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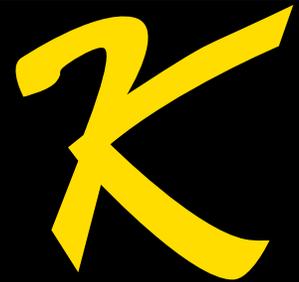


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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

2

Chuck Herrig, Chair

We can all agree this is a Spring unlike any we have ever experienced. It feels good to get away from the news and take a walk outside. The robins, bluebirds and sandhill cranes are highly active in our neighborhood.

This Spring 2020 edition of our quarterly newsletter is mailed to all Gull Lake Chain residents. Our intent with the broader distribution is to communicate the benefits of membership to the Gull Chain of Lakes Association known as GCOLA, share the work our lake association and partners are doing, and to encourage you to become a volunteer for the many opportunities available. We hope you enjoy reading this edition.

A Change of Plans

Another objective for the broader distribution of our Spring newsletter has been to promote our Annual Gala, but how the world and our community has changed. For the past month, the GCOLA Board Of Directors has been monitoring developments regarding COVID-19 and our state leaders' efforts to mitigate the spread. We arrived at the difficult decision to cancel this year's Gala for a few reasons.

One, in April our Gala Committee was at a point in our planning schedule to invest money in printing tickets, producing promotional materials and soliciting silent auction donations from GCOLA members and business partners.

It didn't feel appropriate to solicit donations in the current economic environment from those businesses who have generously supported our Gala in past years.

Second, looking at social distancing guidelines and the fact that we do not know the timeline for when the pandemic is behind us, it is not realistic to hold the Gala for 400 people in a confined event space.

This puts GCOLA in an unexpected financial position as the annual Gala is our single fund-raising event. If you have enjoyed attending the Gala in past years, we would love your support by encouraging you to donate to GCOLA for the amount you would have spent attending the Gala. Remember any donation to GCOLA is tax deductible. Thank you for considering making this worthwhile gift.

We look forward to bringing the Gala back in 2021 and I personally look forward to seeing many of you again.

We are still in the planning stages for our Annual Meeting. Finalizing a date and location can be determined with a relatively short lead time. We will mail GCOLA members a postcard with the Annual Meeting date and time this summer.

Brighter days are ahead. Stay safe and enjoy the spring season.



As you read this article, the “regular” session of the Minnesota legislature will have completed on May 18. This has not been a normal legislative session. Your Government Relations Committee was busy working the four legislative/government relations priority issues (shown below) both at the local and state level. The top three issues were also high priorities for Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR) and MN COLA. We (GCOLA, MLR and MN COLA) jointly were making excellent progress on all three issues when in mid- March, we had a “WALLOP”. That “wallop” was the COVID-19 pandemic issue and all legislative activity except for COVID-19 related items came to a screeching halt. MLR’s Jeff Forester (Exec Director) and Henry Erman (lobbyist) have their feet on the ground every day at the Capitol and their feeling is that there will be a short special session for non-COVID-19 legislation in the summer timeframe. Current status on our four priority legislative issues is as follows:

Consider regulations (distance from shore, depth, etc.) for watercraft creating enhanced wakes that are a safety issue, cause shoreline erosion and sub-surface ecological damage

House Bill HF 3770 and Senate Bill SF 3624 were generated establishing a 200-foot no-wake offset from shore, dock, rafts, etc. for all watercraft. Rep. Josh Heintzeman and Rep. John Poston were two of the authors for the House bill. Steve Frawley from our Government Relations Committee (GRC) asked Josh Heintzeman if they were open to compromise on the 200 ft. offset, but the response was “no”. House Environmental Chair Rep. Persell received little support for a 1000 ft. offset. GCOLA feels that the bills as written do not significantly reduce the problem with shoreline erosion and subsurface turbulence caused by enhanced wake watercraft (EWW). The Senate Environmental & Natural Resources Policy Committee chaired by Sen. Carrie Ruud held a committee hearing on SF 3624 on Mar. 4. Doug Johnston from our GRC attended the hearing. Chuck Becker for the Safe Wakes organization testified for tougher regulations and boat industry testifiers included Jeremy Wiczek from Nisswa Marine. The committee on a party-line vote of 7 – 5 approved the bill (Republicans – for, Democrats – against wanting greater off-set and more scientific studies). Those in favor of bill say it sets minimum restrictions where we have none today. They indicated the issue can be revisited considering new science and doesn’t stop local governments from setting tougher ordinances. House Environmental Committee Chair Persell is not accepting the industry study recommending 200 feet offset at face value. Rumor is he will

not allow the bill to be heard in the House committee. On the local scene, GRC members met with Mayor Kevin Egan and Lake Shore City officials. The Lake Shore City Government has concerns with enforcement of a potential local ordinance for EWW on Lake Margaret and Upper Gull. GRC members also met with Neal Gaalswyk, Chairman of the Cass County Board of Commissioners. We had an introductory meeting and are planning a future meeting to discuss local ordinance enforcement options.

Establish watercraft operator license program to make lakes safer for everyone

Our number two GCOLA priority is included in House Bill HF 4254 and Senate Bill SF 4307. They are identical bills that ask the DNR for recommendations for establishing boat safety program for operators that include:

- Operator permit required for watercraft over 16 ft.
- Permit issued after safety/education course is completed
- Endorsement and additional course required for Enhanced Wake Watercraft (EWW) operators
- Optional endorsement for AIS self-inspectors
- Study by MAISRC and St. Anthony Falls Lab on surface and sub-surface effects of enhanced waves on shoreline and lake bottoms to be completed by end of 2020
- Recommendations by MAISRC to legislature in January 2021

The House Environmental Policy Committee, led by Chair John Persell, held a hearing on HF 4254 on March 11. Representatives from MLR testified in favor of the bill. Bill HF 4254 was approved and referred to the House Environmental and Natural Resources Finance Division since fees and funding were included. At the time of the shutdown, companion bill SF 4307 had not been put on agenda for the Senate Environmental and Natural Resources Finance Committee agenda.

Increase boater AIS compliance with fines for AIS that are at parity with Minnesota game & fish fines including authority to impound

Our GCOLA number three priority is included in House Bill HF 3643 and Senanumber three Bill SF 4079. The House Bill HF 3643 has bi-partisan authors that include Rep. Josh Heintzeman and Rep. John Poston. These bills are identical to what GCOLA communicated to our local legislators on this issue in December. Both bills increase AIS fines per GCOLA recommendation:

- Increases drain plug fine from \$100 to \$250, plus other transfers to \$250
- Increases AIS transfer from \$500 to \$1000

The bills did not include “third strike rule” to impound, which was recommended by Rep. Josh Heintzeman. He had indicated that the “third strike rule” it would be a hard sell the first time around. The House Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Committee led by Chair Rep. Persell held a hearing on HF 3643 on March 2. MLR and MN COLA representatives testified at the hearing in favor of the bill. HF 3643 was approved and referred to House Judiciary Finance & Civil Law Division. Senate Bill SF 4079 still had not been scheduled for committee hearing even though chair of the committee (Sen. Ingebrigtsen) is author of the bill.

No more stocking of muskies in the Gull Chain of Lakes

GCOLA is working this as a local issue rather than a state-wide issue with the legislature. The Otter Tail County (OTC) lakes are following the same strategy. We are seeking a five-year moratorium on muskie stocking in the Gull Lake Chain

and asking for an independent study on the sociological/ economic impact and issues of muskie stocking in non-native lakes. House Bills HF 4004 and HF 4005 were authored by Rep. Josh Heintzeman, Rep. John Poston and Rep. Bud Nornes from OTC. HF 4004 asks for five-year moratorium for muskie stocking on Gull Chain and OTC lakes. HF 4005 asks for 5-year moratorium plus \$50K for socioeconomic study on effects of muskie stocking in Gull Chain of Lakes and OTC lakes. We were working to get Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen to author a similar Senate bill. House Environmental and Natural Resources Committee Chair Persell has agreed to hear HF 4005 (with study) but is waiting for an accompanying Senate bill.

The Government Relations Committee will continue to work with MNCOLA and MLR on these issues if non-COVID-19 legislation is restarted. Any bills introduced in this 2020 session but not acted upon will not carry over to 2021, since 2021 will be a new biennial session. Continue to be active and let your legislators and our Committee know how you feel on these issues.

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Sheila Johnston, Environmental Committee Chair

GCOLA's annual Tree Give-Away took place on Saturday, May 16. Members had a choice of white pine and paper birch trees. In order to provide more plant diversity to shoreline properties and food sources for pollinators and wildlife, American plum trees and several shrubs were also offered. The shrubs were false indigo, high bush cranberry, and nannyberry.

The Loon Program will be conducting three loon surveys this year and volunteers are needed. Each survey will only take about two hours of your time. There will be a nesting survey in early June, an adult and chick survey in July, and a chick survey in August. Volunteers may sign up for the surveys that fit their schedules. To sign up, please go to www.gcola.org. Click on **Get Involved** and then click on **Loon Programs**.

The Lake Steward Program is entering its second year. In our first season, 23 property owners were awarded beautiful Lake Steward signs for modeling environmentally friendly and best practices on their lakeside properties. Two more property owners were recognized this spring bringing us to a total of 25. The Lake Steward signs are displayed on the shoreline or on the end of the dock. More information about the Lake Steward Program is available on the GCOLA website under **Get Involved**. You will also find a link to GCOLA's Score Your Shore Mini Assessment. It takes just a few minutes to complete, and you can find out if you too qualify to be a Lake

Steward! Please contact lakesteward@gcola.org if you would like to be considered for the program or if you would like to recommend someone.

