

2008 Annual Report
Thirty Lakes Watershed District
Brainerd, MN

This annual report is submitted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103.D. It summarizes the activities of the Thirty Lakes Watershed District for the calendar year of 2008.

Background

Thirty Lakes Watershed District was established by Order of the Minnesota Water Resources Board on May 18, 1971 in response to two nominating petitions.

The primary goal of Thirty Lakes Watershed District is the protection of the surface and subsurface water within the District Boundaries.

The primary purpose of the District is to conserve natural resources through land use planning, flood control and other conservation projects to protect public health, safety and welfare.

There are 52 lakes within the 70 square miles of the Thirty Lakes Watershed District boundaries. The entire District lies within Crow Wing County, and 60% of the total area is covered with surface water. Portions of the cities of Nisswa, Merrifield and Breezy Point are within the District, as well as portions of the townships of Lake Edward, Pelican, Mission and Unorganized First Assessment. The largest lakes within the District are Pelican Lake, Lake Edward, Lake Hubert and North Long Lake.

Introduction

The Board of Managers of the Thirty Lakes Watershed District hold regular meetings on the second and fourth Monday of each month. All regular meetings are open to the public and are held at the District office located at 17064 Commercial Park Road, Brainerd, MN. Proper notice of special meetings is published in the prescribed manner.

The Annual Election of Officers for the Board of Managers is held during the regular June meeting.

The **Managers and Officers** at the beginning of 2008 were as follows:

Thomas R. Ebnet, President
7335 Crabtree Lane
Nisswa, MN 56468
(218) 963-2318

Dale Armstrong, Vice-President
4752 South Road
Brainerd, MN 56401
(218) 963-7550

Joseph J. Hampl, Secretary
27117 Pelican Lake Road
Merrifield, MN 56465
(218) 330-9236

Bruce Yund
30190 Osceola Circle
Breezy Point, MN 56472
(218) 562-4443

Appointed to the Board in May of 2008:

Kenneth B. Svee
20200 Elm Drive (P. O. Box 1077)
Brainerd, MN 56401
(218) 963-9432

Board Resignations Effective 9/1/2008:

Dale Armstrong, Vice-President
4752 South Road
Brainerd, MN 56401
(218) 963-7550

Joseph J. Hampl, Secretary
27117 Pelican Lake Road
Merrifield, MN 56465
(218) 330-9236

Advisory Committee

The Thirty Lakes Watershed Board of Managers has been grateful to have the following individuals comprise the Advisory Committee:

Bob Albrecht
22 Third Street N.W.
Crosby, MN 56441
(218) 546-6633

Rick A. Johnson
9124 Hunter's Lane
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472
(218) 562-4201

County Commissioner Rosemary Franzen
14732 Inglewood Drive
Baxter, MN 56425
(218) 820-7640

Appointed to the Advisory Committee in 2008

Coralee Fox
205060 Carolyn Lane
Brainerd, MN 56401
(218) 963-4462

Vic Peterson
24400 Smiley Road, Suite 4
Nisswa, MN 56468
(218) 562-5643

Resigned from the Advisory Committee in 2008

William LaTour
2059 Perch Lane S.W.
Nisswa, MN 56468
(218) 828-9858

Glen Gustafson
28077 Blue Jay Way
Merrifield, MN 56465
(218) 765-3796

Staff

Marty Peisch, Administrator
5211 Ojibwa Road
Brainerd, MN 56401
(218) 963-4359

Tasha Lauer, Office Manager
14451 Blackberry Court
Baxter, MN 56425
(218) 330-4310

Mary Lou Cody, Bookkeeper
10894 County Road #127
Nisswa, MN 56468
(218) 829-9588

Technical Consultant
Alan Cibuzar
A. W. Research Laboratories, Inc.
16326 Airport Road N.E.
Brainerd, MN 56401
(218) 829-7974

2008 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

A New Direction

In August of 2008 the Board of Managers met with members of the Board of Soil & Water Resources to discuss the overall operation of Thirty Lakes Watershed District, and where improvements might be made to better serve the public. It was decided that Thirty Lakes should shift its focus from data collection and put more emphasis on education and implementation of projects.

A Difficult Year

The resignation of two Managers on 9/1/2008 left the Watershed District short-handed. For one reason or another, the Crow Wing Board of County Commissioners did not appoint replacements in 2008, leaving the Board of Managers operating at 3/5th capacity.

DNR Shoreline Habitat Program

Thirty Lakes Watershed District was approved for the Dept. of Natural Resources Shoreline Habitat Program and was granted a total of \$35,000 in funding for projects over a two year period.

County Building Permits

Onsite inspections were made of some 88 properties that had been granted Construction Permits from Crow Wing County. This number is less than half the number of Construction Permits issued in 2007 which was an indicator of a down-turn in the economy. Our inspections addressed possible stormwater issues both during and after construction.

Storm Water Permits

Our permitting process was revised in an attempt to make it more efficient. The District issued 15 Storm Water Permits during 2008, with 6 more pending approval at the end of the year.

Annual Overflight

The focus of the 2008 Overflight was not to identify possible land use violations as had been the case in past years, but to document the entire northern half of the District. Photographs from the flight were digitized and entered into the computer mapping system for historic purposes. The southern half of the District will be documented in 2009.

