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Chair's Message 1	GCOLA Profile 16	Tree Giveaway 31
Northern Lights in Our Skies 3	Thank You Donors..... 17	Wanted EOD Volunteers 31
Our AIS Efforts are Working..... 5	Decontamination Unit Donation 19	From the Lab to the Lake 32
Basic Loon Rescue Webinar..... 7	Lake Steward the Easy Way 21	Buoy Map 33
Financial Summary & Budget..... 9	Shoreland Habitat Asks 23	Work with Us 33
Our Priorities at a Glance..... 11	Welcome New Members 25	Ice Fishing Tournament..... 33
Government Relations Update..... 13	Photos Wanted..... 25	What We Do..... 35
Firefly Watchers Wanted 15	Weather Reporting Opportunity..... 27	Mission Statement..... BC
GCOLA Gala 15	2023 Membership Dues 29	

Opinions or recommendations contained in advertising in the newsmagazine are not necessarily opinions or recommendations of GCOLA, GCOLA's Board or Advisory members.

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You are always welcome to join us at our monthly Board of Directors' meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. Contact Info@GCOLA.org for meeting details.



Steve Frawley at the MAISRC 10th Anniversary event discussing zebra mussel eradication.

We have witnessed a dramatic weather change this winter season with unseasonably warm temperatures and a lack of snow in the area. Unfortunately, those of us who enjoy winter sports activities, as well as local businesses, feel like we were already heading into spring as I'm writing this letter in late January.

This has been a very busy time for the Gull Chain of Lakes Association (GCOLA) since our last newsmagazine edition as we continue to support coalition building with key organizations. We recently sponsored and attended the 10th anniversary Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Research Center (MAISRC) "From Lab to Lake" event December 7th at the University of Minnesota.

I also attended the annual day long, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Round Table event on January 19th together with over 400 attendees from around the state in Bloomington. Attendance at these events serves to keep us in touch with important lake association challenges around the state. Several times during the Roundtable event, I was reminded of some of the contributions that have been made by our own Gull Chain of Lakes Association throughout the state of Minnesota. These contributions include Doro-

thy Whitmer's Lake Steward program, which has been rolled out throughout the state of Minnesota as well as our Loon Conservancy efforts headed up by Sheila Johnston. Both of these programs are receiving state-wide notoriety among different Lake associations, and we have a number of other areas that we should also be proud of within GCOLA. Our Gala Committee just had our first meeting to plan our annual Gala event scheduled for August 4th this year as our main fund raiser. Our newsmagazine, which is published each quarter, has received accolades throughout the state and our various GCOLA committees are making strides to benefit our lakes and GCOLA members now and in the future.

Please take the time to review articles in this edition of the GCOLA newsmagazine including: an generous anonymous gift from a GCOLA couple for a Decontamination unit for Government Point in support of our focus in preventing the spread of AIS, a list of GCOLA donors for the year, slowing the spread of AIS by Steve Henry, Cass County AIS Lake Technician, our 2023 financial summary and 2024 budget article by Uldis Birznieks, 10th Anniversary MAISRC celebration and 2024 DNR Roundtable by me and Lake Steward articles by Dorothy Whitmer, an article on Loon Rescue by Sheila Johnston and an interesting article on Northern Lights by Catherine Munsch.

We have several talented associates that work as volunteers and board members in GCOLA of which I'm very proud to serve. I would like to invite those of you who would like to get further involved in areas that we serve in in the Gull Chain of Lakes Association including: Communications, the Lake Steward program, Loon Conservancy, Recreation, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), Environmental, Finance, Government Relations and Fisheries committees. We can always benefit from additional volunteers who are willing to contribute ideas and bring about positive change. Contact a board or advisory member to learn more about being a volunteer!

Steve Frawley



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This past year we experienced multiple broadly publicized Northern Lights events. Thanks to a solid understanding of what causes the Northern Lights and enhanced monitoring of solar activity, scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) can predict when and where on Earth the Northern Lights may become visible. I took advantage of these predictions one week in September and used the opportunity to do some amateur experimentation with night sky photography. While the results will not win me any awards, it was an exciting first foray, taught me a few things and whetted my appetite to learn more about this natural phenomenon which holds almost mythical status for Minnesotans and other northern climes dwellers.

First, What's in a Name?

Most of you may know that the Northern Lights and Southern Lights are also called Aurora Borealis and Aurora Australis. Named by Galileo, "Aurora" comes from the Roman goddess of dawn. "Borealis" is the Latin word meaning "northern" and "Australis" is a derivative of the Latin "austral", meaning "southern".

The (greatly simplified and abbreviated) Science behind Auroras:

- Electrons are emitted from the surface of the sun, travel towards Earth and produce light as they collide with atoms and molecules in Earth's atmosphere. It is similar to neon light, where the colored light is caused by electrons flowing through a glass tube full of neon and other gasses.
- While faint auroras are present much of the time above the magnetic poles, two types of events can create larger and brighter auroras. One is called a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME). Massive, as in up to a billion tons of plasma ejected from the sun

and hurtling up to a million miles per hour towards earth. CMEs will cause the brightest auroras and are visible over the largest patches of Earth. A less intense and smaller aurora is produced from coronal holes. Think of coronal holes as half of a CME – they have the speed but nowhere near the mass of a CME.

- Aurora colors can vary but are usually green, purple, and red with less common combinations of other colors within the spectrum. The colors we see result from three main variables: the atmospheric gas (e.g., oxygen or nitrogen); the distance from earth's surface; and how "excited" the atoms and molecules are (i.e., the level of energy the atoms have been raised to, above their normal level).

Fun Facts About Auroras

- Aurora Borealis and Aurora Australis are mirror images of each other. If an Aurora is active in one hemisphere, an aurora of the same size and intensity will simultaneously be active in the other.
- Auroras are present during the day, but we need the dark background of the night sky to view them.
- As with many beautiful and once unexplained natural phenomenon, there are many myths and legends surrounding auroras; explanations ranging from them being the spirits of dead people playing football in the sky with walrus skulls (my favorite); the reflections off Valkyries' armor as they led fallen Viking soldiers to Valhalla; and the good luck associated with being born at the time of an aurora.
- As I found out this fall, what the naked eye may not discern, a digital camera can. As I waited for the Aurora to "appear" this past September, I was testing out my newly learned tips and tricks for shooting a night sky. Imagine my shock when what appeared to me as a "black" sky showed up with vivid greens, purple and red on my camera! How does this happen? I will deliberately not try to explain this here, in the hopes that it spurs you to do your own Googling.

