

Meeting Minutes, July 29, 2026

Special Grace Lake Watershed Improvement Association Board Meeting

Location: Online (Zoom)

Attendees: Board Members

- **Geoff Thaden** – President
- **Rick Black** – Vice President
- **Merrie Miller** – Secretary
- **John Fossum** – Treasurer
- **John Botsford** – Board Member
- **Doug Goodman** – Board Member

Guests

- **Dr. Daniel McEwen** – LimnoPro Aquatic Science

Meeting Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Geoff Thaden.

Key Agenda Items & Discussions

1. Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLP) Survey & Delineation Report

- **Background & Method:**
 - A point-intercept survey in August 2025 did not detect Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLP) because the plant naturally senesces (dies off) by mid-summer.
 - The MN DNR subsequently reported pulling up a single detached CLP plant in a fishery net.
 - LimnoPro conducted an early-season point-intercept and meandering survey in June during peak CLP growth.
- **Survey Findings:**
 - Rooted CLP is established in Grace Lake.
 - Five distinct plots were delineated totaling approximately 21 acres, along with 4 single-plant indications (9 total locations).
 - Primary concentrations are located near the public boat access and along the east shore (Call of the Wild area / former resort sites) in depths ranging from 5 to 15 feet.
- **Biology & Control Factors:**
 - CLP reproduces via turions (hardened structures resistant to chemicals) that remain dormant in lake mud for 5–6 years; complete eradication is impossible.
 - Grace Lake has low nutrient levels, soft water, and high water clarity (recently measured at 20-foot Secchi depth), making it less susceptible to severe CLP blooms compared to southern Minnesota lakes.
 - Chemical treatments risk killing beneficial native plants that currently compete with CLP, which can create ecological space for invasives to expand.
 - Late-summer weed complaints along the west/northwest shores are caused by native plants (bushy pondweed/Naiad, Elodea, flat-stem pondweed), which association treatments cannot legally target. Landowners may apply individually for DNR Aquatic Plant Management (APM) permits.
- **Consultant Recommendation:**
 - LimnoPro recommended **against** chemical treatment at this time.
 - Recommended proactive annual monitoring in late May/early June during peak growth to track whether CLP remains stable or becomes a recreational nuisance.

2. Treasurer's Report & AIS Inspection Shortfall

- **Current Balance & Obligations:**

- Total available association funds equal **\$17,228** (\$16,096 in Northwest Minnesota Foundation account plus checking/dues).
- Pending expenses include the full Point Intercept Survey report fee (\$4,689) and camera insurance (\$184).
- **AIS Watercraft Inspection Program Costs:**
 - Total cost for full 7-day coverage (5 days Association / 2 days County) rose to **\$15,283**.
 - Cost increases stem from an earlier start date (May 11), zero missed shifts, increased inspector wages (\$23.88/hour), and lack of township cost-sharing funds.
 - The projected net shortfall by October is approximately **\$2,928**.
- **Mitigation & Fundraising:**
 - The fundraising letter drafted by Vicki has already raised \$1,300 in direct online donations via NWMF and \$350 in additional dues/contributions.
 - Beltrami County AIS Coordinator (Callie Lawler) indicated options to defer remaining balances until spring or potentially reallocate unused County Starry Stonewort funds (\$1,000–\$2,000).

Board Actions & Motions

Motion Summary	Moved By	Seconded By	Vote / Status
Fund AIS Inspections: Maintain full Association funding for public access AIS watercraft inspections (5 days/week) through September 11, 2026.	Rick Black	John Botsford	Approved Unanimously
CLP Management Strategy: Forego chemical treatment of Curly-leaf Pondweed for the 2027 season and establish a board-managed monitoring plan.	Geoff Thaden	Rick Black	Approved Unanimously

Other Business

- **Association Dues Structure:**
 - Board reviewed dues history (\$30 in 2017, \$40 in 2020, \$50 in 2023).
 - Potential future increases (\$60–\$75) were discussed to build reserves.
 - **Decision:** Action was tabled until Spring 2027 to evaluate full fundraising results and member feedback.
- **DNR Infested Waters Listing:**
 - Dan noted the MN DNR no longer officially lists lakes as "infested" solely due to Curly-leaf Pondweed because of its widespread presence state-wide.

Adjournment

- **Motion to Adjourn:** Moved by Merrie Miller, seconded by Rick Black.
- **Outcome:** Approved unanimously; meeting adjourned.

Geoff Thaden