GCOLA promotes shoreline restoration projects through grants to members for restoration projects. Last year four new shoreline restoration projects were completed on Gull Lake, Lake Margaret and Upper Gull. If you are interested in becoming a Lake Steward but you need to make some changes to your property, the Shoreline Restoration Program can help! You can learn more about the program and find resources about shoreline restoration on the GCOLA website. If you are interested in pursuing a shoreline restoration project, contact sheilafjohnston@me.com.

Loons may still be on the nest in June or will be on the water with young chicks. Please see the tips for loon-safe boating in this issue. Please be alert for loons when boating, keep your distance, and never separate chicks from their parents. The best way to observe loons is at a distance. When fishing, never cast towards loons on the nest or on the water. If you lose fishing line or see it in the water, please pick it up so loons and other waterfowl are not entangled. Please share this information with others.

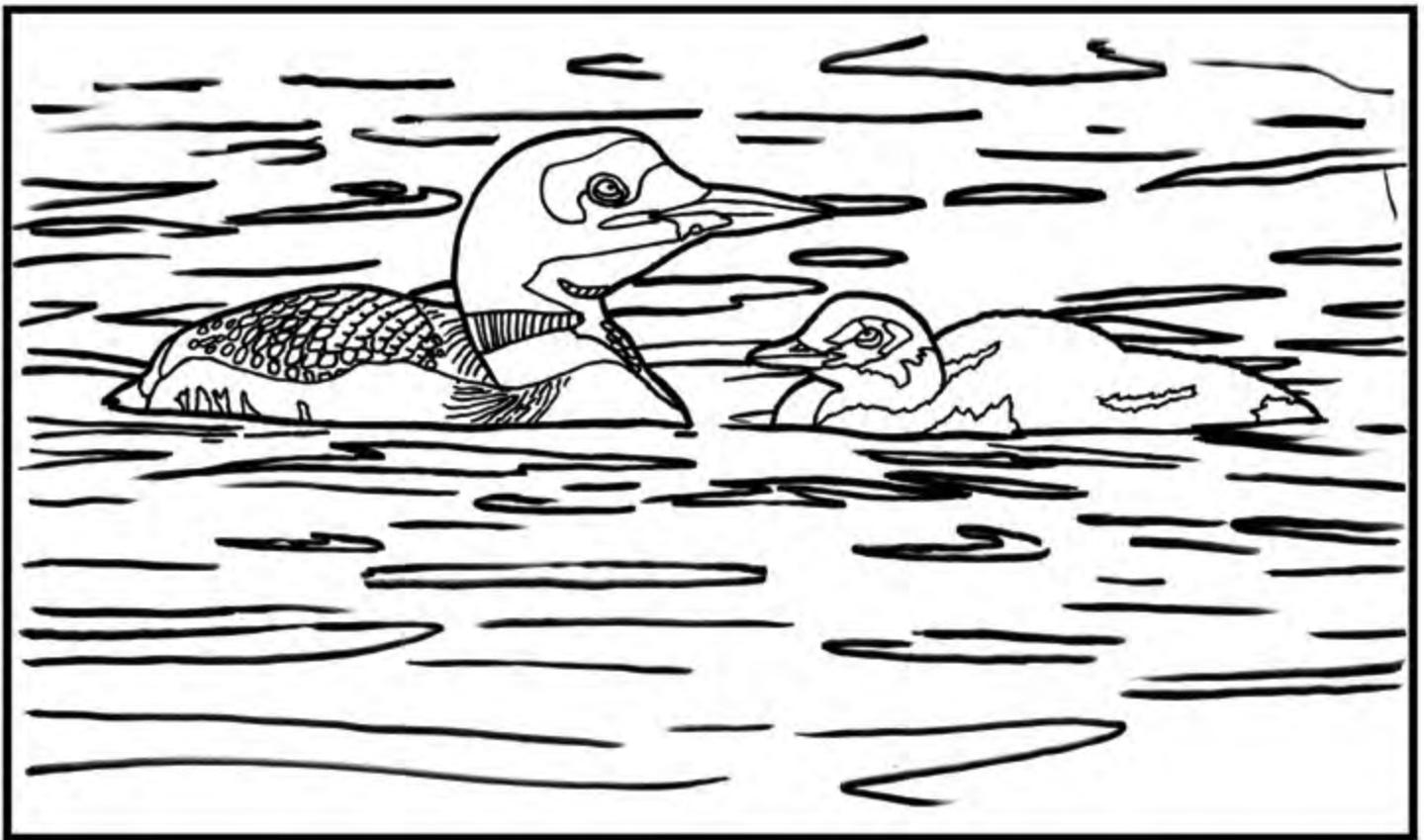




COLOR FUN!

Ask your parents to make a copy of this page for you to color,
and another copy for you to share with a friend!

Daddy Loon and Loon Chick on Gull Lake



Do you know what an adult loon and a chick look like?
See page 7

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- The Common Loon is Minnesota's state bird.
- Loons are diving birds that can dive up to 200 ft. underwater when they are searching for food.
- Their bodies are shaped for diving. To dive better, they have solid bones unlike other birds. Their feet are placed far back on their body for swimming underwater.
- Loons have red eyes with may help them see underwater.
- Loons eat fish such as sunfish, perch, and bullheads. They have elastic throats that allow them to swallow fish whole.
- In summer adult loons have a black and white checkered back. Their heads are an iridescent black that can look purple or green in the sunlight, and they have a white necklace around their throat. In the fall a loon's black and white plumage turns gray and remains that way during the winter.
- Minnesota loons migrate to the Gulf coast in the fall, and they return to their "home lake" each spring shortly after the ice goes out.

Daddy Loon and Loon Chick on Gull Lake



IT'S TIME TO GET THE LEAD OUT AND PROTECT WATERFOWL FROM LEAD POISONING. 8

Jeff Forester, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates and Noelle Hitz and Alero Moju, MN GreenCorps



Minnesota's state bird, the common loon, faces many threats. Shoreline disturbance, excessive wakes during nesting season, boat collisions and natural predation by eagles, muskie, large northern and mink, fishers, fox and pine marten. Swans and other waterfowl are also impacted.

But two of the biggest are oil pollution from the Deep Water Horizon catastrophe. Thousands of Minnesota's loons were impacted during their winter migration. Lead fishing tackle which loons and other waterfowl ingest thinking it gravel for their crops, pose a significant threat.

This year, using funds from the Deep Water Horizon settlement, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is rolling out its Get the Lead Out! (GTLO!) program to encourage anglers to turn in their toxic lead tackle in exchange for free non-lead alternatives.

The objective of the Get the Lead Out! Program is to prevent loon deaths and increase adult survival rates by reducing exposure of common loons to lead through advocacy of intervention activities that promote the use of non-toxic fishing tackle in Minnesota.

Lead poisoning, resulting from ingestion of lead fishing tackle is recognized as one of the leading causes of death in breeding common loons, and ingestion of lead fishing tackle has been found to be the cause of death in 10 to 20% of Minnesota loons. Studies indicate that replacing lead fishing sinkers and jigs with non-toxic alternatives provide immediate benefits to loon populations.

Get the Lead Out! A program facilitated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency hopes to provide a proactive educational and assistance program that encourages Minnesota anglers, retailers, tackle manufacturers, nonprofits and schools to use environmentally friendly non-lead fishing tackle. Some program activities are lead tackle exchanges, providing retailer point of purchase displays, and presenting/ tabling events.

Because lake associations have such deep ties to their local communities, including angling tournaments, town festivals and other events, are uniquely positioned to lead on this effort.

There are numerous opportunities for partnership with GTLO! through hosting one of the following events: tackle exchange, education/ outreach, and sport shows. If there are any opportunities not listed above that you would like to partner with us on, please contact us.

This spring, the MPCA and Minnesota Lakes and Rivers hosted an hour-long webinar on the topic. A recording is available to view on MLR's website at www.mnlakesandrivers.org.

For more information and to sign up for the program and partnering with MPCA, go to:

- To sign up to host an event: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGIpikkRqzH3w3yu0MKds5wpsci2asVdSUnmzSXjetkCBg/viewform?usp=sf_link
- For more information: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/nontoxic-tackle-lets-get-lead-out>

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Get the Lead Out! campaign is a Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) project. The work is being paid for with funds provided by BP as part of a 2016 settlement agreement with federal and state governments to compensate the public for injuries to natural resources and recreational use caused by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates

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9 TIPS FOR LOON SAFETY



Tips for Loon-Safe Boating

Death from collision with a watercraft is one of the most common causes of loon deaths.

- Please stay at least 150 feet away from loons, if possible.
- Young chicks are unable to dive or get out of the way of boats. If struck by a boat, they will die.
- **SPEED KILLS!** Please keep your speed down near adult loons and chicks, especially outside no wake zones where loons rear their chicks.
- Do not separate loon families by boating between them. Loon parents are not able to protect their chicks when separated.
- Do not pursue loons. Let them decide how close they wish to come to your watercraft.
- Do not circle loons with your watercraft. This is harassment and is subject to a fine from the MN DNR.
- When pulling tubers, wake-boarders, or skiers do not allow them to get close to or separate loon families.
- Do not feed loons! Loons will start chasing baited hooks, endangering their lives.
- Do not cast towards loons.
- Please pick up broken fishing line in the water so the loons don't become entangled.



