



Cormorant Lakes Watershed District

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2019 Annual Report

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February 15, 2020

The Cormorant Lakes Watershed District (CLWD) was formed and approved by the State of Minnesota Water Resources Board (now the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources - BWSR) on August 22, 1966. The primary mission of the CLWD is to protect and enhance the quality of waters within its jurisdiction and to ensure that appropriate decisions are made concerning the management of streams, wetlands, lakes, groundwater, and related land resources, which affect these waters.

This report covers the primary activities for the year 2019.

Managers and officers were: Ellis Peterson - Chairman; Jeffrey Moritz - Secretary; Gene Olson - Treasurer; Barbs Hansen – Manager; & Sam Blattenbauer -Manager. Other associates were Liz Larson- Administrator and Sheldon Struble & Cy Abel - Lakeshore Inspectors. Retained ongoing associates include: Engineer Erik Jones, and Water Quality Consultant Moriya Rufer.

The watershed held 13 meetings, including regular monthly, mid-month (as needed), special meetings and hearings during the year.

28 permits were approved during the year addressing shoreline repair (e.g. riprap, fill, and retaining wall), culvert replacement, tree removal, channel dredging, shoreline buffer re-establishment and other. The watershed permit is at no charge to the requestor, and provides an opportunity for the Managers to communicate with property owners.

The 2019 Estimated Market Value for the district is \$578,953,800 as compared to \$525,855,500 in 2018. A general budget for 2019 of \$95,000 was approved at a public hearing on September 4, 2018. These funds were augmented by grant and reserve funds to support an approximate 8% decrease from the 2018 budget.

Projects and activities completed in 2019 included the following:

- The Watershed continued its support for prevention and control of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), through watercraft inspections and education.
- The Upper Cormorant AIS management project, targeted at reducing curly leaf pondweed growth was continued. This pilot project began in 2009 with treatments to be completed in 4 sequential years, and was renewed this year. A public hearing was held in 2018 in which a resolution was passed by the CLWD Board to establish a levy from 2019 through 2022. Funding is through a combination of special assessments, DNR grant support and Watershed funding support.
- The Cormorant Lakes Watershed District moved their website to a new provider through GovOffice. The website project took a few months to finalize but made information much more accessible to the public. A new online fillable pdf permit was also created and uploaded to the website. The website will also utilize a calendar & news section to inform the public about our activities. Managers were also assigned emails as a part of the contract with GovOffice.
- Vern Whitten Photography was contacted to do aviation aerial photography of the Cormorant Lakes Watershed District over the summer of 2019. Mr. Whitten captured some great imagery of the District Lakes individually and collectively. Vern Whitten Photography will be taking orders for prints of any of the images.
 - <http://www.vernwhittenphotography.com/>
- Lake inspections continued, identifying issues of zoning compliance, runoff control, silt fencing or other that needs to be addressed.
 - Through inspections, an issue was identified where an owner removed a majority of the trees along the steep shoreline. Through engaging with the owner, the CLWD was able to stop the work and engage with the owner to remedy the situation.
- Managers attended and participated in some of the area Lake Association annual meetings in June 2019.
- Support for testing (Secchi disk, chlorophyll and phosphorus) of CLWD lakes clarity and nutrient loading continued.

- The Watershed board attended the annual meeting of Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) in December at the Arrowwood Resort & Conference Center in Alexandria, MN, with Ellis Peterson and Sam Blattenbauer as delegates.
- Minutes from 2019 meetings are posted on the CLWD website, www.clwd.org.
- Benson, Leitheiser and Soberg, CPA's completed the 2018 annual audit.
- Watercraft inspections were conducted on Big Cormorant Lake during the boating season in an effort to monitor and educated people using the public water access points and prevent the spread of invasive species. CLWD financially supported the program.
- The CLWD Board sent a letter of support & partnership to the upcoming project at the Cormorant Community Center to help with any water runoff issues or other water related concerns.

Focus areas for 2020

- Continue the Clean Water implementation, developing erosion and sedimentation abatement actions.
- Continue the partnership with Lake Association members and Advisory committee members to share information and hear issues, successes and concerns.
- Continue education and support for efforts with respect to issues related to the Watershed.
- Explore more education options to the public.
- Review and update the watershed rules document.
- Re-convene the Advisory Board.
- Website provider updates and email address assignments. Updates to CLWD logo and printed materials.
- Implement a public calendar maintained on our new website.

Respectfully submitted:

Sam Blattenbauer, Secretary

Prepared by:

Liz Larson, Administrator