Understanding what generates the Northern Lights is interesting. But nothing compares to viewing them. I encourage you to bookmark www.swpc.noaa.gov/communities/aurora-dashboard-experimental and head out at night when an aurora is predicted for your area.

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Get ready to make unforgettable memories with your crew this boating season. Our passionate and knowledgeable staff is looking forward to earning your business. We can't wait to help you make the most of your lake lifestyle.



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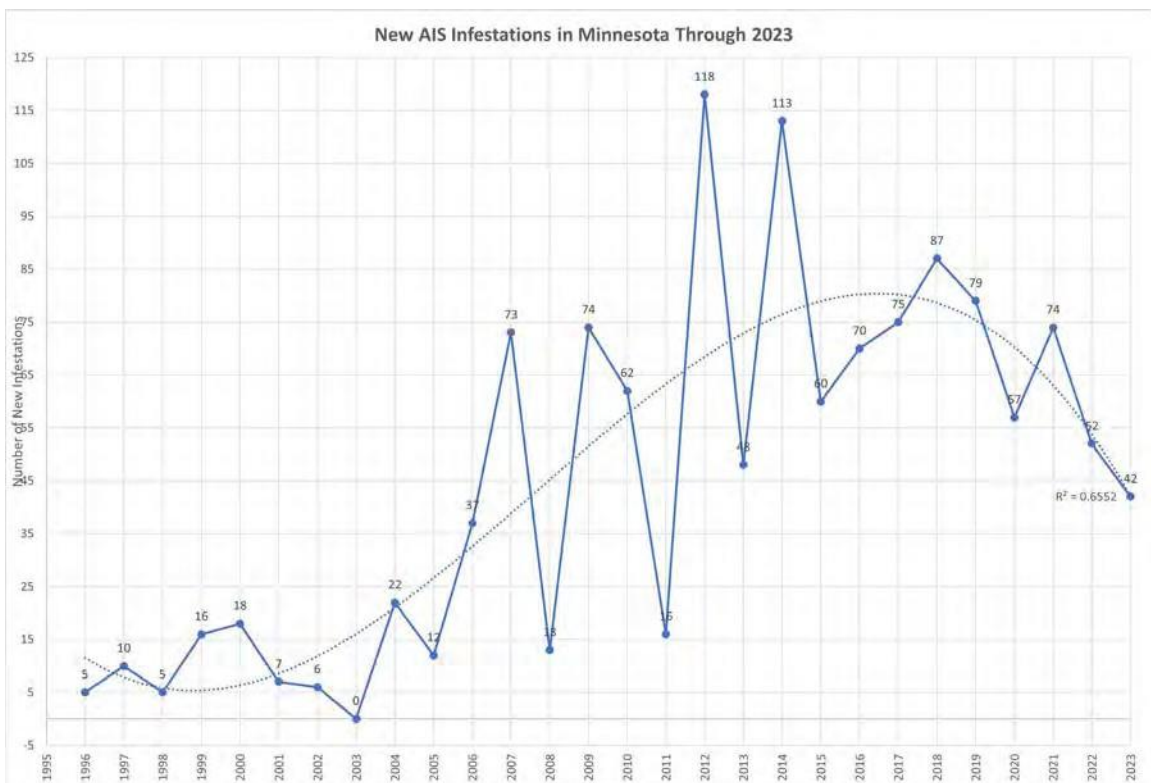
In 2014 Minnesota started allocating funds to Counties for efforts to control Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). That funding has made a major contribution to reducing the spread of AIS across Minnesota. Since the County AIS funding came online, the rate of new infestations in Minnesota has declined by almost 50%.

Looking at AIS of all types, the peak of new infestations was 2012 through 2014, with an average of 93 lakes being listed as infested in each of those years. In the most recent three years of 2021 through 2023 we saw an average of only 56 lakes listed as newly infested in each of those years. There has been a trend of fewer infestations each year for the past five years and in 2023 only 42 lakes were listed, down from the peak of 118 new infestations in 2012.

Looking specifically at zebra mussels the story is even better. The peak of zebra mussel infestations in Minnesota was 2014, with 67 lakes listed that year as newly infested. Since then, the rate of new zebra mussel infestations has dramatically dropped with only 28 lakes being listed in 2023. In Cass County, only 13 lakes with public accesses have been listed as zebra mussel infested out of the 103 lakes with public accesses. Only 12.6% of publicly accessible lakes in Cass County are infested with zebra mussels.

Lake users still need to be vigilant in cleaning, draining, and drying their water related equipment. With ever increasing numbers of infested lakes, the risk of an AIS introduction into Gull Lake is higher than ever. In 2023, AIS Inspectors checked 420 boats at Gull Lake accesses that had most recently been on lakes infested with Eurasian Water Milfoil and 80 boats coming from lakes infested with Starry Stonewort. Always check your trailer and boat thoroughly prior to returning to Gull Lake. We recommend having your guests or visitors remove their watercraft from their lake one week prior to visiting our area.

Through the efforts of local groups and individual water users, we have made a dramatic change in the spread of AIS across Minnesota. We have shown that by working together to implement AIS inspections, watercraft decontamination, and outreach we can reduce the spread of AIS across Minnesota. The rate of AIS spread across Minnesota is a function of the behavior of each of us individually. Let's all commit to continue reducing the spread of AIS and redouble our efforts to preserve Minnesota's lakes for future generations.





WAKE RESPONSIBLY

1 Stay at least 200 feet away

2 Keep music at reasonable levels

3 Minimize repetitive passes



BASIC LOON RESCUE WEBINAR

Do you wonder what to do if you see a sick or injured loon?
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Presented by Linda and Kevin Grenzer, Loon Rescue Inc.



Hosted by Minnesota Lakes & Rivers Advocates

April 18, 7 p.m.
Webinar Registration Form
<https://forms.gle/hjGFmhF2gPnschTm9>



Kevin and Linda Grenzer ready to release a juvenile loon saved from fishing line entanglement.

