

## **Thirty Lakes Watershed District - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the Thirty Lakes Watershed District?**

The Thirty Lakes Watershed District was established in 1971 to address lake water quality concerns, lakeshore development, storm water management, septic system regulations, garbage and swimmer's itch.

### **How is the Thirty Lakes Watershed District funded?**

The Thirty Lakes Watershed District is funded by property taxes paid by property owners within the District. The District tax is in addition to Township, City and County property taxes. This tax is imbedded in the tax statement and is not identified as an individual single line item.

### **How do I know if I live in the Thirty Lakes Watershed District?**

The Thirty Lakes Watershed District is located in west central Crow Wing County and covers approximately 70 square miles, 60 percent of which is covered by surface water. The District's major lakes include: Clark, Edward, Gladstone, Horseshoe, Hubert, North Long and Pelican.

The cities within the District are Breezy Point and Nisswa. The townships within the District are Unorganized Territory (First Assessment), Lake Edward, Center, Pelican and Mission.

Call the Crow Wing County Land Services Department at 824-1125 to see if your property lies within the Thirty Lakes Watershed District.

### **If the Thirty Lakes Watershed District disbands, who is going to take care of our water management issues?**

High quality water management services will be provided by other qualified government agencies — including Crow Wing County, the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the City of Nisswa and the City of Breezy Point — but without paying additional property taxes.

### **Why Terminate the Thirty Lakes Watershed District Now?**

Other government units are performing the work previously done by the District. The District spent two years reviewing and updating the 10 year plan and the conclusion of disbanding the District became obvious to the Managers. The review included examining the current duties and roles of the District. This extensive review determined that other government entities such as the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Crow Wing County and the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District are adequately addressing water issues, eliminating the need for the District itself and the additional tax needed for funding. During the two year review, neither the Managers nor its Advisors identified any projects to complete. By disbanding the Thirty Lakes Watershed District, property owners will continue to receive the high level of services they have been, but without an additional tax.

**If property owners have been taxed all these years, where did our money go?**

The Thirty Lakes Watershed District has not taxed property owners since 2012. In 2013 the Board of Water and Soil Resources required the District to spend down fund reserves, which at the time was more than \$340,000. This action, combined with the lack of approved projects, resulted in a zero levy effective for the years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Based on the estimated market value and tax classification, below is the estimated tax amount on a levy of \$186,680 (average levy since 2005):

<b>Tax Classification</b>	<b>Taxable Mkt Value</b>	<b>Estimated 30 Lakes Tax</b>
Homestead	\$100,000	\$14
Homestead	\$250,000	\$32
Homestead	\$500,000	\$66
Homestead	\$750,000	\$108
Seasonal Rec	\$100,000	\$14
Seasonal Rec	\$250,000	\$32
Seasonal Rec	\$500,000	\$66
Seasonal Rec	\$750,000	\$108
Commercial	\$250,000	\$56
Commercial	\$500,000	\$122
Commercial	\$750,000	\$188
Commercial	\$1,000,000	\$254

If the District disbands, the dollars currently available within our accounts will be appropriated for water quality testing to be conducted by Crow Wing County exclusively within the Thirty Lakes Watershed District. It is estimated that these dollars will provide water quality testing for at least the next 20 years.

**What are the next steps in the process?**

A petition of 25% of the full time resident property owners within the District is required to discontinue the District. The petition is then sent to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). BWSR is then required to hold a termination hearing in Crow Wing County. BWSR then has the authority to issue a termination order which would cease the

District as a local unit of government if it has been determined that the District does not benefit public welfare and public interest and the watershed is not needed to accomplish the purpose of State Statute 103D.