



## **Minutes of Meeting Monday, 12 January 2026, 10:05-11:32 am (Zoom)**

**Present:** Margaret Vos, Chair, east Mille Lacs; Cynthia Johnson, ViceChair, Platte Lake; Barb Eller, Secretary, upper Rum River Watershed; Guy Haglund, Treasurer, East Mille Lacs; John Pearson, Communications, South Mille Lacs; Molly Clyne, Mille Lacs SWCD staff; Perry Bunting, Director, MLBO DNR Environmental Services; Chad Weiss, MLBO Water Resource Manager; Robert Wall, MLBO Watershed Coordinator; Ellie Joing, Aitkin SWCD Staff; Bob Janzen, Aitkin SWCD Supervisor; Pat Murphy, Pres. ACLARA; Greg Berg, ML Area Fisheries Supervisor; Elias Beamish, Isle; Tom Kuelbs, East Mille Lacs; Dick Weber, Big Pine Lake

**1. Welcome and Introductions** – Meeting called to order at 10:05 AM by the Chair.

**2. Agenda** – Approved by Chair as presented.

**3. 12/15/25 Meeting Minutes.** M. Barb 2<sup>nd</sup> Cynthia. Approved

**4. Financial Report** –

- **12/31/25 Update. Attachment 1. M.Cynthia 2<sup>nd</sup> Guy .Approved.**
- **2025 Year End Report. Attachment 2. M. Guy 2<sup>nd</sup> John. Approved.**
- **January 2026 Report. Attachment 3. Correct projected expenses for HLHL '26 to \$2500 with available balance for other expenses to \$1704.69. M.Barb 2<sup>nd</sup> Cynthia. Approved as corrected.** Margaret notes all expenses should be approved. Expecting HLHL '26 Budget by March meeting. Barb will continue to administer the Initiative Foundation grant. John to send estimate for website and Zoom renewals to Guy. Other projected organizational expenses should be sent to Guy for the next meeting.

**5. Organization**

• **Nonprofit status update and continuing education:** Cynthia presented a standard Conflict of Interest Statement to be signed by each officer annually. Required by the IRS. Copy to Barb and John for record keeping. To be done at April in-person meeting. Cynthia also notes that all members should track volunteer hours. This is useful for in-kind contributions to grants and is required by the IRS. Cynthia will provide a worksheet for tracking volunteer hours.

• **10 Year Plan Review:**

- Correct name: Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group
  - **The Mille Lacs Compass Program:** MLLWG took ownership of the ML Compass Program as a marketing tool to funnel landowners to the SWCDs for potential financial assisted work. Question: How does our local ML Compass Program related to the statewide MLR Lake Steward Program? Discussed in past about expanding Compass to the entire watershed and strengthening our relationship with the Rum River Partnership. Goal: Define this further and establish funding requirements for the next year.
  - **Information Resource:** Margaret notes that shoreland tours should be reinstated. Website redesign will help make information available to the public.
  - **Collaboration with Other Organizations:** Add Trash Tracker, Mille Lacs Keep It Clean. Explore adding the Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP) and the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) as a way to bring U. of Minnesota resources to Mille Lacs.
  - **Organizational Effectiveness:** We achieved Nonprofit 501(c)(3) status and have now shifted to continuing education of nonprofit officers and members. We need an annual budget for the organization. Fundraising and grants should be linked to goals and objectives.
- **2026 Meeting schedule:** 8 meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays --Jan 12, Mar 9, Jun 15, Jul 13, Sept 14, Nov 9  
In person meetings: Friday April 17 and October 16. Group agrees.

**6. Healthy Land, Healthy Lake Expo 2026 subcommittee report:** Similar format to last year. We are reaching out to exhibitors and will have verified list by March meeting. Projected budget to be done by March meeting. Next HLHL meeting Jan 20<sup>th</sup>. Current members: John, Barb, Cynthia, Guy. Need more volunteers, let John know. A key challenge was identified regarding the venue layout, as the restaurant owner was unwilling to close off part of the space for speakers, potentially causing audio issues. The group explored solutions like using a small section of the restaurant area or renting partitions, with further discussion planned for the January 20th meeting. They also debated whether to charge table presenters a fee, with Margaret, Pat, and Barb expressing hesitation due to the educational nature of the event, while Cynthia and others noted the potential benefits of such a fee for sustainability and attendance. Agreed no fees at this time. Need to organize drawings so more manageable. Next meeting Jan 20<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Partnerships and Activities Updates**

- Keep It Clean: N/R
- Pat is on MLR Advisory Board; Ann is doing work for them.
- DNR Roundtable Update: Pat notes lakeshore presentation done by MLR. Reviewing Tamarack watershed and Talon Mining issues.
- Pat notes Aitkin Shoreland Ordinances meeting on Jan 6. Next meeting Jan 27. Bob and Pat are attending with the intent to not go backwards on shoreland ordinances.
- ACLARA starts meetings Apr 11. Brian Roulet Aitkin SWCD will be reviewing AIS minigrants
- Rum River Watershed Partnership: Finalizing funds for 2027. Still have funds from 2023 and 2025. Aitkin SWCD currently has funds available for landowners for shoreland work.
- Get the Lead Out: Noted at DNR Roundtable. Doing good with lead tackle, but no restrictions on lead shot. Could focus the latter at the HLHL. Continuing pressure is needed. Recycling of lead shot: Take to toxic waste depot or police station.

**8. New Business and Open Discussion:**

- Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair is June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
- [https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/aquatic\\_invasive/index.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/aquatic_invasive/index.html)
- [https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/aquatic\\_invasive/aq\\_inv\\_prevention\\_public\\_awareness.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/aquatic_invasive/aq_inv_prevention_public_awareness.html)
- Brain Roulet Aitkin SWCD AIS: [roulet.aitkinswcd@gmail.com](mailto:roulet.aitkinswcd@gmail.com) For info on AIS minigrants.

