



Minutes of Meeting Monday, June 15, 2026 | 10:05 – 11:44 am CT

- 1. Present:** Margaret Vos, Chair; Cynthia Johnson, ViceChair; Guy Haglund, Treasurer; Barb Eller, Secretary; John Pearson, Communications; Ellie Joing, Aitkin SWCD; Bob Janzen, Aitkin SWCD Supervisor; Jake Janski, Mille Lacs SWCD Supervisor, Rum River Partnership Chair; Molly Clyne, Rum River Partnership; Lily Carr, MLRA; Ann Brucciani Lyon, KIC, ML Trash Tracker.
- 2. Agenda –** To New Business add Molly on Boat Wakes, Cynthia on Bluebird Houses, Ann on Lake Ogechie cleanup, Jake with ML SWCD updates. **Approved by Chair as amended.**
- 3. 4/17/26 Meeting Minutes—correct “next meeting date” to June 15. Chair approved as corrected.**
- 4. Financial Report : See attachment 1. Chair approved expenses and financial report.**
 - John has not yet been reimbursed for April approved expenses of \$478.74, website expenses. Guy to complete.
 - Aitkin SWCD was reimbursed for \$23.19, domain name renewal. It is now on the MLLWG debit card for future payments.
 - Other expense: Stamps \$15.60
 - Balance: \$1684.09
- 5. Organization**
 - Nonprofit minute: Barb notes the Google Ads Grant program for nonprofits could drive increased traffic to our website and to donations. Provides up to \$10,000/month of free ads. Nonprofits are eligible; governmental units, schools are not. Barb to report additional details in July.
 - PayPal and GiveMN donation updates (John, Guy): **M. John –adopt GiveMN.org as our donation platform for this fiscal year. 2nd Guy.** Discussion: GiveMN provides a simple platform designed for nonprofits without complicated testing requirements and maintenance as does the PayPal platform. The only issue is relatively high processing fees. These can be requested to be paid by the donor. **Motion approved by group.** John to enhance donation visibility on website.
- 6. Healthy Land, Healthy Lake Expo 2026 Review**
 - Review: Barb notes John is working on a draft event summary. Event was a success with 50 participants although the target was 100. Speaker presentations in separate bar area worked out with minor AV glitches. 1 exhibitor requested the speakers be in the exhibit area so all could listen. Speaker setup in the am was much easier with the table setup the night before. ML SWCD leftover tree sales and water nitrate testing went well. Molly to share details. MNL Plant truck sales were minimal, but Jake to share details. The Roundtable discussion was excellent and well-timed. Molly noted ML County Commissioner (Rhonda Bjornson) attended with positive feedback. John reported adding 22 new names to our mailing list, bringing the total to around 140-150 contacts.
 - **Grant Report to the Initiative Foundation completed June 8. Available upon request to barbeller04@gmail.com All records must be maintained for 4 years for audit purposes.**
 - Recommendations:
 - **M. Ann: Schedule HLHL '27 for 1 May 2027, Tulibees Tavern, 2nd John. Approved.** Secretary's note: Space reserved June 16 with Rob Dubbs, Tulibee's. Fee will be \$600. (Barb)
 - Start promotion earlier via website, social media, newspaper articles , radio (Ann, John, Molly)
 - Increase connection to our State Parks, request free Park Passes as drawing item (Guy)

- Need a table drape with our name and logo (John)
- Designate a Concierge to handle speakers and exhibitors. Need 1 Greeter at all times at our table plus a schedule of assignments. John had many requests for help. (John)
- Add more breaks between speakers to allow attendees to move between the exhibit hall and speaker area (Cynthia)
- Need feedback from partners, such as SWCDs, MNL, Great Roots, to measure success. (Barb)
- **Volunteer hours for HLHL'26 and budget items for HLHL'27 to Barb NLT 1 August.**
- **Seek funding (Barb & Planning Committee).**