When threatened, adults will lift their body out of the water, flap their wings, and issue a tremolo call. This means, "Stay away!" If you see this display, please immediately leave the area.

Remember, the best way to observe loons is at a distance with binoculars.

If you see a sick, injured, or dead loon please call a conservation officer at 888-646-6367.

Thank you for protecting our loons! Please share this information with other boaters. For more information about loons go to www.gcola.org.

Tips for Loon-Safe Boating Near Nesting Loons



May and June

The Common Loon is Minnesota's state bird. We have many nesting pairs on the Gull Chain of Lakes. Loons typically return to their nesting territories as soon as the ice is out and they are on the nest in May and June. While you are boating, we hope you enjoy observing the loons.

Please follow these loon-safe boating tips to protect our loons while you enjoy your day on the lake!



Natural nest



Man-made nest

- **Please stay at least 150 feet away from nesting loons.**
Nesting is a vulnerable time for loons.
- **Please keep your watercraft speed slow to keep wakes to a minimum near nesting sites.**
Loons nest on natural nests which look like grassy mounds close to the water's edge or on artificial loon nesting platforms. Nests can be washed out by wave action from boats or jetskis.
- **Please immediately back away if you see a loon in a head-down position.**
Normally a loon sits on the nest in a relaxed position with its head upright. A loon with its head craned forward or down senses a threat and may abandon the nest, leaving the eggs to be taken by a predator or destroyed by chilling or overheating. Loons need to incubate their eggs for 26 to 29 days.

If you see a sick, injured, or dead loon please call a conservation officer at 888-646-6367.

Thank you for protecting our loons! Please share this information with other boaters. For more information about loons go to www.gcola.org.

TIPS FOR LOON SAFETY

Loon Chicks at Different Stages of Development

The Common Loon is Minnesota's state bird. There are many loon families on the Gull Chain of Lakes raising their young throughout the summer. As summer passes, adults leave their chicks alone more often, making them more vulnerable to being struck by a boat.

Photographs by Sheila Farrell Johnston



Chick in June with adult loon



Chick transitioning to flight feathers



Chick in late August, early September



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PLEASE PICK UP BROKEN FISHING LINE

Sheila Johnston, Environmental Committee Chair

Broken fishing line left in the water or hanging from trees is a deadly hazard for loons, waterfowl, eagles, and other birds. If you are an angler, please pick up broken line. If you are a boater or paddler, you can help too! When on the water, please keep your eyes open for broken line and pick it up. This loon was found with fishing line around his leg, body, head, beak, and tongue. It appeared that there was a hook embedded in his throat. Thankfully, wildlife specialists were able to untangle the fishing line. The hook was in his gizzard and it was left there to be ground up by pebbles loons ingest to grind up their food. There was no lead sinker and his lead levels were good. This loon was a father with chicks, and through the team efforts of everyone involved in the rescue he was returned to his family quickly. Most incidents like this do not have a happy ending. Please pick up broken or discarded fishing line and save our loons and wildlife.



Photo by Acadia Wildlife

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GULL LAKE AVID ANGLER MEETING RECAP

Chuck Herrig, Fisheries Chair

14



In January 2020 DNR Fisheries Manager, Mark Bacigalupi, hosted a meeting with fishing guides, fishing media, a DNR Conservation Officer, a resort owner, and me to discuss our observations from the 2019 fishing season. Marc also shared the latest DNR Fishery Survey for the Gull Lake Chain. I appreciate that GCOLA is represented in this setting and it speaks to the importance of the Gull Lake Chain fishery to the Brainerd Lakes area.

Fishing Observations:

In May and June, large walleyes were found in surprisingly shallow water. Some walleyes stay shallow all summer.

Lots of bigger walleyes were caught, particularly in June, July and August, on weed edges. The primary guide tactic is using a slip bobber with a leech, which is challenging with multiple fishermen in the boat potentially tangling on weeds.

As I have shared in past years, walleye fishing locations have changed since the introduction of zebra mussels as the fish now stay tucked in the weeds for cover.

Fall walleye fishing was slower than in past years, especially September. Some guides had tough luck in October as well. Several guides noted that walleyes are staying shallower than they were traditionally in fall.

Open water night fishing for walleye continues to draw loads of fishermen and they are doing well.

Lots of small 12" walleyes were caught through the ice this winter. One guide noted tullibeeps were widespread this winter.

All guides noticed an increase in the number of smallmouth bass in the Gull Lake Chain. They are not stocked. The increase in smallmouth bass is a recent trend seen in many walleye lakes in Minnesota.

Pan fish and bass fishing continues to be very good throughout the chain.

Tim Collette, DNR Conservation Officer, has observed a steady decline in the number of fishermen on the Gull Lake Chain for fishing opener over the years. Everyone agreed the Gull Lake Chain is transitioning from a fishing destination to a recreational boating destination.

Wheeled ice houses are having a huge impact in winter. An aerial count on Mille Lacs counted 10,000 houses in January, despite a one walleye limit. Because of poor ice conditions on many lakes including Leech and Red, fishermen are going where the ice was safe, especially Mille Lacs and Lake of the Woods. During spot checks by the DNR, many wheel ice houses in the Brainerd Lakes area were vacant on the ice and some that were occupied did not have drilled holes! In these instances, people are using wheeled ice houses as weekend cabins on the ice.

This group unanimously support lowering the statewide limit for walleye from 6 to 4 fish. Unfortunately, there is currently not broad enough support across the state to implement the regulation change.

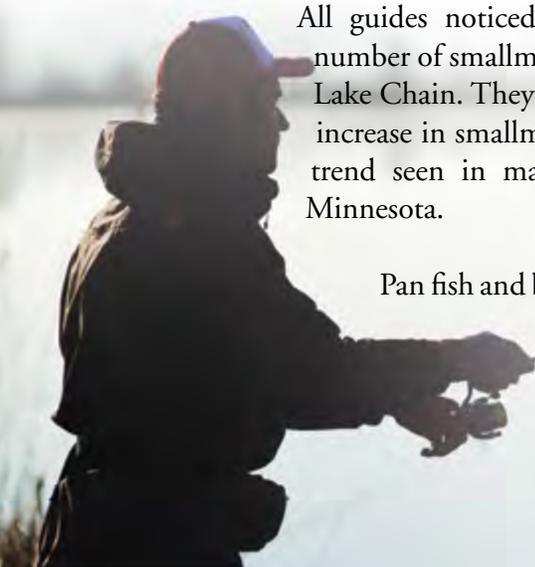
DNR Walleye Fishery survey:

Walleye fry survival on Gull Lake continues to be low which would normally trigger walleye fingerling stocking again this Fall. The Lake Management Plan for the Gull Lake Chain states if walleye fry survival is poor in two consecutive years, fingerlings will be stocked that fall. Fingerlings cost about one dollar each and you need to stock about 50,000 fingerlings to be meaningful.

There is a strong correlation between zebra mussel proliferation beginning in 2011 and reduced walleye fry survival ever since in the Gull Lake Chain.

The DNR Gull Lake survey netting in fall 2019 also showed poor adult walleye counts at approx. 3 walleyes per net lift. For comparison, a good year on Gull would yield 6 walleyes per lift. The best walleye lakes in Minnesota yield 10 walleyes or more per lift.

As you have probably read, due to COVID-19 the DNR cancelled statewide walleye egg collection operations. Stocked walleye fry in the Gull Lake Chain come from the operation in Pine River. Hence, no walleye fry were stocked this spring in the Gull Lake Chain. This may mean there will not be walleye fingerlings available this Fall, yet to be confirmed.



BE AWARE OF BEARS THIS SPRING: DNR LISTS TIPS FOR AVOIDING CONFLICTS

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



As bears emerge from hibernation, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reminds homeowners to check their property for food sources that could attract bears.

“April is a good time to walk around your property to remove or secure anything that could attract a bear,” said Eric Nelson, wildlife damage program supervisor for the DNR. “Taking action now to avoid attracting bears can help you prevent a season-long a problem.”

As bears emerge from hibernation, their metabolism gradually ramps up and they will begin looking for food at a time when berries and green vegetation are scarce. People should remove or secure attractants such as birdseed, garbage, livestock feed, or compost to reduce potential conflict.

Black bears are the only bear species that live in the wild in Minnesota. Bears are more common in the forested region of northern Minnesota, but can live anywhere in the state if they find an area of suitable habitat. They usually are shy and flee when encountered. Never approach or try to pet a bear. Injury to people is rare, but bears are potentially dangerous because of their size, strength and speed.

Avoid bear conflicts by following these tips:

Around the yard

- Any time you feed birds, you risk attracting bears. Avoid feeding birds from April 1 to Nov. 15.
- If you still wish to feed birds, hang birdfeeders 10 feet up and 4 feet out from the nearest trees. Use a rope and pulley system to refill birdfeeders, and clean up spilled seeds.
- Do not put out feed for wildlife (like corn, oats, pellets or molasses blocks).

