

Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group
Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2020
Rolf Olsen Center, Onamia

Members Present: Perry Bunting, MLB DNR; Jake Janski; Mille Lacs SWCD; Harmony Maslowski, Mille Lacs SWCD Coordinator; John Pearson, South Harbor & St. Paul; Sam Seybold, Aitkin SWCD; Janet Smude, Aitkin Co SWCD; Chad Weiss, MLB DNR; Laurie Westerlund, Aitkin Co. Commissioner; Guests: Margaret Vos, John Thompson, Kate Thompson, Don Carling.

1. Chair, Laurie Westerlund, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
2. Agenda Approval: Agenda was approved with the addition of Lead Tackle discussion item 5.6. M/S/C Perry Bunting/Jake Janski.
3. Public Comment: Road Salt discussion on the use of salt on roads by state, county, and townships. Who's responsible? What's happening at the local and state level? What can an individual do? Alternatives to salting? Possible strategies: Track what is happening at the state legislature; Topic for a Topic of the Month article; Component of evening meeting or a Healthy Land Healthy Lake event.
4. Consent Agenda: A consent agenda included: a. Approve of December 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes, b. Approve of Financial Report, d. Information only: Topic of the Month. These items were approved as presented. M/S/C John Pearson/Perry Bunting.
5. Discussion and Action
 - 5.1. 2020 Transitions - Topic of the Month was sent to the new gmail account email list. Discussion of ideas for future Topic of the Month included: How to reduce the impact of your water softener on salt in the environment; Lead tackle concerns tied in with potential future tackle exchange; Critical habitats/zones and options for protection; CD3 ("Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose") stations: What they are and how to use them - MLB DNR is obtaining two Mobile Units, plus an additional one via MLB DNR and MLCo may be installed this spring Mark Apfelbacher from CD3 General Benefit Corporation, suppliers of the CD3 cleaning units, may be possible guest speaker for upcoming meeting. There may be an opportunity to inform the graphics that are displayed on the units.
 - 5.2. Work Plan Discussion - Harmony Maslowski suggested that members review the ten-year plan and come back with what they would like to work on and accomplish going forward into the year. Defined goals and outcomes are needed to apply for grants and funding. The funding sources may give us some ideas, what would the group like to focus their efforts on? Homework: What item(s) do we want to tackle going forward? Bring your ideas to the April meeting.
 - 5.3. Grant Funding Sources – Discussion on identifying grant sources including initiative foundation (does not reach Aitkin area), MPCA grant possibilities 319 and CWP, Trout Forever, Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, State moneys from Clean Water Fund and Outdoor Heritage Fund.
 - 5.4. Healthy Land Healthy Lake Event – Harmony Maslowski shared Lynn Gallice's ideas for a Compass Member interactive event with "Do It Yourself" workshop-style presentations, for example "build your own rain barrel." Discussion: Boat launch and food have been enjoyed previously, but what draws the desired audience? What are the outcomes we wish to have from this event? Possibilities: Have a plant truck; Have event at a free or inexpensive venue like the Rolf Olsen Center/Hazelton Township; Change Healthy Land Healthy Lake into a summer-long series of three or four smaller events that could include our evening meeting. Ideas for HLHL elements included round-table discussion; educational components; and time to socialize to stimulate interaction among landowners. It was noted that there is value in word-of-mouth advertising and reaching out personally to potential participants. Harmony Maslowski suggested having a subcommittee meet to further discuss the event plans because the whole MLLWMG group is not meeting again until April. Outreach discussion included idea of hiring a professional marketer for support (Redhouse Media has been used in past); polling email list regarding what topics people are interested in; and adding additional email addresses to list.

5.5. AIS Grant Ideas – This is funding for educational resources and there are a few thousand dollars available per year. MLLWMG has produced materials in the past. Question was asked about whether there were leftover AIS signs; Pearson said he'd check with Barb Eller (Note: Eller said there were no unused signs that she was aware of).

5.6. Lead Tackle– John Pearson opened a discussion about reducing the use of lead tackle in the watershed and circulated a sample non-lead tackle. Money from the BP oil spill settlement is expected to be used to bring back the “Get the Lead Out” Campaign run by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. MPCA is looking at hosting lead tackle exchanges around the state including at Mille Lacs, although no dates have been set yet. This may be an opportunity for involvement by MLLWMG. Aitkin County has independently hosted tackle exchanges.

6. Updates and Comments

6.1. Media Committee: New Gmail account is now in operation. (Media was also addressed under agenda item 5.4)

6.2. Fundraising / Grant Writing / Membership (This topic was addressed under agenda item 5.3)

6.3. Updates and Comments: None

7. Meeting Evaluation and Next Steps

8. Next meeting - To be set up for Isle City Hall, April 20, 2020 from 10 a.m. - 12 noon.

9. Meeting adjourned