



CLEARWATER RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Promote | Protect | Preserve

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March 30, 2022

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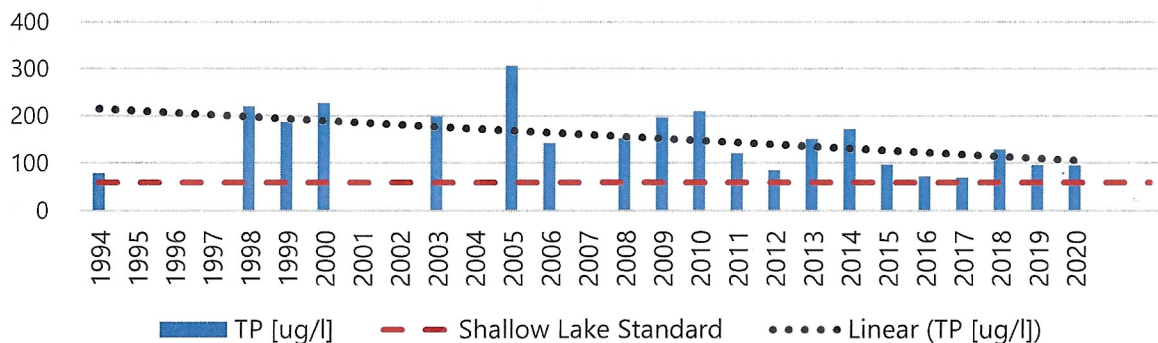
Clear Lake Property Owner:

The Clear Lake Property Owners (CLPO) Association has routinely partnered with the Clearwater River Watershed District (District) on projects to improve water quality in Clear Lake. Recently, CLPO lobbied the District to pursue grant funding for a restoration project to improve Clear Lake. After several grant attempts requiring significant CRWD staff and Board time and effort, **the District secured a \$361K state grant for a Clear Lake Project.**

In addition to water sampling in and around Clear Lake and diagnostic studies to assess the sources of algae blooms in Clear Lake, the Clearwater River Watershed District provided financing and technical support for Clear Lake projects. Several other District project and programs financed by a combination of state and federal grants obtained by the District have significantly improved the water quality in Clear Lake.

As the results of these efforts, concentrations of phosphorus -the nutrient which causes algae blooms- are about half of what they have been historically in Clear Lake. Even with significant progress shown in the figure below, Clear Lake remains above the state standard for Phosphorus.

Clear - Historical TP [ug/l]



As with other single lake restoration projects, this project requires a local match of 25% of the project costs, plus ongoing maintenance. These are required by the grant agreement. **75% of the project is funded by the State of Minnesota.**

Funding the local match requires a local levy. The proposed project levy would have 2 phases:

- The initial project cost plus maintenance over the levy term (1 or 5 years)
- Then ongoing maintenance.
 - Maintenance covers all the maintenance and operation work for the existing and proposed projects for Clear Lake, including monitoring
 - After the initial levy, the annual project maintenance fund levy is set annually during the CRWD budget process.
 - No additional maintenance funds can be levied for regular maintenance while the maintenance fund balance is greater than or equal to 20% of the original project cost, except for repairs exceeding normal maintenance (which has occurred twice in District history).

District staff identified 3 scenarios, they are summarized in the text and table below. Both levy scenarios would levy funds from the benefited property owners as required by law. The benefited property owners are generally found to be the lake shore residents (generally each unique parcel is assessed 1 unit of benefit, with special categories for DNR or County owned parcels).

- Alternative 1: 1-year term. This includes the paying the 25% local share of project cost, plus establishing a maintenance fund in one year. This means the largest assessment is year 1, with assessments dropping lower after that to cover ongoing operation and maintenance, monitoring and inspections (unless significant maintenance is needed).
- Alternative 2: 5-years term. This includes the 25% local cost share, the first 5 years of maintenance, financing fees as well as fees for assessing charged by the County over 5 years. Assessments drop lower after that for routine maintenance (unless significant maintenance is needed). Even in this case, homeowners can choose to pay the levy all at once and avoid most financing charges.
- Alternative 3: no local levy. The grant will be returned, no project will be constructed. The likelihood of this grant funding being available in the future is very low.

	Cost Per Parcel (*Based on 140 parcels, that may change)	
Year	1 Year Levy Term	5 Year Levy Term (includes interest and financing fees from County)
Year 1	\$975	\$285
Year 2	\$52	\$271
Year 3	\$52	\$257
Year 4	\$52	\$243
Year 5	\$52	\$229
Year 6- On	\$0-52 Annually, pending annual budget evaluation and local feedback baring major repair needs	\$0-52 Annually ending annual review baring major repair needs

Residents will soon be asked by their lake association to sign a petition to initiate a process to begin the project. The steps of the process are listed in state statute; it provides residents opportunity to give feedback throughout, even after the petition is signed. The Board uses science, engineering, and statutory requirements, plus resident feedback to make decisions about moving the project forward.

The project funds cover design, permitting, construction and maintenance for the project. Modeling predicts that, if the necessary size of the project can be achieved, the load reductions should bring the average condition of Clear Lake closer to state water quality standards within 10 years.

The CLPO sent a preliminary survey to its members and received favorable feedback. They will be asking lake shore homeowners to consider signing the petition at their **April 16th, 2022 meeting at 11 am at the Watkins Village Hall**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our administrator at admin@crwd.org.

Sincerely,
Board of Managers
Clearwater River Watershed District