Kevin and Linda Grenzer, of Loon Rescue, Inc., have been rescuing loons and other birds in need of help since 2013. This husband and wife duo specializes in rescuing loons all year long, including ice rescues. They are nationally respected loon rescue experts! They have traveled hundreds of miles across the entire state of Wisconsin to rescue loons that are in need of help. They often encounter and deal with loons that are hooked, entangled, suffering from lead poisoning, stranded in small ponds, and have been struck by boats. They have many different techniques and equipment to safely capture these loons. Kevin and Linda will discuss the correct and safe ways to rescue and transport a loon that is in need of rescue. Techniques will be discussed on how to approach a beached loon, and an entangled loon that is easily approachable and does not dive.

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2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND 2024 BUDGET

OUR MEMBERS ARE THE SECRET

On Wall Street, year 2023 had a bull market, an excellent year for investors. At GCOLA, 2023 will go on record as being an excellent financial year for our Association. Sure, I will provide all the numbers, but look beyond the numbers. The numbers are made possible by you, our generous and committed members. GCOLA is one of the strongest and most recognized lake associations in Minnesota. Over the years, other lake association leaders have asked, how do you do it? What is your secret? **OUR MEMBERS ARE THE SECRET!** Our members are dedicated and committed to the mission of GCOLA. That is the secret!

With that lead-in, it's that time of year to provide you, our valuable members, a review of how GCOLA did financially in 2023 and a look forward to what is planned for 2024. The figure below shows the financial data for 2023 and the budget for 2024 with the \$ and % for each major category.

Several things changed financially in 2023 that are reflected in the Financial Summary figure shown above.

1. GCOLA selected the Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation (BLACF) for its AIS Fund. The BLACF AIS Fund total is shown at the bottom of the figure and totals \$241.2K. The GCOLA Board transferred a significant portion of the AIS Contingency Fund plus a transfer from the allowable spending amount from our Initiative Foundation Preservation Endowment Fund (\$36.6K) to establish the BLACF AIS Fund.

2. With the establishment of the BLACF AIS Fund, the GCOLA Board decided to withdraw the "allowable spending policy" amount from our Preservation Endowment Fund for 2022 and 2023 as determined by the Initiative Foundation. That amount, \$36.6K, was transferred to the BLACF AIS Fund.
3. For the Preservation Endowment Fund total, as shown in the figure, we will no longer include the \$50K match that the Initiative Foundation provided to help start the Endowment Fund in 2012, since GCOLA can't access those funds, even in an AIS emergency.
4. The Board decided to make the decision on donations to other organizations rather than those decisions being made at the committee level, since the total donation amount is not insignificant. In the figure shown, a new line has been added under

	2023 BUDGET		2023 ACTUALS		2024 BUDGET	
	\$ (K)	%	\$ (K)	%	\$ (K)	%
INCOME						
DUES	53.0	33%	53.6	22%	53.0	31%
DONATIONS* (See Note 1)	45.0	28%	135.0	54%	60.5	35%
GALA	43.5	27%	49.8	20%	48.0	28%
GRANTS**/OTHER (See Note 2)	17.0	11%	10.1	4%	10.0	6%
INCOME TOTALS	158.5		248.5		171.5	
EXPENSES						
ENVIRON/AIS/LOONS/LAKE STEWARD	56.7	32%	58.7	31%	47.3	26%
BUOY SYSTEM/SAFETY	37.9	22%	40.8	22%	32.4	18%
GALA	21.8	12%	16.5	9%	25.5	14%
ADMINISTRATION	21.4	12%	21.8	12%	28.1	15%
DONATIONS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	23.0	13%	30.8	16%	20.0	11%
COMMUNICATIONS/GOVT RELATIONS/ MEMBERSHIP/FISHERIES/MISC	14.3	8%	20.1	11%	28.3	16%
EXPENSES TOTALS	174.9		188.7		181.5	
NET INCOME (LOSS)	(16.4)		59.8		(10.0)	
*Note 1 - Does not include IniTaTve FoundaTon Annual Spending Amount Transfers - (2023 Actuals of \$36.6K & 2024 Budget of \$21.1K)						
**Note 2 - Does not include cost of Watercra^ InspectTons directly paid by counTes to inspectors						
*** Note 3 - Only includes funds in PreservaTon Endowment Fund accessible to GCOLA in AIS emergency (\$50K IF match not included)						
PRESERVATION ENDOWMENT FUND - TOTAL			366.9	***See N e 3		
AIS CONTINGENCY FUND - IN			57.7			
AIS CONTINGENCY FUND - TOTAL			81.0			
BLACF AIS FUND - IN			241.2			
BLACF AIS FUND - TOTAL			241.2			
BALANCE SHEET						

Expenses, “Donations to other Organizations” to reflect the total donations made by GCOLA. Key organizations targeted for 2024 donations include the MN AIS Research Center, Univ of MN-St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (large wake wave study), MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates, MN Coalition of Lake Associations, and several other worthy organizations.

Overall, the year 2023 was an excellent year financially for GCOLA. Income of \$248.5K is the highest ever for GCOLA besting 2022 actuals of \$185.7K, which previously had been the highest. The Net Income of +\$59.8K beat the budgeted net income by over \$75K.

For 2023 income, member donations totaled \$135K, an all-time high!! Thank you to all our members for your generosity and contributing to our mission to preserve and restore our Gull Lake Chain!! The Gala event was very successful again and Gala income bested budget by \$6K.

On the 2023 expense side, total expenses of \$188.7K were the highest ever. Given the excellent income, the higher expenses were not an issue for the net income. The purchase of the new AIS decontamination unit (which was funded by a donation) was the major factor in expenses being above budget. We were able to fund additional AIS inspections of boats (beyond that funded by Cass and Crow Wing counties) but not to the level we had budgeted due to staffing shortages both with county AIS inspectors and the Lake Shore law enforcement. The Gala committee succeeded in getting the highest net income ever for the event (\$33.3K)!! Congratulations to Jane Edwards, the Gala Committee Chair, and all the Gala Committee members. With the excellent overall financial performance in 2023, the GCOLA Board moved two planned 2024 expenditures back into 2023, \$10K to purchase additional buoys for our buoy system and a \$5K donation for loon banding. The Communications/Govt Relations/Membership/Misc area was \$6K over budget with the major factor being increased printing costs, which are being addressed by the Communications Committee.

