



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Benton Lake in Cologne hosting 'largest outdoor cribbage tournament' and more on lake *Family-friendly fundraising event will be held Saturday, Feb. 9*

Cologne, Minn.—Jan. 24, 2019 — To raise funds for and awareness of lake restoration, the Benton Lake Watershed Conservancy (BLWC) in Cologne, Minn., is hosting what the BLWC is billing as the “largest outdoor cribbage tournament in the state.” The BLWC invites players and spectators to attend the Feb. 9 event, which will feature outdoor cribbage games played on boards drilled into Benton Lake’s frozen surface and other family-friendly activities, including:

- Putt-Putt Ice Golf
- Warming Tent
- Raffle Prize Drawings
- Food, Beer, Soda, Water (available for purchase)
- Benton Lake Restoration Updates from Carver County
- And more

The event begins at 11 a.m., with the cribbage tournament starting at Noon. Proceeds from the day’s activities will help fund projects and continued efforts to improve the overall water quality and recreational use of the lake, including: carp removal, fish habitat areas, fish barrier installation, fish stocking, recreation access area, water clarity improvements and other projects.

“While our work to improve the quality and use of Benton Lake continues, the BLWC and our lake restoration partners are excited to host this unique and fun event. What better way to bring our community together in support of this lake than to be on the lake,” said John Hendel, Cologne, member of the BLWC and event organizer. “Cologne has a history of hosting creative events to help raise funds for projects and services that benefit our community and its residents, including a summer Drive-In movie weekend supporting our Fire Relief Association, and we believe this will be just as impactful.

“We look forward to celebrating the progress of our 10+ year restoration efforts while raising necessary funds to continue to clean up Benton Lake and restore it to its natural state,” Hendel added. “The BLWC is grateful for the generous support of our residents and businesses who have donated to this event, and to all – including the City of Cologne and Carver County – for their support of the BLWC efforts.”

Interested in playing cribbage on the ice?

Find a partner, come as a family or come solo – the BLWC will pair interested players. Those who don't know how to play cribbage will roll large dice for peg points. The cost to play is \$10 per person, and provides each player with a raffle ticket to play and as entry into the prize drawing.

Spectators attend for free. There is no cost to enter the event and no purchase is necessary to attend.

Raffle drawing

There are more than 25 raffle items – with more items being donated up to the event – and the prize drawing will be held at 3 p.m. on Feb. 9, on the lake (need not be present to win).

Tickets are \$10 each and are available at several local establishments, BLWC members and will be available for purchase at the event. For more information – including parking and event access information – and to see the list of raffle prizes, visit <https://www.facebook.com/DICECribbage/> or contact John Hendel at 952-380-8064.

About Benton Lake Watershed Conservancy

Founded in 2007 by then 11-year-old Jacob Steinbauer and longtime Cologne resident Don Smith, the Benton Lake Watershed Conservancy (BLWC) is committed to improve the quality of and restore Benton Lake as a recreational and community asset in Cologne. Since its founding, the citizen-led BLWC has performed bi-weekly water sample collections, led several community presentations to build awareness of lake issues, led clean-up activities, donated trees to lakeshore property owners to plant as buffers and worked with elected officials and agencies including Carver County and its Water Management Organization, Minnesota DNR, City of Cologne, Metropolitan Council and other organizations to improve the lake's water quality. To mitigate the significant presence and impact of rough fish (carp and bullheads) and phosphorous levels in the lake, the BLWC and its agency partners installed a fish barrier, introduced predator fish, removed more than 6,000 pounds of carp, stocked the lake with breeds of pan fish and installed aerators to keep the bluegill population alive during winter months. Additionally, the BLWC installed a kayak-canoe access launch and a 58-foot fishing pier with a seating area for community members of all ages to use.

In 2010, the BLWC and founders Smith and Steinbauer were recognized as the Outstanding Citizen Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program by the Minnesota Waters organization.

The BLWC continues to raise funds for and awareness of additional projects to further improve the quality and recreational use of the lake. For more information, contact John Hendel at 952-380-8064 or Don Smith at 952-466-5995.

(Media: Please see attached documents for history and BLWC milestones)