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Greetings Seasonal Owners: MSRPO Members in Ely Spoke Up and Won!

Last week we put out a call to MSRPO members in the Ely area that the Ely School Board was considering a levy that would have fallen disproportionately on Seasonal Owners. Due to what the *Ely Echo* called "intense" public pressure, the measure failed 5-1.

MSRPO member and Burntside Lake Association President Reynold Mack, who attended the meeting, wrote in:

Well, we attended the School Board Meeting tonight, July 13th, and to our surprise the Bonding Bill did not pass, only one vote for the bond. Lots of great ideas from the presenters tonight. Especially interesting was the talk by Bill Skradski, who pointed out that the Ely school district would be a lot better off if they could get taxes from the sections of Lake County that send their children to the Ely school system rather than being bused 60 or so miles to Two Harbors, plus the properties on the west end of Burntside that have their taxes go into the St. Louis County School system, District 2142, with those kids coming to Ely. The Ely School District could get a benefit of maybe \$200 or \$300,000 + which would just about make up this \$400,000 short fall ... Bill Erzar picked up on Skradski's remarks about getting Lake County to play the bill here in Ely since the children use Ely schools. Amy Richter says no, because she sees how the people are struggling now, and Marsnik and Kellerman feel more work needs to be done in figuring out a better solution that the public will vote for when put on the ballot. Paul Pengal didn't have anything to say. The roll call vote was 1 in favor and 5 no votes.

Thanks to all that came, now as we promised in the meeting we will write our representatives, as well as Tim Pawlenty with our concerns over fund of out state shrinking school districts, and the ineffective way they are funded. {i.e., Tax money going to other places rather than the school district the kids attend.

Here is a great [Ely Echo editorial](#) on the vote last week.

The author is right, there is a heck of a storm brewing, and it is not just in Ely, but statewide. The OPEB issue is not going to go away anytime soon. In 2009, MSRPO and others argued that removing the voter approval requirement was a bad idea, and the legislature did change this. But the problem remains.

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expectations and thus the significant budget constraints that districts are now experiencing. Rising Health Care costs are a huge driver of increased property taxes again. The OPEB issue is a ticking time bomb.

On March 31st, the State Auditor released a very troubling report on the OPEB impacts statewide. Some of the areas with the highest projected OMEB liabilities are in the lake districts. [Click here](#) for the complete report.

Current Federal "Cap and Trade" Climate Bill Benefits Minnesota's Forest Land Owners

The "cap and trade" system we have all been hearing so much about in the press sets carbon pollution targets for each industry. Let's say a coal plant released 100 tons of carbon into the atmosphere each year. And let's further assume that their targets are set at 10 tons. If the company is very innovative and efficient, it makes its target and then beats it, producing only 5 tons of carbon. That means that the company has 5 tons to "sell" to a company that has not yet been able to meet its target.

At the beginning, of course, many companies will have a hard time making their goals. What can they do? They can buy credits at the Chicago Climate Exchange or other traders of carbon credits around the world. Many of these credits will come from people like you and I who certify that they are managing their land to "capture" or sequester carbon.

Of course, it depends what types of trees you are growing and the climate, but roughly speaking in northern Minnesota, an acre of boreal forest can sequester about a ton of carbon a year.

A few years ago, Chicago established the Climate Exchange, and they trade in carbon credits. At one point these credits were trading up to \$10 per ton and have dipped as low as \$2 a ton. Some experts estimate that if the US passes the cap and trade bill currently being debated in congress, these credits could jump to as much as \$30 an acre.

Professor Dean Current, from the University of Minnesota Department of Forestry, will make a presentation at the MSRPO Annual Meeting on October 14th to more fully explain this program, how you can get involved, and what it might mean for MSRPO members.

Protect Our Shorelines. Protect Our Lakes.

Those of us who own lakeshore property know that the way to protect the water quality in our lake, after fighting sources of pollution like bad septic fields or industrial waste pipes, is to prevent runoff into the lake. When we restore our shorelines, we improve the quality of our lakes.

But the big question is HOW? Paula West at the Leech Lake Area Watershed Protection will hold the Shoreline Buffer Zone Expo '09 on August 1st. The cost is only \$15, and it is sure to be a fascinating, fun and informative day.

[Click here](#) for more information.

SHORELAND BUFFER ZONE EXPO '09

AUGUST 1, 2009 at DEEP PORTAGE CONSERVATION RESERVE (JUST OFF HIGHWAY 46 EAST OF HACKENSACK ON CTY #5)

8:30 – 9:00 AM Sign-in; coffee and refreshments (Pre-registration required - see information below).

Exhibits

9:00 AM – 12:00 Choose between two information packed, how-to- do-it workshops:

Workshop A: Creating/Restoring a Shoreland Buffer

For those ready to get started with a new buffer zone project. Discover the crucial role of native vegetation buffer zones in preserving both water and shoreland quality.

Learn the basics of a shoreland creation/restoration project — preparing the site, designing, plant selection, seed and plant sources, planting, etc.

Workshop B: Maintaining your native plant buffer zone (For those with existing buffer zones)

Learn about routine care and maintenance of your buffer zone and how it might be enhanced, and how to recognize and eliminate invasive plants.

Noon – 1:00 PM Lunch

1:00 – 4:00 PM Bus tour/Field trip

Take a bus tour of nearby shoreland buffer zone creation/restoration projects. See how your shoreland might look!

******PRE-REGISTER BY JULY 24 (REQUIRED!)******

To pre-register, contact Paula West at Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation (218-675-5773 or email: info@leechlakewatershed.org). For more information about the workshop content, contact: Eleanor Burkett, University of Minnesota Extension, 218-828-2326 or burke044@umn.edu.

FEE: \$15 per person for the day, including workshop, lunch and bus tour

If you can't make the workshops/lunch, come for the afternoon bus tour only — fee \$10. Buses loading at 12:45 p.m. and will return by 4:00 p.m.

Fee payable on the day of the event.

Sponsored by the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation, U.MN. Extension Service, Cass County Environmental Services Department, Cass County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America and Deep Portage Conservation Reserve. Partially funded by a grant from the MN DNR, Shoreland Habitat Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. West', written over a faint circular stamp or logo.

jeff@msrpo.org

Not a member of MSRPO? [Click here](#) to join our mailing list. Together, we can protect the family lake place from confiscatory property taxes.

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