The 2024 budget approved by the Board has a net income (loss) of -\$10.0K as shown in the far-right column of the figure. The Board of Directors is

comfortable with this budgeted loss for 2024 as we have a healthy balance in our operating accounts, and we have bettered our budgeted net income versus actual net income each year since 2015 by an average of +\$36.5K. The Board accepted a conservative approach for 2024 income (\$77K lower than 2023 actuals but \$13K higher than 2023 budget). Highlights of the 2024 budget include the following:

- Membership is budgeted at the same level as 2023 which is closing in on 1100 members.
- Donations are conservatively budgeted with a 33% increase over the 2023 budget. We are hoping for similar positive responses in donations as we had in 2023, yet it is not prudent to budget for that level.
- For 2024, the Environmental/AIS/Loon Conservancy/Lake Steward committees continue as the major benefactor of funding with 26% of budgeted expense. These committees are a top priority for GCOLA. This included allocating \$8K for the shoreland habitat projects (50/50 cost share grants to GCOLA members) and will allocate even more if projects are approved for our members.
 - The buoy system continues as a major expense item at 18% of the Expense budget and \$10K was moved forward from 2024 to late 2023 for purchase of replacement buoys. The GCOLA buoy system is one of the most complete and complex navigational buoy systems in the state and it takes considerable effort to maintain it. Thank you to Jay Chaney for his excellent leadership and to Chad Boesen and his crew at Your Boat Club for maintaining our buoy system.

In 2023, since we had an excellent financial year and the operating accounts were at a healthy total, the Board approved a transfer of \$50K from our operating account to the AIS Contingency Fund, which now totals \$81K. With the BLACF AIS fund at \$241K, GCOLA now has \$322K for immediate use if needed for any new AIS that invades our Gull Lake Chain and the \$366.9K in the GCOLA Preservation Endowment Fund in reserve.

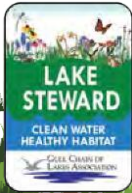
Bottom line – it is great to be able to say again that GCOLA is in a sound financial position, and we will work to make sure that it continues in 2024.

OUR PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE



LAKE STEWARD

- 185+ lakeshore owners working to protect our lakes
- 97 Lake Steward awards
- Fund shoreline restoration
- Annual tree giveaway

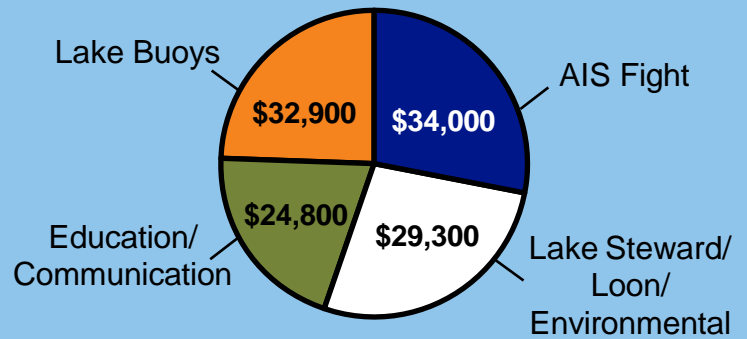


SAFETY & RECREATION

- 125 navigational buoys across the Gull Lake Chain
- Boat Safety classes 75+ kids per year
- Partner with local sheriff departments



2024 BUDGETED PRIORITIES



LOON CONSERVANCY

- Loon population surveys
- Loon-safe boating program
- Get the Lead Out (GTLO) loon-safe fishing

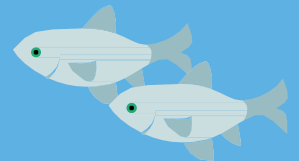


ENVIRONMENTAL

- Water quality monitoring
- Light pollution education
- Education on improving lake water quality

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)

- Inspect 24 boat launches for AIS
- Fund 3,300+ boat inspections annually
- Financially support the U of M AIS Research Center



GET INVOLVED

- 1050+ family & business members strong
- Exciting volunteer opportunities
- FUN! Annual Summer Gala Event

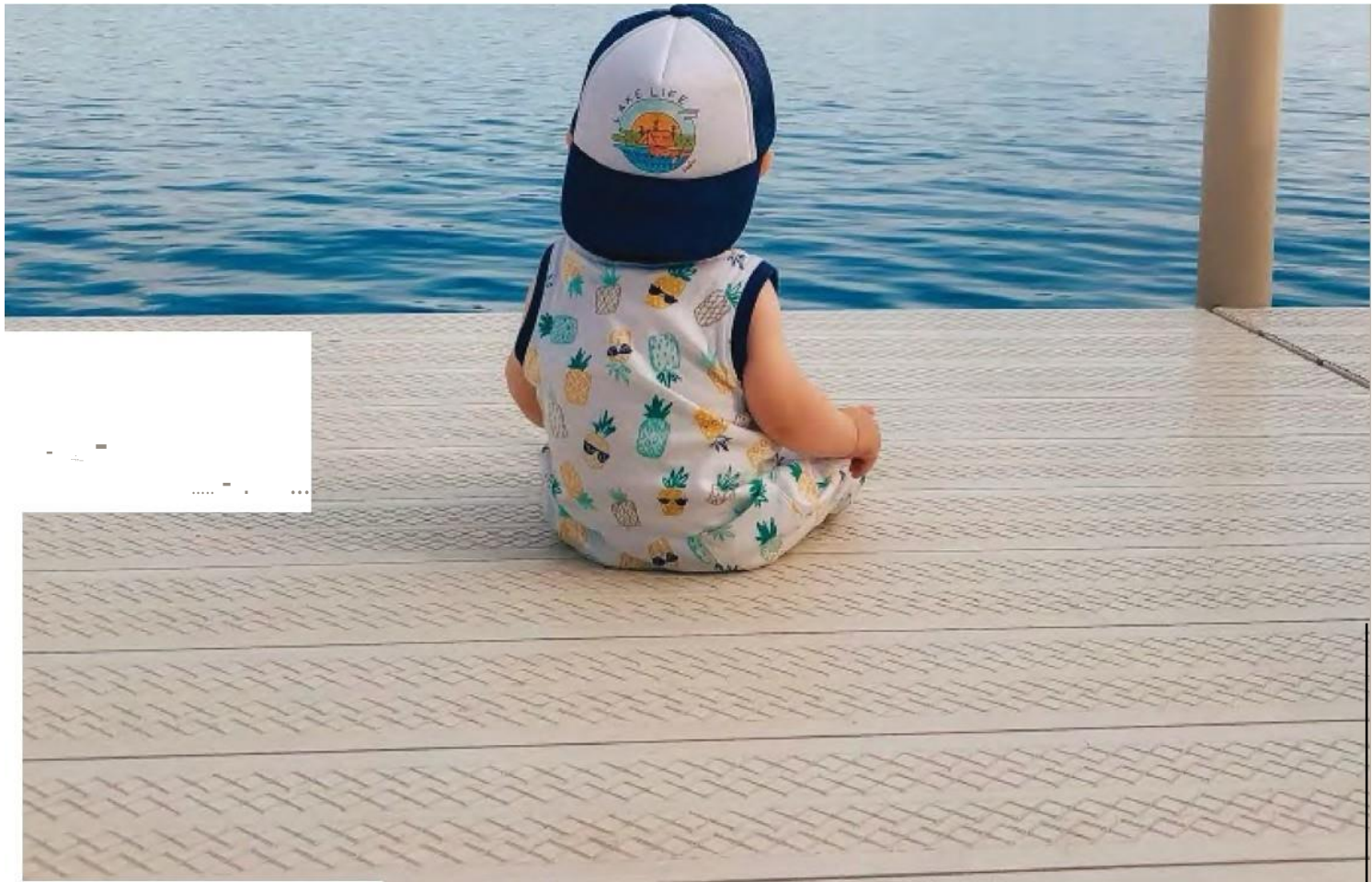
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- Advocate for lake issues with state legislators
- Interface with county and local governments
- Share with neighboring lake associations