- Replace hummingbird feeders with hanging flower baskets, which are also attractive to hummingbirds.
- Do not leave food from barbecues and picnics outdoors, especially overnight. Standard coolers are not bear-proof.
- Clean and store barbecue grills after each use. Store them in a secure shed or garage away from windows and doors.
- Elevate bee hives on bear-proof platforms or erect properly designed electric fences.
- Pick any fruit left on trees from last fall and collect any fallen fruit promptly.
- Cover all compost material added during the winter by turning the piles or covering with leaves, shavings, manure or other compostable material. If you compost household food scraps, consider securing it with an electric fence.
- Harvest garden produce as it matures. Locate gardens away from forests and shrubs that bears may use for cover.
- Use native plants in landscaping whenever possible.
- Store pet food inside and feed pets inside. If pets must be fed outdoors, feed them only as much as they will eat.

Garbage

- Store garbage in bear-resistant garbage cans or dumpsters. Standard rubber or plastic garbage cans are not bear-proof.
- Keep garbage inside a secure building until the morning of pickup.
- Properly rinse all recyclable containers with hot water to remove all remaining product.
- Store recyclable containers, such as pop cans, inside.

More bear information

People should be cautious around bears and give them space. If bear problems persist after cleaning up food sources, contact a DNR area wildlife office for advice. For the name of the local wildlife manager, contact the DNR Information Center at 651-296-6157 or 888-646-6367, or find wildlife area office contact information on the DNR website.

The DNR does not relocate problem bears because doing so does not resolve the underlying problem, which is often unsecured attractants provided by people. Relocated bears generally become a problem somewhere else.

For more information, visit the DNR website. Additionally, the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has information online at bearwise.org

Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston

2020 BOAT SAFETY CLASSES CANCELLED

Bob Toborg, Safety & Recreation Chair



The COVID-19 Virus has yet another victim, the GCOLA boat safety classes. In the past, the boat safety classes for youth ages 12 to 17 have been sponsored by the Gull Chain of Lakes Association and conducted by the Cass and Crow Wing Sheriff's Departments at the Gull Lake Yacht Club. With the uncertainty of the spread of the COVID-19 virus, it was reluctantly decided to cancel the 2020 classes.

According to Minnesota state law, all youth aged 12-17 years old are required to have a permit to operate a boat with a motor of over 25 hp. There is an online DNR approved class that will qualify teens for the required permit. The online class is offered by a private company and has a \$24.95 fee. For more information on this class, go to boaterexam.com and click **Minnesota**.

We are sorry about this unfortunate turn of events. Hopefully, life will be back to normal by 2021 and the classes can resume next summer.



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MOSQUITOES AND MOTHER NATURE'S SECRET WEAPON

Sheila Johnston, Environmental Committee Chair

Mosquitoes are the tiny insect with a big, bad reputation that has been rightfully earned. Many people wonder if mosquitoes have any positive effects on the world. In fact, they do!

- Dragonflies feed on adult mosquitoes and their larvae. Bats also feed on mosquitoes. Fish eat the larval forms of mosquitoes and sometimes consume adults that linger on the surface of the water. These animals provide food for others in the food chain.
- Mosquitoes help pollinate aquatic plants and near-aquatic plants. In turn, these plants provide shelter and protection for other animals and organisms.
- Due to the role of mosquitoes in the eco-system, there are a greater number of species in the environment. Many birds are mosquito eaters. Chickadees, swallows, house wrens, bluebirds, warblers, vireos, tanagers, sparrows, and orioles all catch flying insects in the air, which allows them to stay safe from predators and increase the survival of the species. Even birds that are seed eaters feed their young mosquitoes.
- Medical discoveries and treatments have been based on the unique characteristics of mosquitoes.

Despite the many positive contributions of mosquitoes, no one wants to be bitten! Instead of spraying your yard with harmful chemicals that will kill butterflies, bees, moths, and beneficial insects, as well as harm birds and aquatic animals, let Mother Nature give a helping hand. Dragonflies are Mother Nature's secret weapon! They do not sting or bite, and they do not carry diseases or germs. One dragonfly can eat hundreds of mosquitoes in a single day! Dragonfly larvae are even more effective. They play a significant role in regulating mosquito populations as they kill mosquito larvae, or "nymphs", in the water. They can stay in their larval stage for up to two years. Dragonflies also control other insects like midges, deerflies, blackflies, and horseflies. They are the top predator in the insect world.

Planting trees and shrubs on your property will provide good hiding spots for young dragonflies. Water plants that grow near the lake or plants that grow in the shoreline buffer are also sought after by dragonflies. Black-Eyed Susans, Joe-Pye Weed, Swamp Milk Weed, and White Yarrow planted in the garden or shoreline buffer will also attract dragonflies to your property.

Do our lake eco-system a favor and let Mother Nature's "exterminator" do their job to control mosquito populations safely.



Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston

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THE ORIGIN OF LAKE STEWARDS PART I: FINDING THE MISSING LINK

18

Dorothy Whitmer, Lake Steward Coordinator

A few years ago, an intriguing quiz dropped into my mailbox. It was called “Rate Your Shoreland!” I took the quiz because I was certain I would get a high score: my shoreland is neat and tidy, perfect! What could go wrong? Well, I tanked. And I tanked in so many ways.

It turns out that hundreds of years ago, the lakeshore on our chain of lakes looked like the Pillsbury State Forest, a stretch of undeveloped land on the west side of main Gull Lake. As seen from the water, there is dense forest climbing the bluff, the trees near shore hanging out over the water. Fallen trees are left as they are, and the view from a boat, especially up close, is majestic. All lakes age: runoff slowly adds silt and nutrients to the water over time, so that the water becomes cloudier and less appealing, but native forest on lakeshore is associated with the slowest and therefore healthiest aging process. The fastest aging and deterioration of our lakes happens when we remove trees and develop the land in ways that increase runoff.

I don't mean to say that all of us should pitch a tent on our property to keep it untouched. We need homes. And I think it's good for us to enjoy the lakes so that we can be strong advocates and protectors of our watershed. Minnesota's Shoreland Management Act of 50 years ago gives us good guidance on setbacks and other ways to make our homes friendly for the lakes. Our counties have land and watershed management plans that encourage good practices. But somehow those facts from the state and county are not getting through to people like myself who are managing lakeshore. So often there is a Missing Link between what is known to help our lakes and what we do on our properties.

I called Julia Kirkwood, who had written for the state of Michigan the “Rate Your Shoreland” quiz that I took (using my Minnesota property) and she told me that she had taken the idea from Minnesota! (Score Your Shore Quick Guide, available on the DNR website). Michigan also makes their more detailed quiz available online, but unlike Minnesota they collect the results and give certificates to high scorers, encouraging lower scorers to improve to earn a certificate. When I asked how she got people to take the quiz in the

first place, did they have billboards to advertise, she laughed and said no, that was the problem. Getting the message to landowners is, in fact, the Missing Link between knowing how best to protect our lakes and taking action to do just that.

You won't be surprised to learn that the Missing Link is us: GCOLA, and everyone who shares our mission of protecting the Gull Lake Chain. If you aren't yet a member, please join us at gcola.org. We bring to you the ways we can each make our lakes healthier and more resistant to invasive species. How do you find out what to do? Go to gcola.org, click **Get Involved**, click **Lake Steward Program** and then click **Score Your Shore Mini Assessment**. Please leave an email address. It's only a few questions and most people complete it in 2 minutes or less. And I hope it leads you to join us as a Lake Steward and be awarded a beautiful sign for your lakeshore.

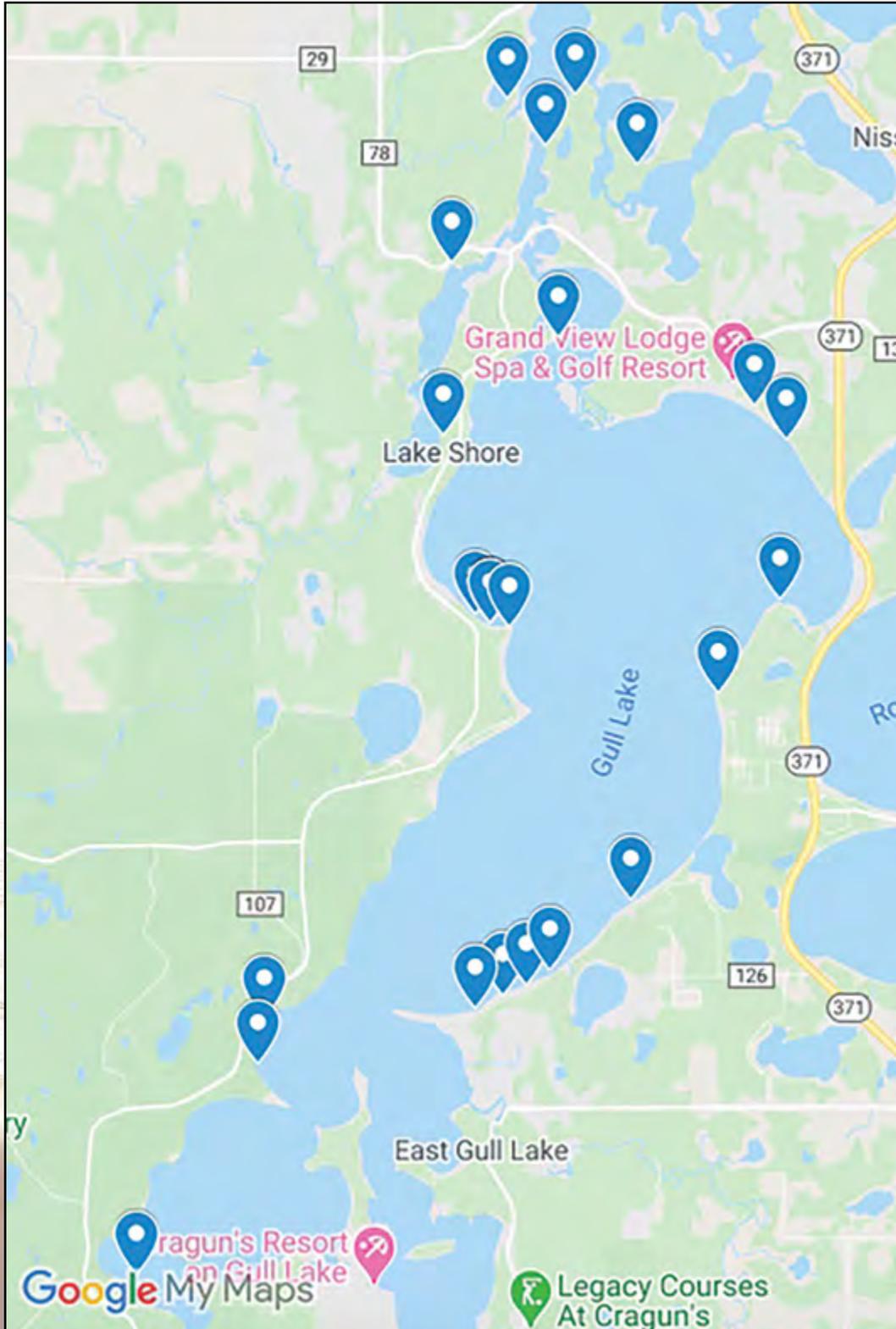
Now back to how, to my great dismay, I tanked on the Michigan quiz. I did have a 25-ft shoreline buffer, but only on half of my shoreline. And I had lawn. Lots of lawn. Lawn that I fertilized and treated with pesticides. Yes, I was so neat and tidy! But that tidiness is harmful to the lake. And the funny thing is, even though I told myself that I love using my lawn with kids and grandkids (squirt gun fights, with me running around in a full to the wrist and ankle wetsuit as body armor!) I don't need so much lawn.

