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ASSOCIATION



Hazel meets her first fish Photo by Dan Hedlund

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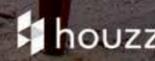
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Dave Anderson Website Manager 218-963-3121 webmaster@gcola.org	Kathy Lundberg Communications Chair kathylundberg@comcast.net	Kevin Egan Severson Porter Law 218-692-6999	Tim Plude DNR AIS 218-203-4354 timothy.plude@state.mn.us

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. Meetings are held at Cragun's Resort in the Dutch Conference Room in the main lodge.

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Steve Frawley, GCOLA Chair

I've been spending more time on the dock this summer as I'm introducing our grandkids to fishing. It's such a thrill to witness the joy of a young child catching a fish and beaming with pride. While spending more time on the dock this year, I've noticed our dock flags are showing significant wear and tear and will need to be replaced at season's end. Many of our neighbors who enjoy boating and fishing have shared with me that we seem to be experiencing more high winds this year than previous years.

I'm honored to accept the position of Chair for GCOLA beginning in September. I've been a GCOLA board member during the past five years serving on the Communications, Nominations and Government Relations Committee as Chair. We have had a residence on Lake Margaret since 1999 and enjoy now living here full time. I feel strongly about continuing to support GCOLA's mission: to restore and preserve the highest water quality and environmental standards achievable, while promoting the responsible use of land, water resources and safety on the Gull Chain of Lakes.

As you may recall from the summer newsmagazine, Uldis Birznieks recently agreed to the interim role as Chair until the 2022 Annual GCOLA Meeting. We, on the GCOLA board, owe a debt of gratitude to Uldis as he chaired our successful July Gala event. You can read more about this annual event in a separate article by Uldis. He has served the board with distinction during his tenure as a former Chair while also serving on both the Government Relations and Finance Committees. We also appreciate Uldis' contributions on issues regarding the recent

helipad and wetlands development and are fortunate to have him continue as a board member.

The Annual GCOLA meeting was held August 10 at the Gull Lake Yacht Club. At this meeting, GCOLA committee chairs shared many of the successes during the past year. Please refer to the article written by Uldis Birznieks for more details. Also in this newsmagazine issue, you will hear from Committee members regarding some of the continuing challenges we face as a lake association. Re-districting will result in a new slate



of legislative representatives in both the house and senate after January 1. We hope to garner continued support from legislators on issues that are consistent with our mission to restore and protect our water resources for future generations to come.

You will also read more about the outstanding results with our Lake Steward program chaired by Dorothy Whitmer, impacting the Gull Lake Chain and lake associations throughout Minnesota. We also continue to show strong progress in protecting our loon population while mitigating future aquatic invasive species (AIS) threats. While we continue to make progress in these and other areas, our success is truly

based on the many contributions from GCOLA volunteers and board members. Please consider volunteering to serve on one of the many committees outlined in this newsmagazine. You won't regret it!

Thanks

Steve

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Gregory Baltzer, Upper Gull
Gregory Danke, Roy
Bob & Syd Goodwin, Nisswa
Brent & Christie Hamak, Gull
Dan Lewandowski, Gull
John & Claire Louwers
Jenny Max

Josh & Ann Noser
Mark & Ashley Pietig, Roy
John & Deborah Schaefer, Gull
Jennifer Twaddle
Jacob Rudolph
Joe & Ann Grimstad, Gull
Members now total 998!

LOVE OUR LAKES 10TH ANNUAL GALA

Our tenth annual Gala was held on Sunday evening, July 24 at Cragun's Legacy Pavilion and it proved, once again, to be the "place to be" on a fine summer evening. Over one hundred eighty lake-loving guests purchased tickets for a wonderful evening of fun, friendship, both live and silent auctions, delicious appetizers, complimentary beer tasting and unique entertainment.

The 2022 Gala Committee had probably the most challenging planning process that we have had in the ten years of the Gala. Whereas most Gala committees have spent seven months or more planning the event, the 2022 Gala Committee had just a little over two months to plan this great event, due to circumstances beyond the Gala Committee's control. The Gala Committee including Jennie Ward, Rosemary Goff, Sue Friedrichs, Mary Beth Jones, Vicki Smith, Claudia Allene, and Steve Frawley were able to compress that planning timeline and still pull off a wonderful Gala event. The Gala Committee wanted to try some different things and that they did. The event was held at Cragun's Legacy Pavilion for the first time which gave our guests a more intimate setting where everything was centrally located. We had complimentary beer tasting with our GCOLA Gala Commemorative Brew, Mango Lemon Shandy from Jack Pine Brewery.