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During January's GCOLA board meeting the 2024 Legislative Priority Items were approved. These priorities include the following:

1. Consider legislation (distance from shore, depth, etc.) for watercraft creating enhanced wakes that are a safety issue, cause shoreline erosion and sub-surface ecological damage.
2. Provide sustained funding to the Minnesota Aquatic Research Center (MAISRC) for finding solutions to eradicate zebra mussels, starry stonewort and other aquatic invasive species (AIS)
3. Maintain/increase funding level to counties to prevent the spread of new or existing aquatic invasive species
4. Support efforts to limit encroachment by land developers on marginal lakeshore property
5. Increase boater AIS compliance with fines for violations that are in parity with Minnesota game and fish fines, with authority to impound

Priorities one through four above are the same as last year's key priorities while priority number one continues to be the number one priority for several years now. Priority number five is a new addition this year and provides more "teeth" in potential measures to help mitigate AIS infractions.

2024 Annual DNR Roundtable

I attended the annual DNR Roundtable event on January 19th at the Doubletree hotel in Bloomington hotel from 7:30am until after 7:00pm along with over 400 attendees. This was my second year attending this event kicked off by Governor Walz and DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen. During this full day event, I had the opportunity to meet with Commissioner Strommen and the three Assistant DNR Commissioners in attendance. In addition, I met with the Minnesota House and Senate Environmental leaders, Representative Rick Hansen, and Senator Hawj. Throughout the day, I also connected with Lake Association leaders from around the state, DNR subject matter experts and others concerned with protecting and conserving our water resources. The Roundtable

format included an opening Plenary session followed by two concurrent session tracks on subjects such as climate change and Minnesota Fisheries, followed by panel discussions and a closing Plenary session. The opportunity to discuss the future challenges we all face conserving and protecting our water resources was a key highlight of the day's session.



Update on State of Vermont Wake Surf Boat Legislation

On January 7, Vermont released the nation's most comprehensive restrictions on wake-enhanced sports. The new rules, which are anticipated to be in effect for the 2024 boating season, stipulate that enhanced wake sports must be 500 feet from shore, in no less than 20 feet of water, and only on lakes where the state has mapped a minimum 50-acre zone designated for the activity. In addition, wake boats must be registered to operate on a specific lake and are required to undergo professional decontamination of their ballast tanks before operating on another lake, to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. This final rule now goes through one last 45-day agency review, whereby the State confirms all rule-making steps were followed, after which they take effect.



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Photo by Robert Eliason

Several people have already volunteered to be Firefly Watchers. Now is your chance to be a Firefly Watcher this summer. What does a Firefly Watcher do? Well, we have been Firefly Watchers for many years now. On a warm summer's evening as the twilight turns to darkness, we sit out. Sometimes we sit with our favorite beverage, sometimes not. Sometimes we talk, and sometimes we sit silently enjoying each other's company. But, we are always on the lookout for fireflies. We do this throughout the summer when we are in the mood. I am asking Firefly Watchers if they see a firefly, to make a note, and then send an email to me. If you are interested in becoming a Firefly Watcher, send an email to Robert Eliason at gcola.endofdock@gmail.com with Firefly in the subject line. Please include your lake address. I will report our findings in the winter newsmagazine.

SAVE THE DATE

12th Annual GCOLA GALA
Sunday, August 4, 2024
Grand View Lodge

Four levels of Gala Sponsorship available
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(jedwards3718@gmail.com)
for information

KRIS DRIESSEN, CO-CHAIR LAKE STEWARD COMMITTEE



My husband, Chuck, and I both grew up spending our summers on Gull Lake. That was when “lake moms” existed. Moms gathered the kids when school was out and went to the cabin for the summer. Dads came up on weekends. I was a registered nurse by profession, but more than that, I care for animals, dogs, and wildlife. I’ve been a dog walker at HART for nearly 18 years.

I first became involved with GCOLA when Ron Faust asked me to come along on a shoreline restoration visit. I learned a stable shoreline not only involved native plants but was also beneficial to wildlife. My interest in the interconnectedness of native plants and wildlife continued to increase after that. Protecting nature and ecosystems of the lake lead me to AIS Detector, Loon Count, End of the Dock, Lake Steward Program and Tree Giveaway. As a hobby I am continually attempting to identify native plants, mosses, lichens, and other wildlife species.

An advertisement for a gas station. The text reads: "Gas @ Love Lake Marina on Gull", "JUST NORTH OF YACHT CLUB, THROUGH LOVE LAKE CHANNEL", "Boats and Beyond Rentals.com", "SMOOTH, EASY, PAY AT THE PUMP", "218-963-7700", and "www.BoatsandBeyondRentals.com". There are also logos for MasterCard, VISA, AMERICAN EXPRESS, and DISCOVER.