7. COMPASS/Lake Steward program evolution

- Lily Carr, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates: Lily presented the Lake Steward Program from Minnesota Lakes and Rivers, explaining how it recognizes property owners with natural shorelines through a statewide network of 70-75 lake associations. MLLWG is currently listed as a member on the <https://mnlakesandrivers.org/lake-steward/>. The email points of contact for Lake Steward Evaluators are currently the ML SWCD (Molly) and the Aitkin SWCD (Ellie). She described how the program involves neighbor-to-neighbor outreach rather than direct government contact, with volunteers promoting the initiative to their neighbors. Goals and promotion are similar to the ML Compass Program. Lily proposed honoring current Compass members with MLRA Lake Steward signs if they approve.
- The group discussed plans for shoreline restoration signs, with Guy requesting signs for his shoreline restoration project. They debated whether to include the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group or Soil and Water Conservation District logos on the signs, with Ellie suggesting a cohesive Mille Lacs Lake Group approach to avoid confusion across different counties.
- Barb suggested transitioning from the Mille Lacs Compass program to the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Lake Steward Program due to resource constraints, and noted that current volunteer evaluators are limited to Margaret and Guy on the east side, John on the south side, and the Andersons on the west side. We need to recruit more volunteers. Margaret notes the watershed is more than the lake, the MLLWG is not a lake association, and we need additional ongoing discussion at the July meeting. Lily agreed to assist.
- Planning for any transition should include clear communication to our members and SWCD partners.

8. Partnerships and Activities Updates

- Keep It Clean and Lake Cleanup Efforts (Ann): 175# of trash retrieved by divers (including Ellie) from Mille Lacs this spring.
- MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates - MLR
- Aitkin County Lakes and Rivers Association – ACLARA: N/R
- Rum River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan : Jake notes request for funding for FY'27 going in. Funds remain in prior year budgets for shoreline projects and well-sealing.
- Get the Lead Out [note program ends June '27] (John): N/R

9. New Business and Open Discussion

- **ML SWCD update (Jake):** In process for hiring a Shoreland Specialist. Carol Jacobs has agreed to run for NE Mille Lacs SWCD Supervisor. Bob Hoeffert is retiring.
- In chat Molly asked for input on a boating pattern with potential shoreline impacts. See prior email. Molly Clyne, Watershed Coordinator & Forestry Organizer for Mille Lacs Soil & Water Conservation District, at molly.clyne@millelacs.mn.gov
- Add Molly Clyne on Boat Wakes and Cynthia Johnson on Bluebird Houses to July agenda.
- Ann will coordinate with Erin Fallon on Lake Ogechie clean-up. Guy , Barb volunteered.
- Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair is June 20th, this Saturday , at Long Lake Conservation Center.

Next meeting: July 13, 10-11:30 am via Zoom

Adjourned 11:44 am.

Attachment 1. Financial Report

MLLWG Monthly Report		
	May 2026	
05/01/2026	Beginning Balance	\$4,204.70
Include X items	Includes \$2,500 from Initiative Foundation to be used for HLHL only.	
	INCOME	
X	May donations	\$165.00
	Total Income [current month]	\$165.00
	EXPENSES	
	Operating Expenses incurred	\$501.93
X	Operating Expenses paid to date	\$0.00
	HLHL Expenses Approved	\$2,670.01
X	HLHL cleared to date	\$2,570.01
	HLHL unpaid	\$100.00
	Total Expenses [current month]	\$2,570.01
	FULL CLOSING/CURRENT BALANCE	
	[Includes Saving account w/\$10 minimum balance]	\$1,799.69

2026 Year to Date	
Beginning Values	
Income	Expenses
\$0.01	\$0.00
Current/End YDT Values	
\$165.01	\$2,570.01
Copy these values to the beginning values above to start the new month.	

Monthly Totals		
	Income	\$165.00
	Expenses	\$2,570.01
BANK ACCOUNTS		
[End of Month Update]		
Checking Account 05/31		\$1,689.69
Blaze Savings Account 05/31/2026		
[Includes \$10 minimum balance]		\$110.00
Closing Bank Balance 05/31/2026		\$1,799.69