Web Site

The web site of Thirty Lakes Watershed District, www.30lakes.org, continues to be regularly updated with current information, meeting minutes and photographs.

Parker Boy Scout Reservation

With DNR and County Water Plan funds in place, this shoreline restoration project began in early summer. First a large hill was re-sculptured and planted with grasses and shrubs. Then the shoreline was stabilized with a combination of seeds and sod flats of native vegetation. The project is almost complete, except for the planting of plugs in the two bioretention basins.

Water Quality and Lake Level Monitoring

Sixteen (16) lakes were tested three times during the summer of 2008 to determine their Trophic State. Of the 52 lakes within the District, 12 to 14 are tested each year on a rotation basis.

Lake gauges were placed in twenty one (21) lakes within the District, and their levels were recorded every two weeks from May through October. All data was submitted to the MPCA Storette system and made available on the Thirty Lakes website.

Pelican Lake Stormwater Project

The services of a Conservation Engineer were provided through the Crow Wing Soil & Water Conservation District to design a stormwater management plan using a series of three bioretention/infiltration areas. His final report was presented to the residents in the project area and was favorably received at one of three meetings of the "stakeholders".

Thirty Lakes Watershed District recognizes that this plan using bioretention areas is less than perfect. However it will control slightly more than the "first flush", which would be an improvement since currently there is no stormwater management at all in the project area.

Earth Day

Thirty Lakes organized an Earth Day Presentation held in the common areas of the local shopping mall with more than twenty Agencies and Commercial Vendors and Exhibitors.

Lakes Area Clean Waters Council

As a Charter Member and the Fiscal Agent, Thirty Lakes Watershed District continues to be active in this group and responsible for the creation, design and update of their website, www.dropstopabsorb.org. The goal of this organization is to implement 1,000 new rain gardens, shoreline buffers or rain barrels within the next two years.

Organizing Lake Associations

In September of 2008, Thirty Lakes arranged a partnership with Minnesota Waters in an effort to organize new Lake Associations within the District. Thirty Lakes will notify property owners and host a community gathering, with Minnesota Waters making the presentation.

DNR Shoreland Management Open House

In response to a request from the DNR, Thirty Lakes supplied "greeters" to welcome the participants at this Open House event.

Elks Camp Shoreline Restoration

Partnering with the Pelican Lake Property Owners Association, Minnesota Waters, Crow Wing Soil & Water Conservation District, the University of Minnesota Extension, and the Dept. of Natural Resources, Thirty Lakes Watershed participated in this project.

The seeds for this project were collected within a 10 mile radius of the site and planted in the fall of 2008. Flowers and shrubs are scheduled to be planted in May of 2009.

Cost-Share Project

A new Cost-Share system was established to split the cost of shoreline restoration or creation of rain gardens with the residents of the Watershed District. The first such project was started in October of 2008 with spreading seeds and planting shrubs. Flower and grass "plugs" will be planted in the spring of 2009.

South Campus 9th Grade

An educational presentation was made by Thirty Lakes to the two ninth grade Natural Resources classes at the Brainerd High School South Campus. Thirty Lakes will be working with the same students in the spring of 2009 as they design and plant a rain garden on the school campus.

Looking Ahead to 2009

Shoreline Owner's Workshop

Plans are being made for two workshops (one in April and one in July) to be held at the Northland Arboretum. Information will be presented on shoreline restorations and the effect they have on water quality.

Home Builder's Show

At the request of the Mid-Minnesota Builder's Association, Thirty Lakes Watershed District will make a presentation on the subject of Stormwater Management at this three day show to be held at the Brainerd Civic Center.

Legionville Safety Patrol Camp

Plans and designs are being made for a shoreline restoration at this camp on North Long Lake. This project area presents a definite challenge in that the cattails along the waters edge are infested with Canada Thistle. Every effort will be made to eliminate the Thistle prior to planting.

Residential Shoreline Restoration

Thirty Lakes Watershed District has made application to the DNR Shoreline Habitat Program for a shoreline restoration on a residential property on Gull Lake. If approved for funding, the project will begin in May of 2009.

Hazard Mitigation Planning

A representative from Thirty Lakes will be a part of the Crow Wing County Hazard Mitigation Planning.

Forming New Lake Associations

Minnesota Waters will make a presentation about the benefits of forming a lake association at a community gathering of lakeshore property owners organized and hosted by Thirty Lakes Watershed District.

9th Grade

Thirty Lakes has purchased textbooks to prepare the Brainerd High School South Campus 9th Grade Natural Resources students for designing and planting a rain garden on the school grounds. We will continue this educational project through the actual planting.

Earth Day 2009

Plans are being made for a bigger and better Earth Day celebration to be held at the Northland Arboretum. Features will include Speakers on subjects such as rain gardens and composting, Vendors and hosted Nature Walks.

Vegetation Surveys

Several requests have been received from lakefront property owners to have vegetation surveys completed for their lakes. Curly Leaf Pond Weed and Eurasian Water Milfoil continue to threaten the lakes in our area. Thirty Lakes will continue to research the situation and determine its most beneficial role in this situation.

Crow Wing County Comprehensive Local Water Plan

Thirty Lakes Watershed District will continue to attend meetings of the Local Water Plan Committee and provide input on projects and priorities.

District Expansion

It continues to be the goal of the Thirty Lakes Watershed District to expand its boundaries to include the true geographic watershed.