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WHITE BEAR/VADNAIS HEIGHTS PRESS **3A**

Augmentation advocates plan meet-and-greet

BY DEBRA NEUTKENS
REGIONAL EDITOR

Recharging the depleted lake is the sole mission of Friends of White Bear Lake.

The nonprofit group is lobbying for augmentation to remedy the lake's low water level and invites the public to a meet-and-greet to learn more.

Friends Chairman Harry Melander, a Mahtomedi resident who also represents District 12 for the Metropolitan Council, said the Dec. 9 event is to promote the work his group is doing regarding augmentation.

"The plan to recharge the lake is controversial. Some

say 'yes' and some say 'maybe not,'" Melander said. "Our group believes the direction we're going is best for the region and the lake. We need to convince people at a local level that this is a regional asset and with help from our legislators, we may get it done in 2016."

Representatives from around the lake comprise the now 12-member Friends board, which has added five more members since forming in September, all lake homeowners.

Birchwood director Greg McNeely, who also chairs the White Bear Lake Restoration Association, said the December event is a "kickoff to grease the

wheel for augmentation."

"We're trying to get support for our efforts to regenerate the lake," he noted. "We want the lake to be healthy. Friends is a vehicle for people who love the lake to have their voices heard in the legislative process."

Their goal is to obtain 100 percent of the capital costs from the Legislature to build the infrastructure. That total, plus operating costs for the system, are being compiled in a Department of Natural Resources/Met Council study due to the Legislature Feb. 1. Proposed is a 4-mile pipeline that would carry water from Vadnais Lake to White

Bear Lake.

Water would be purchased from the St. Paul Regional Water System, which draws surface water from the Mississippi River. The Friends group offers assurance the recharge system would filter river water to remove invasive species and phosphorus before entering White Bear Lake and would not impair water quality.

Friends' board member Jim Markoe said personal invitations will go out to city and town leaders around the lake to make them aware of the organization and the Dec. 9 meeting. The community is also encouraged to attend.

It is a fundraiser

If you go:

When: 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9

Where: Best Western Country Inn,
White Bear Lake

Details: Short program. Light
appetizers and cash bar

but there is no expectation about raising money at the event.

"We are just trying to promote the work we're doing and bring more energy to the cause by bringing more people to the table," Markoe said.

"When we do work at the Capitol, there is a cost to make sure we're watching our Ps and Qs," Melander added. "We will appreciate contributions but this is more to get

people in the community, both those who live on and off the lake, engaged in what we're trying to do."

More information about Friends of White Bear Lake, including its mission, board members and water level facts, can be found at www.fowbl.org. The website went live Nov. 24.