

LWV White Bear Lake Area Local Program Positions

Revised April 2018

1. Education

- a. Support a safe, fair and respectful educational climate for all K-12 students and groups. We support programs to counteract cultural and gender bias, which prepare students to thrive in our multicultural diverse society and work force. (1999)
- b. Emphasize civics education knowledge and skill development along with reading, writing, mathematics, science and technology, speaking and listening as the primary goals of K-12 schools.
- c. Support secondary student programs designed to meet their needs for more structure or more flexibility than the standard program provides.

2. Natural Resources

Private well water should be tested for safety. (1990)

3. Environmental Protection

Support of local ordinances requiring source separation and support of local contract and licensing requirements for source separation in waste collection.

4. Land Use

- a. Support comprehensive planning and orderly growth.
- b. Support programs to increase the availability of low and moderate income housing and housing for special groups by using tax increment financing (TIF where appropriate. (1972, 1973, 1978-79, rev. 1999)
- c. Support the need for safe non-motorized pathways. (1973, 1978-79)
- d. Development and support of a convenient transit service. (1973, 1978-79)

5. Representative Local Government

Support of open appointment process in public government bodies.

6. Representative Ramsey County Government

- a. The Leagues of Ramsey County support changes in the juvenile justice system with the major emphasis on primary prevention and early intervention with a strong family focus. We need to foster and support family relationships, restore community, and work to integrate family and community. When prevention fails, intervention should be individualized, swift, appropriate, and restorative, with punitive measures used only as a "last resort." A partnership among families, community, school health services, human services, and corrections is the most effective solution. (1975-76, Rev. 4/96)
- b. Continue to support the Ramsey County Charter.

7. Social Policy

Monitor Cable TV in the north suburban area. LWV believes public access channels are an important communication link in the area. These channels must be encouraged and protected. In order to facilitate maximum usage, the cable contract should require sufficient funding to support at least one well-equipped production studio, equipment, and facility for remote cablecasts and technical production assistance.

**The League of Women Voters of the White Bear Lake Area
Position Statements Concerning
White Bear Lake Conservation District Governance**

The League of Women Voters of the White Bear Lake Area (LWVWBLA) undertook a study of the White Bear Lake Conservation District (WBLCD) and its management practices through a concern for protection and preservation of White Bear Lake, an important water resource in the east metro region. The positions and recommendations below summarize the findings of the WBLCD Governance study and its appendices.

The League of Women Voters (LWV) supports good government practice in all areas and levels of government as seen in a quote from its national position statement:

“The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.”

The League of Women Voters of the White Bear Lake Area acknowledges and commends the many members of the community who have given countless hours of volunteer time, as well as knowledge and expertise, to the benefit of White Bear Lake and the Conservation District. The successes and achievements of the WBLCD are result of the dedication and efforts of the members of the board, its staff, and its committees. The study and its recommendations strive to make the function of the WBLCD even more effective and better prepared to meet the challenges facing White Bear Lake in the future.

In the process of the LWV study of the WBLCD many resources were employed. Members of the study committee observed 22 regular monthly meetings of the Conservation District along with the corresponding Lake Use Committee meetings beginning with the regular June 22, 2010 meetings. Lake Quality committee meetings were also observed.

Other sources of information used for the report were the WBLCD website, the minutes of WBLCD, the WBLCD budget, the State of Minnesota Statutes governing the formation of the Conservation District, the website of the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District, reports given to the Conservation District by its contractors, the LWV of the United States. The LWVWBLA members also conducted interviews of past and present WBLCD Board and committee members and local officials who have worked with the Conservation District.

Three areas of the Conservation District were targeted for study by the LWV of the White Bear Lake Area: Operations and Structure, Transparency and Communications, and Finance. The members and Board of the League of Women Voters of the White Bear Lake Area support the following recommendations.

Operations and Structure:

Job descriptions are recommended for Board members and committee members as being essential for a better understanding of their responsibilities. New Board members should receive consistent orientation in a clearly outlined process, which should include the history, structure, and ordinances of the Conservation District. Periodic training for Board members and staff should encompass matters of importance for protection of the lake, as well as, improvements in Board function. Job descriptions, orientation, and Board trainings will aid recruitment, improve retention and communication and generally build the capacity of the WBLCD to provide effective management of the lake.

In order to enhance understanding of the various Board committees and their responsibilities, there should be rotation by the WBLCD Board to various committee assignments. Consideration should be given to the interests of committee chairpersons in the topic/s of the committee when committee assignments are rotated.

The LWVWBLA supports an update of the 1999 Strategic Plan for effective long term lake management. The WBLCD Board should create an Annual Work Plan to set priorities and schedules for the year. The Annual plan would guide the work of the Board and staff. It would also facilitate understanding of the work of the WBLCD for the public as well as new Board and committee members. Accomplishments for each year and direction for the future could be identified by reviewing the tasks completed at the end of the year.

The LWVWBLA believes that increasing staff time could improve overall function of the Board. Staff skills should include a familiarity with the work of the Conservation District and the ability to facilitate the Annual Work Plan with the members of the Board. The Board needs to provide clear details of staff's responsibilities and regular reviews of staff and staffing needs.

There should be a standard process for Request for Proposals or bidding with contractor oversight being an important aspect to the process. The bidding process should be available to all.

Transparency and Communication:

The WBLCD Board could ensure there is a consistent communication effort being made by posting agendas and minutes of Board and committee meetings in a timely manner and making pertinent support materials available to the public either online or at the meetings (public packet). This information should include budgets, study materials, lake information, updates on Eurasian Water Milfoil and other Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Posting of job descriptions and openings available for volunteers and others in the community could help to attract new volunteers to apply for positions on the Board or its committees.

Improved communications with other "lake partners" including lake municipalities and organizations, regional, state and federal agencies such as Rice Creek Watershed, DNR, etc., is recommended. Opportunities for grants or other collaboration could be identified and pursued.

A written annual report would summarize the accomplishments of the Board during the year for the public as well as identify work needing to be placed on a work plan for the following year. The Annual work plan and review should be driven by the long-term Strategic Plan, which needs to be updated on a regular basis.

Finance:

It is strongly recommended that a finance Committee be established. The finance committee should develop a budget through a process that is transparent to the public. This would include the draft budget being available prior to its adoption. The Strategic Plan and the Annual Work Plan should drive the budget for program and projects. Reserve fund policies should be set by the Board and based on standard government practices. The Conservation District should establish a policy for regular auditing.