



Cormorant Lakes Watershed District

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2022 Annual Report

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February 1, 2023

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 2022.

Managers and officers were: Ellis Peterson - Chairman; Sam Blattenbauer - Secretary; Mike Foley – Treasurer; Lyle Hansen-Manager & Jeffrey Moritz -Manager. Other associates were Liz Larson- Administrator and Sheldon Struble & Cy Abel - Inspectors. Retained District Engineer Erik Jones.

The watershed held 24 meetings, including regular monthly, mid-month (as needed), special meetings and hearings during the year.

19 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 permit from CLWD is at no charge to the requestor, and provides an opportunity for the Managers to communicate with property owners.

The 2022 Estimated Market Value for the district is \$685,904,600 as compared to \$631,570,700 in 2021. A general budget for 2022 of \$73,400 was approved at a public hearing on September 7th, 2021. These funds were augmented by grant and reserve funds to support an approximate -21% change from the 2021 budget.

Projects and activities completed in 2022 included the following:

- The Watershed continued its support for prevention and control of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), through watercraft inspections and education. The Board dedicated \$15,000 in total for AIS programs in the District at a maximum of \$5,000 to an individual program. \$5,000 was awarded to the Big Cormorant Aquatic Invasive Species boat inspections program.
- The Upper Cormorant AIS management project, targeted at reducing curly leaf pondweed growth was paused for 2022. This pilot project began in 2009. A public hearing was held in 2018 in which a resolution was passed by the CLWD Board to establish a levy. The levy recently expired and the CLWD still maintains the funds to pay for curly leaf pondweed. The funds in their account at year end was \$57,508.75. The Upper Cormorant Lake Association indicated they wish to continue the program in 2023 with a levy to begin in the 2024 tax year.
- The Cormorant Lakes Watershed District continued utilizing their new website.
- Lake inspections continued, identifying issues of zoning compliance, runoff control, silt fencing and other needs to be addressed. Inspector Sheldon Struble retired at the beginning of the 2022 season. His many years of service to the Cormorant Lakes Watershed District is noted with much respect and distinction. His vital service helped many landowners with their projects and helped keep water quality at its best through prevention of many issues.
- Managers attended various Lake Association meetings held in June 2022. At some of the meetings, managers spoke on topics that the CLWD has been working on.
- Support for testing (Secchi disk, chlorophyll, and phosphorus) of CLWD lakes clarity and nutrient loading continued.
- The CLWD held two Advisory Committee meetings in order to get advice on various topics including: budgeting, manager financial compensation, new position discussion, district wide education, and one watershed one plan.
- Some members of the Board & staff attended the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) in Alexandria at the Arrowwood Resort and Events Center.
- The CLWD Board hired an intern, Taytum Nelson, for the 2022 year and will continue employing intern as needed.
- Minutes from 2022 meetings are posted on the CLWD website, www.clwd.org.
- Benson, Leitheiser and Soberg, CPA's completed the 2021 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 the Ottertail One Watershed One Plan. Meetings continued throughout the year in the preplanning process. The CLWD Administrator has joined the Technical Advisory Committee & Manager Jeff Moritz has joined the Policy Committee. Preliminary meetings were held throughout the 2022 year for the preplanning process.

Focus areas for 2023

- Hire new employee to be shared with Becker SWCD & Pelican River Watershed and implemented with One Watershed One Plan funding.
- Blue Water Bay preservation project.
- Continue the Clean Water implementation, developing erosion and sedimentation abatement actions.
- Commence study for need to continue curly leaf pondweed treatment on Upper Cormorant Lake. Determine if levy appropriate after study, then commence levy process.
- 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.
- Locate new tree supplier to continue tree program.
- Offer more engineering support to public on projects.
- Create more outreach content with the public.
- Hold meeting with attorney to discuss watershed topics.
- Review and update the watershed rules document.
- Re-convene the Advisory Board. Request more input from Board.
- Maintain the public calendar on website.

Respectfully submitted:

Sam Blattenbauer, Secretary

Prepared by:

Liz Larson, Administrator