Next time, I'll tell you how I dithered. How I waited 3 years while agonizing about how to do the right thing with my lakeshore. Finally, in March of 2019, I pitched an idea to GCOLA's Board of Directors; they embraced it and funded it, and Lake Stewards was born. From March to September of 2019, of GCOLA's 1,000 members, 150 people took the Score Your Shore Mini Assessment, and 23 have so far been recognized as Lake Stewards, with many more to come this year. Now all we need is you.



CRUISE THE LAKE

23 beautiful Lake Steward signs have been awarded and placed on lakeshore properties of the Gull Chain of Lakes, as shown on the map. See how many signs you can find while you are cruising the lake! Enlist the kids, who are great at spotting them; binoculars can help, too. When you find one, it's fun to think of why that property was chosen. Feel free to take photographs, and send photos, comments and questions to us at lakesteward@gcola.org. To learn more, go to gcola.org, click **Get Involved** and click **Lake Stewards**. And if you know of other Lake Steward worthy properties please let us know! Good Luck!



...AND FIND THE LAKE STEWARD SIGNS!



REMINDER

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Photo by Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

GULL LAKE SHORELINE RESTORATION

Shelley McDonald has been a Gull Laker her entire life, and she is a passionate and dedicated Lake Steward. From ages one to seven she spent summer vacations at Ozonite and Sandy Point Resorts with her family. In 1961 Shelley's parents purchased their Schaefer's Point property from F.B. Schachtrup. F.B. spotted the kids sitting in the backseat of the car and noted they were the same ages as his kids, and he said, "I'll sell it to you!" The prospect of instant playmates sealed the deal.



Shelley McDonald, Lake Steward

The brown A frame cabin with the yellow gingerbread trim on Schaefer's Point is a Gull Lake landmark. According to local legend, Clark Gable slept in a tent in the backyard. The cabin was designed by Shelley's grandfather, Alexander McDonald, and father, Gordon McDonald. Alexander was from Nova Scotia, and his idea was to build an A-frame so the snow would slide off the roof. It was originally a fishing cabin with linoleum floors that Gordon could hose off after a weekend of fishing. Today the cabin is a cozy lakeside home filled with memories of decades of summers on Gull Lake.



Bird house in birch tree



The cabin designed by Shelley's grandfather and dad

It has been close to 60 years since the family property was purchased, and it is still studded with towering white pines, birch, maple, and basswood trees. Shelley takes her commitment of being a Lake Steward seriously. No fertilizer, herbicides, or pesticides are used on the property. The screen porch was added to the cabin in recent years to protect her elderly mother and aunt from mosquitoes and biting bugs, so no insecticides would need to be used.

Growing up at the cabin in the 1960s was an idyllic experience for Shelley and her siblings. There were few cabins and no shore stations, and the kids often walked the long uninterrupted shoreline of Schaefer's Point. There was a three-foot stretch of sandy beach to the lake, and lily pads grew in the aquatic zone.

With increased boat traffic beginning in around 2012, the property was being flooded by boat waves, and waves were lapping on the land. Rip rap had been installed in the 1990s. (The Minnesota DNR now advises against the installation of shoreline rip rap, but this was a common practice in the 1990s.) Waves were washing the sand from beneath the rip rap and pulling the rocks into the lake. With her beloved property washing away, Shelley sought assistance from Ron Faust and GCOLA's Shoreline Restoration Program.



potted Joe Pye Weed is a great buffer plant and is a favorite with pollinators.



*Shoreline Buffer:
Black Eyed Susan, Blue Lobelia, and Jewel Weed*



*Shoreline Buffer:
Blazing Star and Sneezeweed*

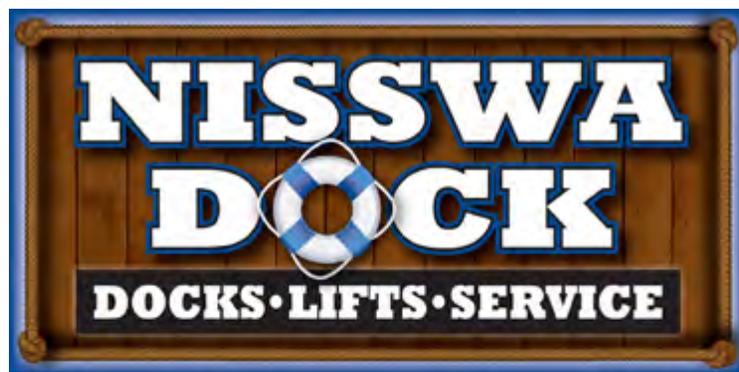
A plan was created by Jane Kimball and 150 seeds were planted to create a shoreline buffer behind the riprap. Plants include blue lobelia, blazing star, jewel weed, horsetail, boneset, partridge pea, sneezeweed, blue flag iris, wild rose, woodland sunflowers, black-eyed Susans, nodding beggar tick, blue vervain and spotted Joe Pye weed. There is a rain garden in addition to the shoreline buffer. Shelley said hummingbirds particularly love the cardinal flowers in the rain garden, and bees, monarch butterflies, and birds are constant visitors in the buffer. Plants have also been added to the rip rap. The continuous onslaught of boat waves is making it difficult for them to take root, but some are slowly establishing.

Prior to planting the buffer, shoreline was being lost. Since the buffer has been established the land is being protected from the deterioration of wave action. However, it would still be helpful if boaters would reduce their wakes and keep further distance from shore.

The buffer is a thick lush tapestry of color. Besides the protection the shoreline buffer provides to her property, Shelley said, "I love it because it is beautiful to look at. The colors change throughout the seasons. Every day is like a present and you don't know what you are going to get!"

Shelley advises others not to be afraid that maintaining a shoreline buffer will be too much work. "The shoreline buffer is not any work at all. It takes care of itself."

For more information about GCOLA's Shoreline Restoration grant program and Lake Steward program, visit www.gcola.org and click **Get Involved**.



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photo by Dave Anderson



photo by Jill Kinsley



photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston

Do you have photos you've taken around the Gull Lake chain you'd like to share with other members? We need pictures to be used in the GCOLA newsletter, website and Facebook. We have a shortage of fishing and boating snapshots so those are especially appreciated. You will be given credit for any photographs printed in the newsletter. Putting a caption with the picture is also helpful. Your snapshots can be sent at full size to Sue Friedrichs at info@gcola.org.

All photos should be supplied at the highest resolution/largest size possible, thank you.

BE A FRIEND TO FIREFLIES!

Sheila Johnston, Environmental Committee Chair

One of my favorite childhood memories is of playing Starlight, Moonlight beneath the black starlit sky as fireflies zigzagged through the darkness. The waves lapped softly against the shore as I hid behind a big white pine. Sadly, this is not an experience our children will share unless we make some changes. Firefly populations are in serious decline, but there are steps we can take to increase their numbers. Let's make those changes and be a friend to fireflies!

HOW TO HELP

Turn off outside lights at night

Fireflies use their flashing lights to signal each other, attract mates and warn of danger. Studies indicate that human light pollution can disrupt their flashes, making it harder for fireflies to find mates and breed. This leads to fewer fireflies in subsequent generations. You can make your yard a haven for fireflies by turning off exterior and yard lights and drawing your blinds so that interior light does not brighten your yard. To further reduce the chance of interior light brightening the outdoors, turn off lights in rooms that are not being used.