THANK YOU DONORS

Thank you to our many members and friends who made donations in 2023! The financial support we receive through dues and donations is appreciated and helps us with our efforts to improve the quality and safety of our Gull Lake Chain. The names listed below are cash contributors to GCOLA in excess of their \$50 dues along with cash donations to the Gala. Our apologies if anyone was inadvertently missing or if there is an error in the information. Please send an email to info@gcola.org or call Sue Friedrichs at 612-751-6156 and a correction will be printed in the next newsletter.

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GCOLA COUPLE DONATES FUNDS FOR AIS DECONTAMINATION UNIT

Thanks to a very generous donation from an anonymous GCOLA couple, the Government Point access on Gull Lake will have a new Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Decontamination (Decon) Unit for use starting in May 2024. The GCOLA couple, who have been very generous to GCOLA with both their time and financial resources, wanted to significantly support the GCOLA mission to prevent additional AIS entering our Gull Lake Chain. In addition to financing additional AIS inspections, they chose to donate funds to allow GCOLA to purchase a new AIS Decon Unit, the Landa ECOS Mobile Wash and Reclaim System.



The existing AIS Decon Unit at Gull Lake Government Point access was feeling its age and use, with frequent repairs and significant downtime. With the pledge of funding by the GCOLA couple, the wheels were put in motion for a coordinated effort between GCOLA, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Cass County AIS Department for procurement of a new AIS Decon Unit. Key to this effort were Brian Turner, the USACE Site Manager at Gull Lake Recreation Area Point, Steve Henry, the Cass County AIS Coordinator and Tim Thoele, the GCOLA AIS Committee Chair. The decon unit and accessories that the team selected was the Landa ECOS Mobile Wash and Reclaim System, which is the same as that used by the Minnesota DNR for other decon units placed throughout Minnesota.

The Landa ECOS unit is an environmentally friendly, patented mobile wash system combining a hot water

pressure washer with a wash water recovery and filtration system atop a trailer unit, making it simple to dispose of the gray wash water from the pressure washing operation, or to recycle and reuse it. Four polyethylene water tanks provide 400 gallons of cleaning water. The high-pressure washer (3500 psi) provides a very hot stream of water (140 degrees F) that will kill AIS or plants attached to a watercraft or its trailer. The Landa ECOS System includes the self-contained decontamination system with pressure washer, trailer with water tank(s), containment mat, underlayment pad, vacuum recovery system, and decontamination attachments. The water recovery system is powered by a generator mounted on the trailer and no external power source is required.

AIS can attach to many parts of watercraft including the anchor, propeller, dock lines, live wells, hull, rollers, bunks, bilge, motor, as well as part of the towing trailer including the axle, rails, or even the license plate. The Landa decon unit can clean these locations with its high pressure, high temperature spray on all types of watercraft including motorboats, bowriders, fishing boats, canoes, and kayaks.

The coordinated effort of GCOLA, the USACE and Cass County shows when multiple organizations and governmental agencies have a common goal, rapid results can be achieved. After the three entities agreed on the AIS decon unit and accessories to be procured, Brian Turner (USACE) worked his magic to receive a substantial US Government discount for GCOLA for the decon unit. The donating couple agreed to the purchase price and then donated the funds to GCOLA for the purchase.

A formal partnership agreement between the USACE, Cass County, and GCOLA was drafted and signed in August 2023. The agreement included the donation of the AIS decon unit by GCOLA to the US Government for exclusive use at the Gull Lake Recreation Area (Government Point access). The US Government will provide storage and maintenance of the unit, assist in purchase of fuel and coordinate operation of the wash station. Cass County will train all operators, schedule, and provide trained operators with a goal of 40 hours per week for a 16-week boating season and assist

with operation and maintenance of the unit. GCOLA will provide up to \$1,000 annually for operation and maintenance of the unit and also will pay for the storage/rental space for the unit.

The new AIS decon unit was received and formally turned over to the US Army Corps of Engineers in early October.



Participating in the donation event were Rusty Milner (AIS Inspector), Uldis Birznieks (GCOLA), Steve Frawley (GCOLA Chair), Steve Henry (Cass County AIS Coordinator), Tim Thoele (GCOLA) and Brian Turner (USACE)



Steve Frawley, GCOLA Chair and Brian Turner, USACE

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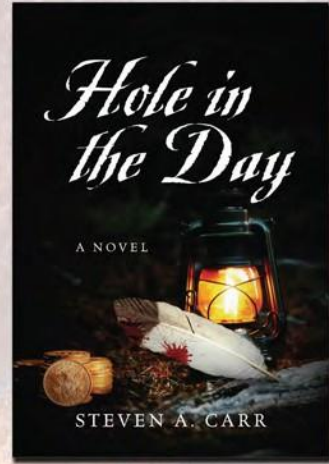
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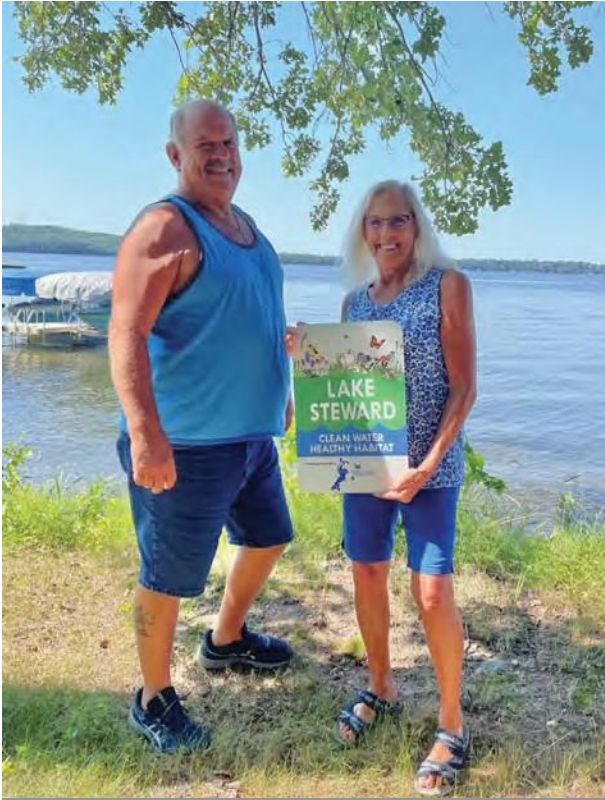
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Justin & Nichole Biebighauser, Gull

Jennifer & Dennis Bussey, Gull

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Gregory & Neva Cole, Gull

David Eischens, Gull

PHOTOS WANTED

Do you have photos taken around the Gull Lake Chain that you'd like to share? We always need pictures for the newsmagazine, website and social media. **We especially have a shortage of winter, autumn and other fun activities on the lakes!** You will be given credit for any photographs appearing in the newsmagazine and a description of the picture is helpful. Your snapshots can be sent at full size (*minimum 300DPI*) to Sue Friedrichs at info@gcola.org.

