencies
3. Federal agencies
4. Regional agencies
5. Tribal agencies

**Section 2.** Regular Members shall have full power to direct MLLWVG and to make other decisions required in achieving MLLWVG's goals.

Regular Members shall:

- A. Identify and prioritize activities and projects consistent with MLLWVG goals.
- B. Plan, budget, and execute activities and projects.
- C. Prepare and distribute information about water quality data, AIS, conservation opportunities, clean-up efforts, and other subjects relevant to the goals of the MLLWVG.
- D. Pursue grants, prepare grant applications and make final reports.
- E. Establish and update operational policies and practices that assure organizational viability.
- F. Monitor and approve budgets.

**Section 3.** To be eligible to vote on matters before MLLWVG, a Regular Member must have attended at least two (2) prior member meetings during the past twelve (12) months. Questions or challenges concerning the eligibility of any Regular Member shall be ruled on by the officers.

**Section 4.** MLLWVG shall meet at least every two (2) months at a convenient location; meetings may also be conducted virtually. Notice of the meetings shall be given at least ten (10) days prior to said meeting date and shall be emailed, faxed or mailed (USPS) to members at their last recorded address.

**Section 5.** MLLWVG meetings shall be open to all; interested parties are encouraged to attend meetings and to participate in discussions that take place.

**Section 6.** A quorum is defined as a minimum of three (3) voting Regular Members and is required to conduct official business.

**Section 7.** A Regular Member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings or who does not attend a minimum of four (4) meetings in the previous twelve (12) months will be ineligible to serve as an officer.

**Section 8.** Regular Members shall serve without pay, but may be reimbursed actual expenses while conducting MLLWVG business, providing that these expenses receive authorization from the Regular Membership.

**Section 9.** Regular and Advisory Members of MLLWVG shall have full access to minutes of all meetings and the other MLLWVG records.

## **ARTICLE V - OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** The Officers shall consist of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Each shall be elected for a two-year term at the October meeting (or the next meeting thereafter) in odd-numbered years. The terms of newly elected officers shall commence on January 1st of the following even-numbered calendar year.

**Section 2.** The candidate for an officer position receiving the most votes of the Regular Members shall be declared elected. Officers may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Regular Members.

**Section 3.** Vacancies for all unexpired terms of the officers shall be filled by election at the next regularly scheduled MLLWVG meeting.

**Section 4.** The Chair shall preside at all meetings and shall be responsible for the management of MLLWVG business. The Chair shall carry out the orders and resolutions of the Members in a timely manner and shall have the authority to delegate responsibilities to others. Task forces and subcommittees may be named for ad hoc assignments and dissolved upon completion.

**Section 5.** In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall carry out the duties of the Chair. When the Chair and Vice Chair are absent, the Secretary shall preside.

**Section 6.** The Secretary shall be responsible for recording and maintaining the minutes, correspondence and records of the organization, either by doing the work or by delegating the duties to another individual.

**ARTICLE VII - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

Roberts Rules of Order shall generally be used to govern the proceedings of the organization. The Chair may appoint a Parliamentarian.

**ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

These By-laws may be amended at any meeting of MLLWVG provided written notice is given to Members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the action is to be taken.

**ARTICLE IX - DISSOLUTION OF ENTITY**

In the event that the MLLWVG is dissolved, it shall be the responsibility of the members to determine the disbursement of remaining assets in accordance with the requirements of the funding sources. Members shall not receive said assets.

**ARTICLE X - CERTIFICATION**

These By-laws were adopted by action of the membership meeting on:

Date: January 22, 2024

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Vice Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_