Let logs and tree and plant litter accumulate

Some species of firefly larvae grow up in rotten logs and the litter that accumulates beneath trees. To encourage their growth, plant native trees on your property. If you have trees in your yard, leave some natural litter around them to give firefly larvae a place to develop.

Avoid use of pesticides and lawn chemicals

The best thing you can do is to stop using lawn chemicals and broad-spectrum pesticides. Firefly larvae eat other undesirable insects, so they are nature's natural pest control. Fireflies and their larvae may come into contact with other insects that have been poisoned, or they may ingest poisons that have been sprayed. Both herbicides and chemical fertilizers

are toxic to fireflies. Firefly larvae spend their first two years in the lawn or grass. Studies have shown that lawn chemicals are very toxic to the food that sustains firefly larvae. Avoid using pesticides on your lawn and you will help boost firefly populations. If you spray your property for mosquitoes, you will be killing all insects in the area. Pesticides do not discriminate. They will kill fireflies, butterflies, moths, bees, and beneficial insects that prey on mosquitoes.

Don't over-mow your lawn

Fireflies mainly stay on the ground during the day, and frequent mowing could disturb firefly populations. Consider incorporating some areas of long grasses into your landscape. Fireflies prefer long grasses and doing this may boost the firefly population in your yard.

Plant native trees

Fast growing pine and native trees provide a good habitat for fireflies. Pine trees provide shade and the low light area created by a canopy increases the amount of time fireflies have to find a mate. If left to accumulate, the litter produced by pine trees provides a good habitat for earthworms and other sources of food for firefly larvae.

Talk to your neighbors

If you live in proximity to others, what you do in your yard will help, but you can create more habitat for fireflies if you enlist your neighbors' involvement. Tell your neighbors about your concerns for the dwindling fireflies and share what they can do to help boost firefly populations. If you can convince one or two people, you could increase firefly habitat and populations.

Let's allow some room for wildness on our properties and bring back the magic of fireflies to summer nights at the lake!

WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

Check out our website at www.gcola.org to learn about GCOLA. It's a great resource if you're looking for a prior copy of our newsletter, want to learn how to become a Lake Steward, need a map of the buoy system, wonder what a certain type of AIS looks like or want to contact us.

We post regularly in Facebook about GCOLA and related articles. Like us on Facebook @GullLakeChain to stay informed.



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WITH NO GALA, IS GCOLA STILL FINANCIALLY SOUND?

Uldis Birznieks, Finance Committee

The GCOLA Gala is one of the three major sources of income for our lake association. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the GCOLA Board of Directors felt it was in the best interests of our membership that we cancel the Gala for 2020. Given that scenario, how will that impact the financial stability of GCOLA? Let's look.

A good starting point is to remove the budgeted Gala expenses and income from the 2020 Budget. We already have incurred some expenses for the Gala in terms of deposits for the venue (Grand View Conference Center), the on-line silent auction bidding vendor, etc. All those deposits will carry forward to our 2021 Gala and have not been lost, but still are expenses this year. A comparison of the 2020 GCOLA Budget with and without the Gala is shown below:

2020 BUDGET WITHOUT GALA"

2020 Budget			2020 Budget W/O GALA	
	\$ (K)	%	\$ (K)	%
Income	Income		Income	
Dues	50.0	35%	50.0	53%
Donations	32.0	23%	32.0	34%
Dues	47.4	34%	0	0%
Dues	11.6	8%	11.6	12%
Totals	141.0		93.6	
Expenses	Expenses		Expenses	
Environmental/AIS	59.3	39%	59.3	44%
Buoy System/Safety	30.0	20%	30	22%
GALA	22.4	15%	5.7	4%
Administration	18.5	12%	18.5	14%
Comm/Gov Rel./Member	18.5	12%	18.5	14%
Totals	151.1		134.4	
Net Income	(\$10.1)		(\$40.8)	
AIS Contingency Fund	20.0			

With all other GCOLA budget income and expense items not changed, except for pulling out the Gala income/expense, the budgeted net come increases (negatively) from a (\$10.1K) to (\$40.8K). This is a significant change.

Since we started a formalized budgeting process in 2012, our actual net income has been higher than our budgeted net income in each of those eight years. Thus, an analysis of recent budgets to actuals could provide insight into how GCOLA might sit financially at year-end. The next chart

is an analysis of the prior three (3) years (2017 – 2019) of GCOLA actual income/expenses versus budget without the Gala income/expenses.

3 YRS WITHOUT GALA"

	Budget	Actual	Actuals vs. Budget
Year 2019	\$K	\$K	\$K
Income	93.9	96.5	
Expenses	110.8	104.6	
Net	(\$16.9)	(\$8.1)	+8.8
Year 2018			
Income	90	97.1	
Expenses	114.8	80.3	
Net	(\$24.8)	+16.8	+41.6
Year 2017			
Income	98.6	92.7	
Expenses	107.5	83.8	
Net	(8.9)	+8.9	+17.8
Three Yea Average			+22.7

In 2019, pulling out the Gala data, net income bettered budgeted net income by +\$8.8K. Likewise in 2018, net income bettered budgeted net income by +\$41.6K and in 2017, we bettered budgeted net income by +\$17.8K. The three-year average for 2017 – 2019 thus was \$17.8K were actual net income beat budgeted net income.

At the time that we write this article, GCOLA had \$98.2K cash in our checking account, exclusive of the AIS contingency. In looking at a range of where that checking balance will be at year end without the Gala, we have the following three data points:

- If we meet our budgeted net income/expenses, net income is (\$40.8K) and checking balance is \$57.4K
- If 2020 net income is like 2019, net income is (\$32.0K) and checking balance is \$66.2K.
- If 2020 net income is like 3-year average, net income is (\$18.2K) and checking balance is \$80.0K

Given these three scenarios, our forecast GCOLA checking balance at year-end 2020 will be somewhere between \$57.4K and \$80.0K.

In conclusion, even without the net income for the 2020 Gala, GCOLA will still be in sound financial shape.

As with several other non-profits in our Brainerd Lakes area that are cancelling their fundraisers, we would like you to consider the following to help GCOLA maintain its sound financial condition for years to come. Consider taking the

amount that your Gala ticket would have been \$50/ticket and donate it to GCOLA. As always, we really appreciate your generosity and continued commitment to our beautiful Gull Chain of Lakes.

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

GCOLA GALA

During this time, our work continues as the Stewards of the Gull Lake chain.

Please consider a donation for the amount you would have budgeted for the event.

To donate go to <https://www.gcola.org/shop> and either download the donation form and mail with a check or select the dollar amount of your donation to pay by credit card.

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN 2020?

If so, thank you for being a member! If not, please do it today.
Our members are the lake chain's Super Heroes!

To join or renew go to www.gcola.org and click Join/Donate.
Or, go to page 30 and fill out and mail in the membership form.
Questions? Email Jane Edwards at jedwards3718@gmail.com

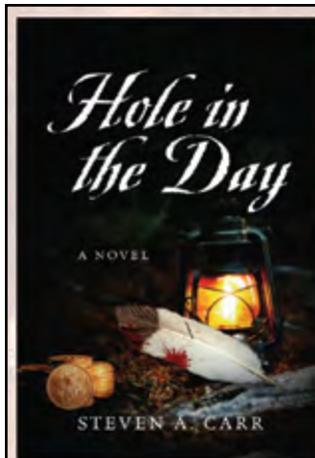
The World will keep turning and one day we will travel together again!



