



Cormorant Lakes Watershed District

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2020 Annual Report

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February 1, 2021

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 2020.

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 District Engineer Erik Jones.

The watershed held 11 meetings, including regular monthly, mid-month (as needed), special meetings and hearings during the year.

32 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 2020 Estimated Market Value for the district is \$608,601,300 as compared to \$578,953,800 in 2019. A general budget for 2020 of \$95,600 was approved at a public hearing on September 9th, 2019. These funds were augmented by grant and reserve funds to support an approximate 0% change from the 2019 budget.

Projects and activities completed in 2020 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 continued working on updating their new website. With COVID-19 pandemic issues happening throughout the 2020 year, the website was vital to convey information to the public.
- Lake inspections continued, identifying issues of zoning compliance, runoff control, silt fencing or other that needs to be addressed.
- There were no lake association meetings because of the pandemic.
- Support for testing (Secchi disk, chlorophyll and phosphorus) of CLWD lakes clarity and nutrient loading continued.
- Some members of the Board & staff attended the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) virtually as the in-person event was cancelled.
- Minutes from 2020 meetings are posted on the CLWD website, www.clwd.org.
- Benson, Leitheiser and Soberg, CPA's completed the 2019 annual audit.
- Watercraft inspections were conducted on Big Cormorant Lake during the boating season in an effort to monitor and educate people using the public water access points and prevent the spread of invasive species. CLWD financially supported the program.
- The CLWD has joined a preliminary process for the Ottertail One Watershed One Plan. Meetings will continue to outline the process. The CLWD Administrator will join the Technical Advisory Committee & Manager Jeff Moritz will join the Policy Committee.

Focus areas for 2021

- 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