THANK YOU!



Photo by Jaimie Marx



Photo by Maranda McCarthy

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The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) is a unique, non-profit, community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation

(rain, hail, and snow). By using low-cost measurement tools, stressing training and education, and utilizing an interactive website, its aim is to provide the highest quality data for natural resource, education and research applications.

We are looking for volunteers to track rain, hail and snowfall amounts in the Gull Lake area. The amount of precipitation can vary widely over an area as large as the Gull Lake Chain. Having a good record of precipitation amounts can help the National Weather Service to understand what's happening in our area. Right now, there are only three official CoCoRaHS recording stations (Bass Lake, Lake Margaret & Hole in the Day Lake). This leaves a great deal of area on the southern end of the chain unmonitored. Your joining the CoCoRaHS network can close that gap in readings. The only cost of joining CoCoRaHS is the purchase of an extremely accurate rain gauge that can be purchased for about \$35.



Don't worry that you need to report every day, just when you have time. Once you are signed up, you can see your reports on their website along with all of the over 20,000 reporting locations across the country. You can see the history of precipitation each day from your computer or smart phone. Simply go to www.cocorahs.org and zoom in on the map whether you

are a member or not.



On a trip to Fort Collins last summer, I had the pleasure of meeting the founder of CoCoRaHS (Nolan Doesken) who started the program 25 years ago after a major rain event in Ft. Collins. He is still very active in CoCoRaHS even after

retirement from Colorado State University. He writes a newsletter called "The Catch" with some great insights into weather and many other things of interest.

"We have seen CoCoRaHS flourish over northern Minnesota, especially over the last couple of years. High density, high-quality observations are crucial for meteorologists at the National Weather Service to accurately track and forecast small scale weather phenomena, like summer-time thunderstorms and heavy snow bands in the winter. The better our observation dataset, the better our forecasts can be. In the Gull Lake area, this is especially critical because of our radar coverage (or lack thereof) in that neck of the woods. Because the area is so far away from the closest radars (Duluth, Twin Cities, and Grand Forks), the radar beam is intersecting storms and weather very high in the cloud, and we can't always clearly see what is happening closer to the ground. Having actual ground truth reports that have been measured by trained observers with good equipment in these locations is crucial." (Ketzels Levens – NWS Duluth)

If you are interested in joining the CoCoRaHS network, please call Dave Anderson at 218-963-3121 or email me at dla920@charter.net or simply sign up at www.cocorahs.org. I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have about CoCoRaHS.



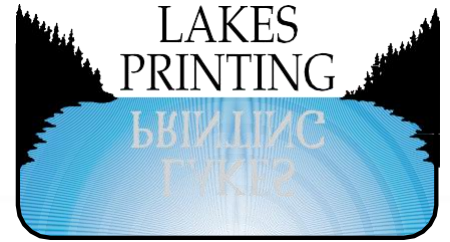


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BECOME A MEMBER

The Gull Chain of Lakes Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, Federal Tax ID #41-1272492. Dues are \$50 per year and any donations above the annual membership dues are greatly appreciated and recognized in the spring newsmagazine. No goods or services were provided in exchange for your membership and donation.

Please use this form and mail your dues to GCOLA, PO Box 102, Nisswa, MN 56468 -or- log in to our website at <https://www.gcola.org/shop> to pay with your credit or debit card.

If you are unsure if you are current with your dues, call Sue Friedrichs at 612-751-6156 or send an email to info@gcola.org to find out.

THANK YOU

2024 Gull Chain of Lakes Association Dues (January 1 to December 31) \$50.00

Additional Donation (Optional)

\$_____ Aquatic Invasive Species Contingency Fund \$_____ Buoy Expenses \$_____ Board Discretion

Please keep my additional donation(s) anonymous

Total Payment \$ _____

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Second or Company Name _____

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Primary Phone _____ Alternate Phone _____

We use email to keep you informed and request your input on issues impacting the Gull Lake Chain.

Email _____ Second Email _____

Lake Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Lake Name _____ Location on Lake (side, bay, etc.) _____

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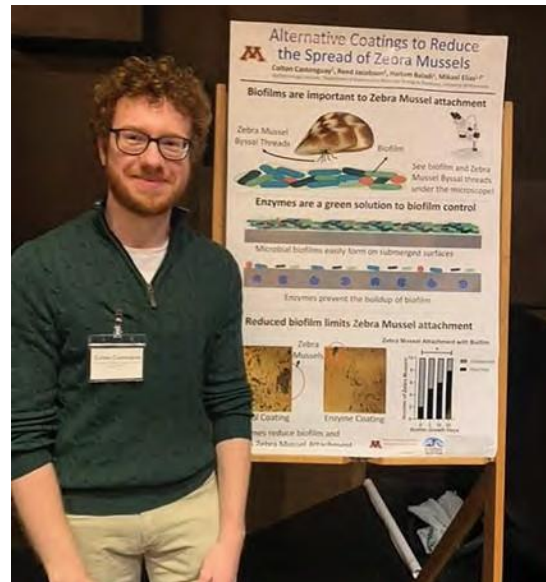
Robert Eliason, Environmental Committee Chair



Water quality is important because it can affect how we enjoy the lake. When the lake's water quality is good, people have no hesitation leaping off the end of their dock. This will be our tenth year measuring the water quality of our lakes. Please join us in celebrating this anniversary by becoming a volunteer. You will be mailed two sampling kits in May. Each kit contains a sample bottle and a postage paid mailing box for the sample bottle. When your sample has been collected, you just put it in the box and mail it. Participants collect one sample any day in June and one sample any day in August. You can join the program by contacting Robert Eliason at gcola.endofdock@gmail.com. Please include your mailing address for the kits and your lake address for your sampling location.