Stay healthy, Stay happy - Claudia

Claudia Allene,
CLAUDIA AROUND THE WORLD TOURS, WORLD ENTERPRISE LLC
(218) 513-8922

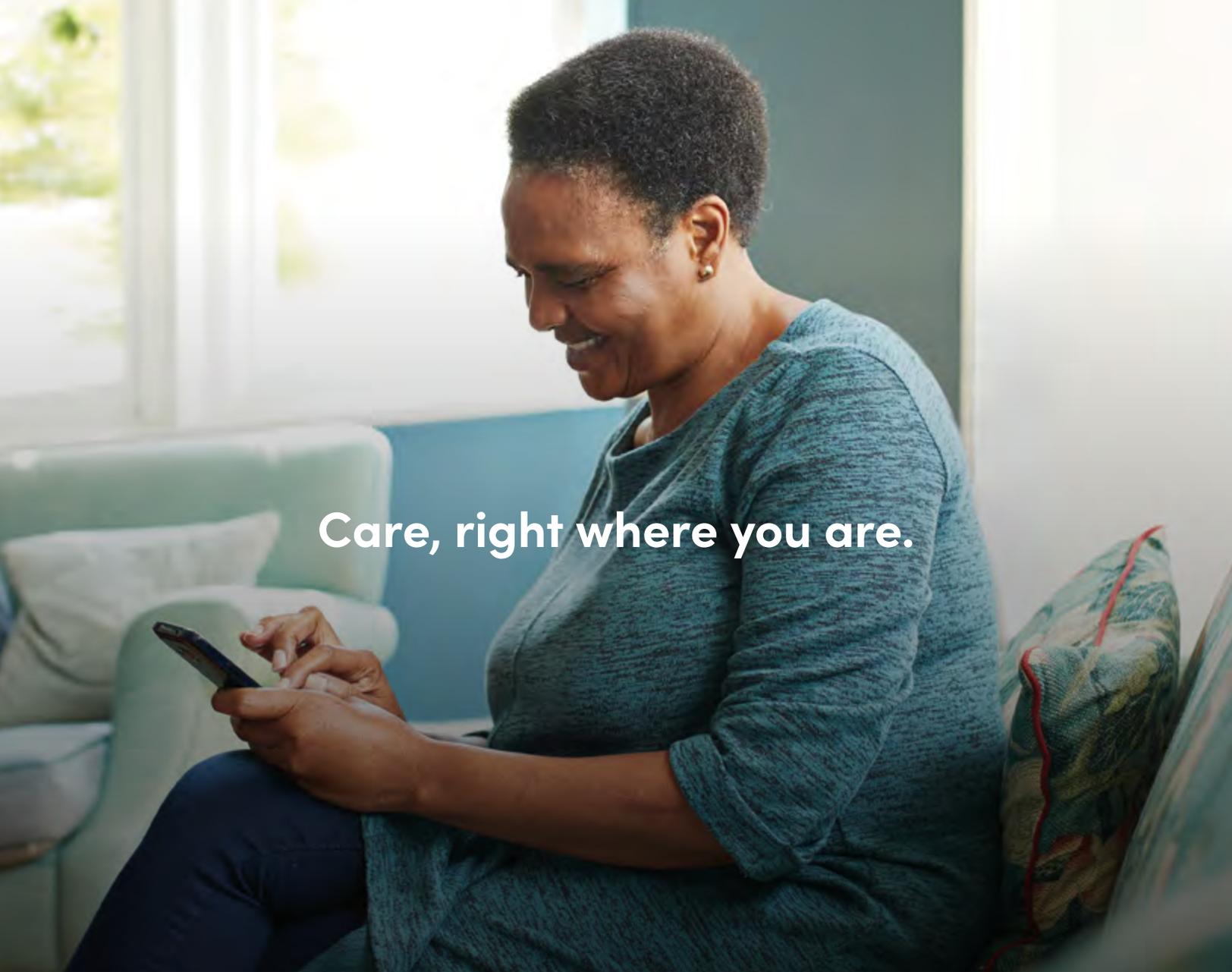
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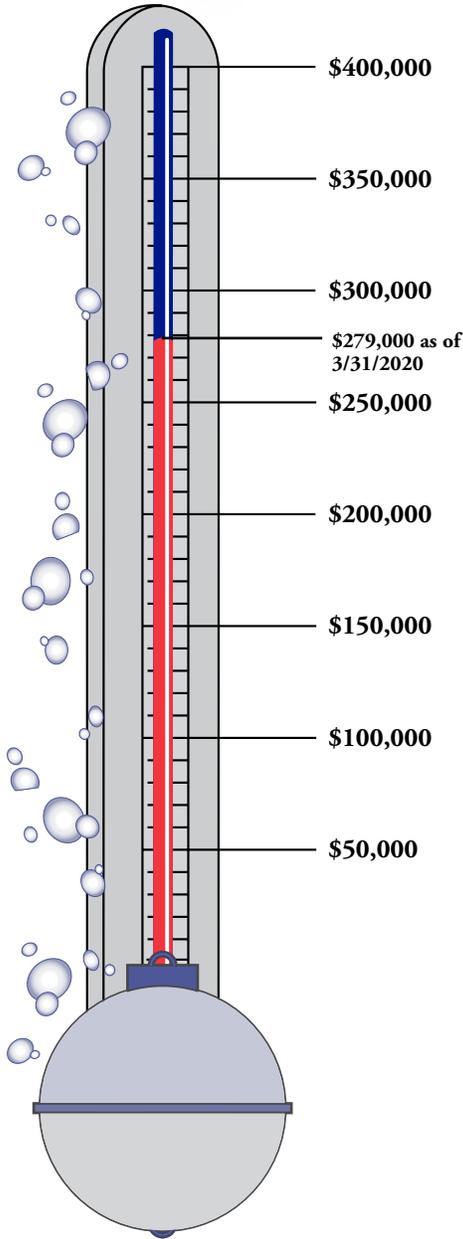
Essentia Health

If you have concerns or symptoms related to COVID-19*, Essentia Health is providing E-Visits at no cost for evaluation. To learn more, or to start an E-visit, go to EssentiaHealth.org/COVID-19.

**Testing ordered as a result of screening may incur a charge.*

FUND UPDATES

Endowment Fund



Thank You!

The Board wants to thank all the many members and friends of GCOLA for the generous support of our Endowment Fund and AIS Contingency Fund. With both funds we have over \$460,000 available, if needed, for any new aquatic invasive species that might get introduced into our beloved Gull Chain of Lakes.

In partnership with the Initiative Foundation, GCOLA established a perpetual Gull Chain Preservation Endowment Fund which included a \$50,000 matching grant from the Initiative Foundation. The fund is intended to provide long term funding to support the stewardship activities of GCOLA to preserve and improve the ecosystem of the Gull Lake Chain. It's also a wonderful opportunity to leave a legacy for those who will enjoy this area for years to come.

AIS Contingency Fund



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ASSOCIATION OF CASS COUNTY LAKES NEEDS YOUR HELP!



IT'S ILLEGAL TO...

TRANSPORT aquatic plants, water, or prohibited invasive species (e.g., zebra mussels, Eurasian water milfoil).

DUMP live bait into state waters, on the shore, or on the ground.

LAUNCH or attempt to place, watercraft or trailers with aquatic plants, zebra mussels, or prohibited invasive species into any waters of the state.

IT'S THE LAW!

CLEAN visible aquatic plants, zebra mussels, and other prohibited species off of watercraft, trailers, and equipment before transporting from any water access.

DRAIN water from the boat's bilge, livewell, motor, ballast tanks, and portable bait containers before transport from water access site or shoreline property.

KEEP drain plug and water draining devices open while transporting watercraft.

THANK YOU
CASS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

DON'T MOVE A MUSSEL!

Clean.Drain.Dry

Stop the Transport of Invasive Species:

- **CLEAN** boots, gear, boat, trailer & vehicle of plants, fish, animals & mud.
- **DRAIN** bilge, ballast, wells & buckets before you leave the area.
- **DRY** equipment before launching watercraft into another body of water.



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**

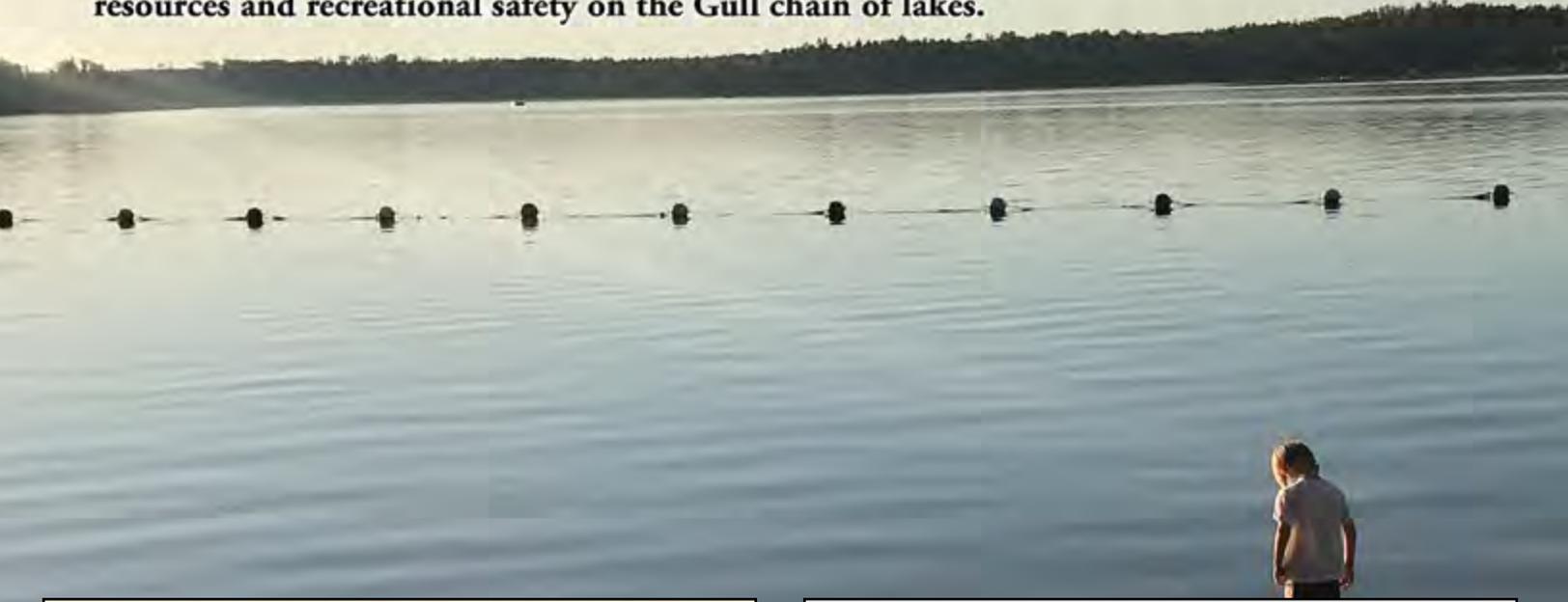
Be A Good Steward. Clean. Drain. Dry.
StopAquaticHitchhikers.org



MISSION STATEMENT

Photo by Jill Kinsley

The Gull Chain of Lakes Association is an alliance of individuals, families and business owners in the Gull Chain of Lakes in Cass and Crow Wing Counties. The Association is devoted to the restoration and continued preservation of the highest water quality and environmental standards achievable, promotion of the responsible use of land and water resources and recreational safety on the Gull chain of lakes.



