

Moose Lake Management District Questions and Answers

1. What is the difference between a lake district and a lake association?

An association is a voluntary organization. You are not required to belong or donate money to the association.

A district is a governmental body with statutory responsibilities to the resource, local citizens, and taxpayers. The lake district is set by law with legal responsibilities and consequences designed to ensure that the rights and interests of the public are protected. It has the power of taxing the district properties.

A lake district can apply for grants and get loans. It is the preferred structure to enter into contracts with other government agencies.

The lake district would take on the responsibility of the weed treatment on the lake.

2. Do we need to form a lake district to solve the high water problem?

Not Technically. Both the Town of Merton and Waukesha County have stated that they will not support our efforts unless we form a lake district. Forming a lake district also enables us to apply for grants to help fund the solution.

3. Does the creation of a lake district solve the high water problem?

No, the Moose Lake Advancement Association board believes it is the best option to form a Lake District because of the aforementioned advantages.

4. What properties would be included in the district?

Any parcel that has lake frontage or deeded access on Moose Lake.

5. How would the Moose Lake Management District be formed?

The land owners who are in favor of such a district will sign a petition. If the petition has a result of 51% of land owners within the district or 51% of the land area within the district the petition will be taken to the town and filed with the Town of Merton clerk. Once it is filed, the town will hold a public hearing within 30 days of acceptance of the petition. After the hearing, the town has up to 6 months to make a decision to either approve or deny the district.

6. Who can sign the petition?

Any person whose name appears as an owner of property on the tax roll is eligible to sign the petition. If you have ownership of more than one parcel of real estate within the proposed district you may not sign the petition more than once.

A partnership, corporation, trust, foundation, or association is entitled to one petition signature only.

7. Who are the individuals on the lake district board once created?

Once the district is formed, there is a board of five individuals who will run the district. Typically the board consists of one member from the town board, one from the county board, and three property owners within the district.

8. How much will this cost the properties who are in the district on an annual basis?

Based on our current annual spending and on other lake district budgets in the area, we are anticipating it will be somewhere around \$50.00 to \$65.00 per parcel versus our current fee of \$45.00 per member of the lake association. We have 121 parcels in the district.

The exact amount owed would be determined by the board which would prepare a proposed budget that would be approved by the lake district members at the first public meeting.

In addition, the lake district can't overcharge the taxpayers, they are not allowed to have a "rainy day account."

9. How will each parcel be taxed?

The annual budgeted amount is either divided equally by the number of parcels on the lake, or mil rates are utilized to determine the share of the total amount each parcel pays. Which option to be utilized is determined by a vote.

10. If the district is formed how do people have a say as to what occurs on the lake?

If a lake district is formed, good governance would include soliciting the opinions of those on the lake. The Town of Merton governs Moose Lake rules and regulations today. If we form a lake district, the lake residents will actually have more control. Currently the lake district on Lake Keesus is addressing the issue of wake boats on their lake. They have had several public meetings addressing this issue and are polling their members.

The following is an example of a situation that a district might want to address. It shows you the many steps that would need to be taken to make the change. The board isn't able to just make a decision and implement that decision. For example, if there is something that the district wants to accomplish, such as, changing boating regulations, per WI Statute 30.77 (3) (cm), "Whether a boating ordinance is adopted by a lake district, city, village, or town, various statutory requirements must be met. The adopting local government (including a lake district) must take into account local conditions in developing boating ordinances, including the lake's size, and shape, environmental features and the extent of the congestion and conflict among the boaters. There are also detailed procedural requirements, including published notices, public hearings, DNR advisory review and other steps."

In our case, it's likely that the lake district would adopt the rules for the lake that the town currently has in place.

11. How are special assessments authorized and approved?

These special assessments would be addressed at a special meeting for all district members to vote either to approve or deny the project. If the special assessment is approved the cost can be allocated in a number of ways.

12. What will happen to the MLAA if the district is created?

The current board would decide what to do by seeking input from the membership of the MLAA.

13. Where can I find more information in regards to lake districts?

All of the above information was obtained by Chapter 33 of the Wisconsin State statute which can be found on line for further reference. There is a copy of the document at: www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/uwexplakes/documents/organizations/lake%20districts/lake_org_guide2018.pdf.