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

GCOLA was a proud sponsor of a table at the 10th anniversary Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Research Center (MAISRC) “From the Lab to the Lake” event on December 7 at the McNamara Alumni Center on the University of Minnesota’s Twin Cities campus. This event provided an opportunity to connect with researchers and concerned lake association representatives across Minnesota on the topic of aquatic invasive species (AIS). This informative event featured interactive exhibits, a celebration of MAISRC accomplishments, and a focus on what’s in store for the future of MAISRC.



Colton Castonguay conducts a poster session to discuss methods for reducing the spread of zebra mussels

I had a chance to meet with other concerned lake association leaders regarding AIS and listen to remarks by Dr Nick Phelps, our recent Gala speaker, and Executive Director of MAISRC. Claire and Ron Faust, Gull Lake residents and GCOLA contributors, are shown at our table and enjoyed the dinner and events throughout the evening.



ADOPT-A-BUOY

GULL CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION

ADOPT-A-BUOY MAP
March 22, 2024

Green Number: Buoy is available for adoption with a one time-payment of \$500 for five years. Contact jaymeklecker3@aim.com for more information.

LAKES AND BAYS: UPPER GULL LAKE, BASS LAKE, NISSWA LAKE, ROY LAKE, SPIDER LAKE, LAKE MARGARET, LOVE LAKE, GULL LAKE.

Adoption Numbers: 6, 66, 67, 11, 1, 59.

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- Help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species and share our vision of being Minnesota's favorite place
- **Weekend work May through September**
- Hours range from 18-40 hours per week
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2024 ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT

Dan Simon, Chair, Fisheries Committee

HELLO FELLOW FISHING FANS!

The famous Brainerd Jaycees Ice fishing Extravaganza had to shift to a virtual tournament with entrants fishing numerous lakes in the region and sending in pictures against an endorsed measuring device with a GPS and time stamp verifying the catch. Everyone loves the opportunity to gather at the annual event, but kudos go out to the Brainerd Jaycees for their yearlong efforts to pull off the normally challenging logistics and then have to shift completely due to ice conditions, and still pull off a great event.

The top three winners were:

		Species	Length	Points
1	Chhorn Chhang	Perch	14.50	109.41
2	Kevin George	Walleye	29.25	98.75
3	Mike Erholtz	Walleye	28.50	95.00



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WHATEVER IT TAKES

LAKES PRINTING CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Lakes Printing in Brainerd is the only business that is allowed access to our Association member list and only for the purpose of mailing our newsletter. They have issued the following confidentiality policy.

We have a strict policy of confidentiality. We will not sell, trade, swap or in any other way use your list for anything except mailing your newsletter. We understand fully that you are the owner of the list and we simply have an electronic copy on our system for your use. This policy is not just for the Gull Chain of Lakes Association, it is applied to all customers.

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YOUR LAKE ASSOCIATION IS WORKING FOR YOU

Aquatic Invasive Species Committee (AIS)

- Coordinates with the City of Lake Shore Police Department to provide watercraft inspections for invasive species.
- Conducts two inspections at 24 locations to look for AIS.
- Donates annually to the University of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) for zebra mussel research.
- Fulfills AIS prevention needs including establishing a boat power wash station at the USACE public access ramp.

Communications Committee

- Maintains a website, a member group email service and social media to provide timely communication.
- Issues four newsmagazines per year to keep members informed about association programs and important issues affecting the Gull Lake Chain.

Environmental Committee

- Monitors water quality of our lakes and stream inlets through quantitative chemical analysis. Samples are collected by GCOLA volunteers and analysis completed by a licensed environmental laboratory.
- Measures water quality during the summer by secchi disk readings taken by GCOLA volunteers.
- Promotes star gazing and northern lights viewing through educational initiatives on light pollution.

Finance/Audit Committee

- Oversees the GCOLA AIS Fund with BLACF, the Gull Chain Preservation Endowment Fund with Initiative Foundation and the AIS Contingency Fund which provide long term funding for fighting and eradicating AIS.
- Manages and provides oversight of finances and audit process.

Fisheries Committee

- Attends annual Avid Angler discussion led by DNR and local fishing guides and outdoor media.
- Stays informed on fishery-related research from the University of Minnesota AIS Research Center.

Gala Committee

- Plans and executes annual fundraising Gala, including silent auction, trip raffle, and event sponsorship.

Government Relations Committee

- Works with state legislators, the DNR, state agencies, and local government units on lake issues and concerns.
- Works with other lake associations, county COLAs, and state-wide lake-related organizations on common legislative priorities.

Lake Steward Committee

- More than 185 lakeshore owners working to protect our lakes with 97 Lake Steward awards to date.
- Provides funding for approved shoreland naturalization projects.
- Conducts a Tree Giveaway each spring to promote naturalization of shoreland to protect water quality.

Loon Conservancy Committee

- Conducts a yearly loon count in the spring and late summer.
- Educates boaters on loon-safe boating practices.
- Promotes the Get the Lead Out loon safe-fishing program.
- Supports loon reproduction activities including loon nesting platforms.

Membership Committee

- Conducts membership development programs to recruit and retain individual, family, and business memberships.

Safety & Recreation Committee

- Purchases, installs, and maintains one of the premier navigational buoy systems (100 buoys) in the State of Minnesota. We also install more than 20 no wake enforcement buoys for the sheriff 's department.
- Provides free maps, with boating rules and regulation, at three public landings.
- Partners with Cass and Crow Wing County sheriffs to provide free boat safety training for approximately 75 youth per year.
- Works with county sheriffs on safety and enforcement issues including donations for night vision equipment, a range finder, and life jackets.

Last s'mores of the season. Photo by Steve Brooks



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MISSION STATEMENT

Photo by Joey Halvorson

The Gull Chain of Lakes Association promotes the responsible use of land and water resources, supports recreational safety, strives to prevent and contain aquatic invasive species, and works to improve water quality and shoreland habitat on the Gull Lake Chain ecosystems now and in the future.