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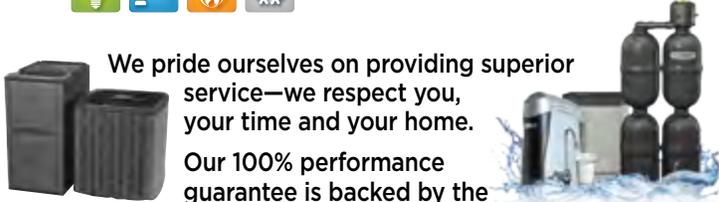
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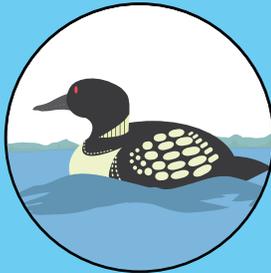


GULL CHAIN of LAKES ASSOCIATION

Stewards for the Gull Lake Chain

Protecting the Future for You, Your Family and Your Business

OUR ENVIRONMENT



- Lake Stewards preserve lake environment
- Programs to protect our loons
- Shoreline restoration and water testing programs

YOUR SAFETY & ENJOYMENT



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

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

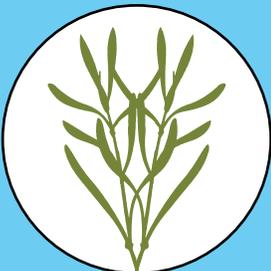


- Advocate for lake issues with state legislators
- Interface with county, city, and township governments
- Share with neighboring lake associations

WHAT IT COSTS ANNUALLY



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) FIGHT



- Protect our lakes from AIS
- Educate stakeholders on AIS
- Maintain technical knowledge of AIS

GET INVOLVED!



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

GULL CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION ³⁴ 2020 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for the lake association are \$50 per year. They are payable anytime from January 1 – December 31. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation which means that money donated by you is tax deductible. Contributions above the \$50 dues are greatly appreciated.

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.

First Name(s): _____ Last Name: _____

Second or Company Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Primary Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email: _____

Second Email: _____

Lake Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

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

2020 Gull Chain of Lakes Association Dues (January 1 to December 31) \$50.00

Additional Donations (Optional)

\$____Aquatic Invasive Species Fund \$____Endowment Fund \$____Buoy Fund \$____Board Discretion

Please keep my additional donation(s) anonymous

Total Payment \$ _____

Check enclosed

Please bill my Credit Card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover)

Expiration Date _____ Card Number. _____ Amount \$ _____

Signature _____

Please contact me via email regarding the following volunteer opportunities:

- AIS Communications Lake Steward Program
 Government Relations Loon Programs Water Testing

Thank you for being a member!

The Gull Chain of Lakes Association does not sell, trade, swap or in any other way use your data except for official GCOLA use. Gull Chain of Lakes is a 501(c)3 corporation, Federal Tax ID #41-1272492.

WHAT WE DO

YOUR LAKE ASSOCIATION IS WORKING FOR YOU!

- Purchases, installs and maintains one of the premier navigational buoy systems (90 buoys) in the State of Minnesota. ***This system is NOT provided by local law enforcement.*** We also install the 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 provides free boat safety training for approximately 75 youth per year. GCOLA also gives each participant a life jacket.
- Coordinates with the City of Lake Shore Police Department to provide water craft inspections for invasive species at the County Road 77 boat landing.
- Monitors lakes and streams running into the Gull Lake Chain for water quality. The samples are taken by GCOLA volunteers, with testing completed by licensed environmental labs. We have established a data base which helps us identify problems now and in the future and provide guidance for action plans.
- Conducts two inspections at 24 locations to look for aquatic invasive species (AIS).
- Takes weekly secchi disk readings during the summer to test the water clarity.
- Promotes lake shoreline restoration projects by providing matching grants for approved restoration projects.
- Awards Lake Steward signs to property owners who have eliminated the use of lawn chemicals, have a shoreline buffer zone of native plants, and upland zone with trees, shrubs, and natural ground cover.
- Gives 500 native tree/bush seedlings to members every year.
- Works with county sheriffs on safety and enforcement issues including donations for night vision equipment, a range finder, and life jackets.
- Donates annually to the University of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center for zebra mussel research.
- Conducts a yearly loon count in the spring and late summer and promotes loon-safe boating.
- Issues four newsletters per year to keep members informed about association programs and important issues affecting the Gull Lake Chain.
- Maintains a website (www.gcola.org), a member group e-mail service and a Facebook page (@GullLakeChain) to provide timely communication.
- Oversees the Gull Chain Preservation Endowment Fund, managed by the Initiative Foundation, which provides long term funding to support the stewardship activities of GCOLA.
- Hosts an annual meeting and fundraising Gala in the summer.
- Fulfills AIS prevention needs including establishing a boat power wash station at the Gull Lake Recreation Area public access ramp managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- Keeps apprised of lake issues and programs by maintaining memberships with the Association of Cass County Lakes, Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Conservation Minnesota, Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations, Minnesota Lakes & Rivers Association, Nisswa Chamber of Commerce, and Norther Waters Land Trust.



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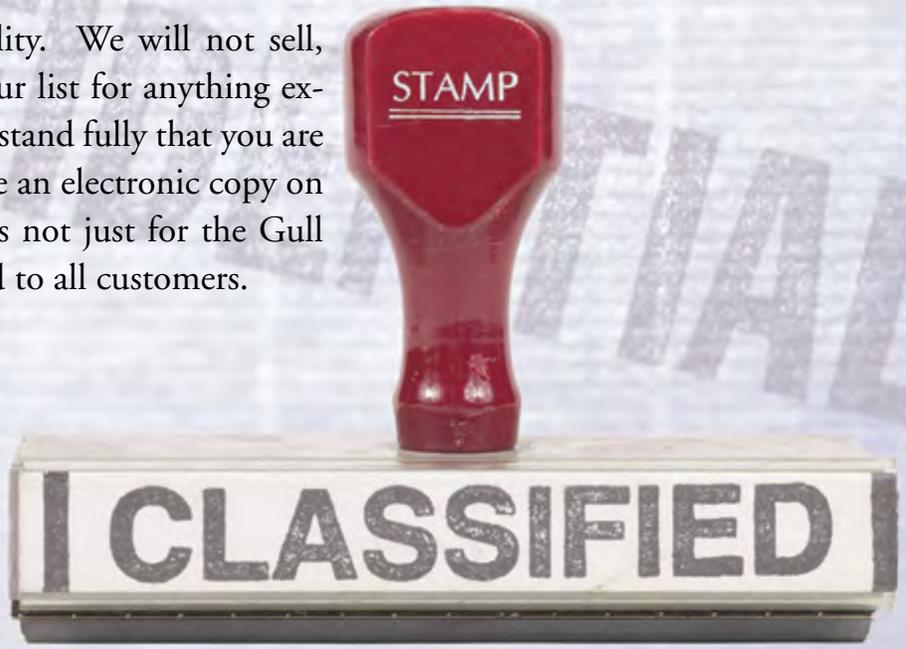
ADULT LIVING



LAKE PRINTING ³⁶ 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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Gull Lake Living BEGIN WITH US

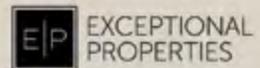


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Steve Alex



Uldis Birznieks



Jay Chaney



Jane Edwards



Robert Eliason



Steve Frawley



Sue Friedrichs



Rosemary Goff



Linda Harrier



Chuck Herrig



John Ingelman



Sheila Johnston



Marv Meyer



Bob Toborg

You are all welcome to join us at our monthly Board of Directors' meetings. We meet at Grand View Lodge on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. We usually adjourn around 10:00 a.m.

Come see what we do.

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Dive Guys

AQUATIC WEED REMOVAL

WHAT CAN WE DO?

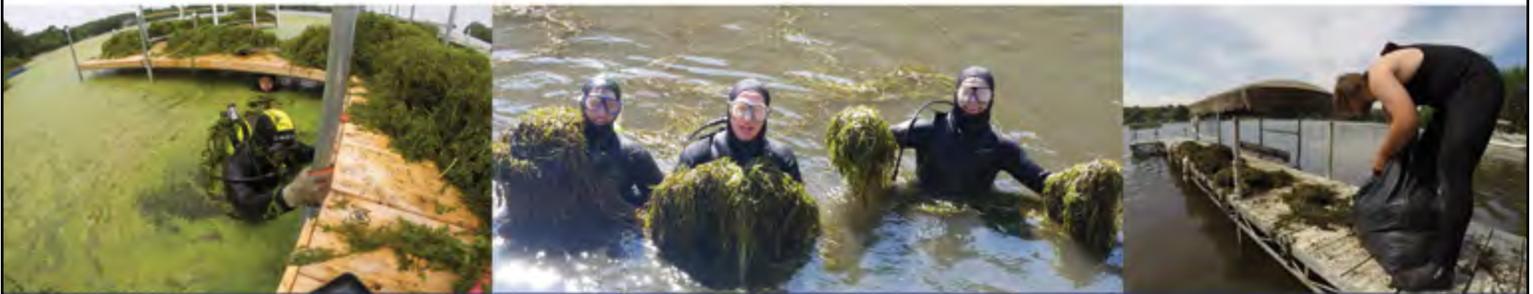
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