



# PRIOR LAKE SPRING LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

## WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

*Tuesday, June 17, 2025*

*Prior Lake City Hall*

*4:00 PM*

Members Present: Bruce Loney, Frank Boyles, Beverly Burnett, Matt Tofanelli

Members Absent: Christian Morkeberg

Staff & Consultants Present: Joni Giese, District Administrator  
Emily Dick, Water Resources Project Manager  
Jeff Anderson, Water Resources Coordinator  
Carl Almer, EOR, District Engineer  
Chuck Holtman, District Legal Counsel

Others Present: Kim Churchill, City of Prior Lake  
Cindy Geis, Scott County  
Jody Brennan, Scott County  
Wes Steffens, Spring Lake Association

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

### **County Ditch 13 Drainage Authority: Initial Analysis and Discussion**

Administrator Giese presented additional background logistics, benefits and drawbacks of the District potentially becoming the drainage authority for County Ditch 13 (CD-13). The findings are summarized as follows:

A Watershed Management District (WMD) would need to determine a cost allocation methodology (e.g., quantity of water contributed to the system “burden”). In addition, ad valorem taxes could be considered on a case-by-case basis for projects that provide benefits beyond drainage. The District would need to specify drainage fees and provide those to the County. It is recommended that if large projects are pursued a revised drainage fee structure needs to be put into place.

In comparison with Buck channel, CD-13 is primarily predominantly agricultural, and has heavier sediment loads. The benefits of being a drainage authority are: streamlining implementation of projects on ditch, avoiding the risk of no management of the drainage ditch, and it may be easier to implement multipurpose drainage projects. There is currently funding for multipurpose

drainage projects from BWSR. Two-stage ditches are an example of a multipurpose drainage project but these types of projects are long-term initiatives.

Constraints include: preliminary start-up costs, staff training, updating Plans and Rules, ongoing costs/staffing, responding to landowner requests, and potential impacts to landowner relationships. Historic ditch maintenance costs have been approximately \$20,000 per year.

The Board discussed potentially utilizing the County's system until a larger project is planned to aid in a slower transition. The Board will need to make a determination of whether they are interested in taking on the role of drainage authority for CD 13 in July or August. The County would work with the District to transfer the ditch authority on a reasonable schedule. The timeline involves approval from LGUs and updating the Water Resources Management Plan in order to initiate a WMD. Administrator Giese will get a temperature check from LGUs.

### **Spring Lake and Upper Prior Lake: Sediment Coring Initial Assessment**

Water Resources Program Coordinator Jeff Anderson presented a recap of the history of alum treatments, water quality, and evaluation of effectiveness. Sediment coring was completed in Fall 2024/Spring 2025 on Upper Prior and Spring Lake to evaluate phosphorus release. Upper Prior Lake water quality values and management goals have been very favorable. Spring Lake shows that external load management goals still require significant progress, and water quality values are degrading as new phosphorus is deposited into the lake from external loading.

EOR Limnologist Anne Wilkinson presented the results of sediment cores and recommendations on future alum treatments. Upper Prior Lake is recommended for a second alum treatment due to reduced external loading, low carp populations, and favorable soil core and water quality data. Spring Lake is recommended to pursue carp and external load management before considering further alum treatments. Spring Lake alum treatments (3 phased doses, completed in 2020) worked for 12+ years and was successful to address legacy loads. However, new external loads coming into the lake are continually redepositing untreated sediments.

### **2026 Budget Draft**

Administrator Giese presented the first draft budget for discussion purposes. The first draft was informed by Board and CAC priorities. The big takeaway is that with capital project implementation, budget reserves will be depleted in 2026 and the District should prepare to pursue grants, bonding, and rebuilding budget reserves. The anticipated 2026+ capital projects are: PLOC bank stabilization, Upper Prior Lake alum treatment. The anticipated 2027+ planned capital projects are: Hwy 13 Wetland Excavation, Spring West IESF, and Desilt Pond Improvements. Alum treatments on Spring and Fish Lake are anticipated in future years. The current draft would represent a 7.6% levy increase from 2025. The Board will approve a preliminary levy at the August meeting. Board managers were asking for a reduction closer to 5% in a revised budget draft.

### **Administrator Report**

- Request that all managers and staff sign in for workshops and meetings.
- There was a revision to open meeting laws. You do not need to be in a noticed public location to participate virtually. There is also no longer a limit on three remote attendances in a row.
- There will be a future report on noticing in local newspapers.

## **Liaison Updates**

### District Partner Reports

- *Spring Lake Association*- Appreciation for phosphorus reduction on Spring Lake. There was a follow-up survey on aquatic treatment, which was disappointing for invasive removal but had promising native diversity. The Spring Lake boat ramp will be shut down for 5 days for improvements by the DNR to extend the ramp. The annual concert will be on July 19<sup>th</sup> at Spring Lake Regional Park. July fourth boat parade will occur if anyone is interested in judging.
- *City of Prior Lake*- Prior Lake drone was instrumental in catching Mr. Boelter. City Hall will be closed on Juneteenth. The City received a grant for a trail segment on Hwy 13. The City is discussing future ownership on Outlot A next to Charlie's.
- *Scott County*- Clarification that the County will not force PLSLWD to take on the role of drainage authority for CD 13, and the County will determine next steps after the District makes a decision regarding interest in taking over drainage authority role for CD 13. The budget will be postponed to October due to federal and state decisions.

### Manager Liaison Reports

- *CAC*- None.
- *Scott SWCD*- None.
- *Lower Minnesota Watershed District*- Retained a new administrator. Reported to County Board recommending an additional manager representing Scott County be added to the board. The Watershed District will be hosting another summer boat tour on the Minnesota River.
- *Sand Creek Township*- None.
- *Spring Lake Township*- None.
- *Scott WMO*- Put out annual report. Have been drawing down reserves in their budgeting.
- *Shakopee*- None.
- *SCALE*- Annual legislative report was not very positive.
- *Scott County*- Manager Tofanelli was reappointed to a second three year term as a PLSLWD manager. Ditch discussions.
- *Minnesota Watersheds*- Legislative and Resolutions committee has a meeting tomorrow.
- *PLOC Cooperators*- None.
- *Farmer-Led Council*- None.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Emily Dick  
6/17/2025