**9. Next Meeting: March 9 2026, 10-11:30 am via Zoom. HLHL Expo Planning Meeting Jan 20.**

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Eller

Secretary

**Attachment 1. Financial Report Update 12/31/2025**

**MLLWMG Financial Report 15October-31 December 2025**  
 UPDATE 31 Dec 2025 Corrected

DATE		Budget Balance	Income Previous Periods	Spent Previous Periods	Income this Period	Spent This Period	Current Balance
	<b>MLLWMG FUNDS INCOME – Jan Beginning Balance</b>	\$1,254.73					
15-Oct	<b>Balance Forward</b>		\$1,900.17	\$2,286.87			\$868.03
10/19/25	Office supplies					7.07	
10/21/25	Refreshments for October meeting					10.28	
11/01/20	Reimburse Barb Eller for: Nonprofit filing, County & State					\$146.00	
	<b>11/26/25 Initiative Foundation Grant for HLHL '26*</b>				\$2,500.00		
12/26/25	Pearson Donation				\$500.00		
12/31/25	Vos Donation				\$500.00		
31-Dec	Savings Interest				\$0.01		
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,254.73</b>	<b>\$1,900.17</b>	<b>\$2,286.87</b>	<b>\$3,500.01</b>	<b>\$163.35</b>	<b>\$4,204.69</b>

**EXPENSES PROJECTED THIS PERIOD**

**Subtotal: \$0.00**

**BALANCE AFTER PROJECTED INCOME & EXPENSES:**

**\$4,204.69**

Blaze Checking Account 12/31/2025	\$4,094.37
Blaze Share/Savings Account 12/31/25	\$110.32
<b>BALANCE:</b>	<b>\$4,204.69</b>

	Expense	Income
<b>Initiative Foundation Grant for HLHL '26</b>		\$2,500.00
Tulibee Tavern Event Center fee	\$300.00	
Marketing & Promotion	\$1,700.00	
Speaker Stipends	\$500.00	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>

*“This project is funded in part by the Initiative Foundation, a regional foundation.”*  
 Separately account for funds received under this grant, retain records for four years.  
 All expenditures related to this grant to be reported to Barb Eller with copy to Guy Haglund.

**Attachment 2. 2025 Year End Report**

Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group  
2025 Financial Report Corrected

**Beginning Balance January 2025** **\$1,254.64**

**Income**

Donations received 2025

Restricted , Healthy Land Healthy Lake (HLHL)

ML Corporate Ventures Grant, HLHL '25 \$1,000.00  
Individual Donors, HLHL '25 \$750.00  
Initiative Foundation Grant, HLHL '26 \$2,500.00

Unrestricted

Fundraising at HLHL '25 \$78.00

Individual Donors \$1,750.00

Savings Account Interest \$0.27

**TOTAL INCOME:** **\$6,078.27**

**Expenses**

Organizational

Domain Registration 2024 pd in 2025 \$23.17  
MN Lakes and Rivers Membership \$125.00  
Website, WP Forms, Zoom for 2 months \$457.90  
Postage \$14.60  
Office Supplies \$7.07  
Refreshments for October Organizational Meeting \$10.28

Operational

Mille Lacs Trash Tracker Website \$100.00  
*Healthy Land, Healthy Lake Expo '25 Administration*  
*Fiscal Agent Expense for MLCV Grant Admin\** \$100.00  
Host Venue, Tulibee's Event Center \$300.00  
Bakery Items, Isle Bakery \$52.00  
*Advertising and Marketing*  
Mille Lacs Messenger Ad \$278.00  
Facebook Ads \$266.72  
SpeedPro Hard Surface Stands (2) \$158.46  
VistaPrint Signage (4 directional signs, 1 thankyou sign) \$200.16  
FedX: Print of handouts, entry forms \$104.54  
FedX: tape, pens, markers \$9.32  
Pearson Promotion and Production, 25.5 hrs\*\* \$250.00  
Brucianni Lyon Promotion, 40 hrs\*\* \$250.00

**TOTAL EXPENSES:** **\$2,707.22**

**ENDING BALANCE** **\$4,625.69**

\*Note: Aitkin Soil and Water Conservation District served as the MLLWG fiscal agent until 7/24/25 and administered the 2025 MLCV Grant.

\*\*Note: Reimbursed for services under 2024 Volunteer Rate of \$36.31/hr. Pearson and Brucianni Lyon were reimbursed only partially under this budget. The remainder were volunteer hours. Thank you.

	<b>MLLWG Financial Report January 2026</b>	<b>Budget Balance</b>	<b>Income Previous Periods</b>	<b>Spent Previous Periods</b>	<b>Income this Period</b>	<b>Spent This Period</b>	<b>Current Balance</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>January 2026 Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$4,204.69</b>					
01/01/26	Balance Forward		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,204.69
	Office supplies		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Savings Interest		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$4,204.69</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,204.69</b>
	<b>EXPENSES PROJECTED THIS PERIOD</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Item</b>				
		<b>\$2,500.00</b>	<b>Initiative Foundation Grant for HLHL '26 Earmarked for HLHL expenses only</b>				
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>					
	<b>BALANCE AFTER PROJECTED INCOME &amp; EXPENSES:</b>						<b>\$1,704.69</b>
	Blaze Checking Account 01/12/2026						\$4,094.69
	Blaze Share/Savings Account 01/12/2026						\$110.00
	<b>BALANCE:</b>						<b>\$4,204.69</b>