We went back to having a paper/pencil silent auction and had a live auction. And for the first time, our entertainment was not a speaker or a musical group but an engaging, hilarious two-some we called the "Trivia Guys."

Thank you to our Sponsors and Donors

A HUGE thank you goes out to the local businesses and individuals who became Gala Sponsors and/or donated cash, items or services to our silent auction and live auctions. As a result of the combination of generous donations, very competitive bidding in both the silent auction and live auctions, the auctions and sponsorship dollars together raised \$21,900. A listing of our generous sponsors and donors are listed on page 9.

Silent Auction, Live Auction and E-Bike Raffle

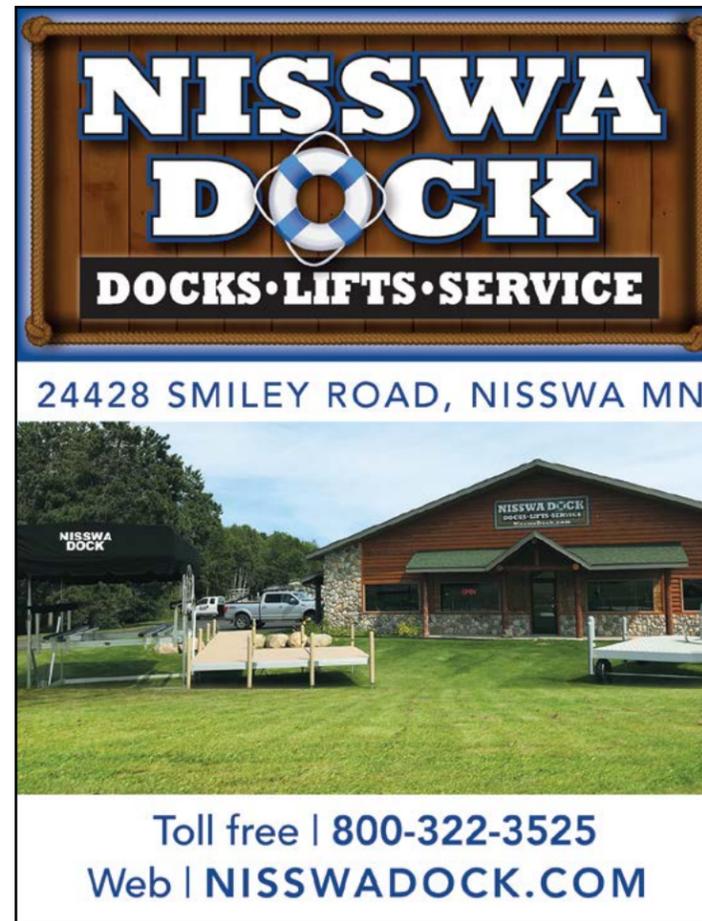
Because of the short timeframe that the Gala Committee was working with, we originally were not going to have a silent auction. Yet, with the tremendous response that we received from local businesses in a very short time period, we decided to have the silent auction and we are glad we did. Feedback we received on going back to paper and pen auctioning was very positive and less confusing for many of the attendees. After a successful live auction, a few years ago, Brett, one of our Trivia

Guys and an experienced auctioneer, convinced us to have a live auction. Brett not only entertained our attendees with his engaging auctioneer style, but he succeeded in getting full value or greater than full value for two of the three items! On one of the items (aquatic weed removal by the Dive Guys), one of the bidders, Dutch Cragun, was even asking a fellow bidder how much shoreline he had? Dutch has over a mile of sandy beach at Cragun's Resort and had the high bid for one of the Dive Guys certificates. That certificate will get put to good use at his resort. After the successful E-Bike raffle at last year's Gala, the Gala Committee opted for a repeat. The raffle was successful again and the lucky winner, Ginny Ehlen, took home a pair of Electra Townie Go E-Bikes valued at \$3,499.

Entertainment

This year's entertainment was the "Trivia Guys", Brett and Dan, with the World's Most Ridiculous Trivia Game Show. They provided a fun filled audience –participation trivia game show with the attendees at each table being a "team" in the game show with team names such as the "Margaret Marvels". The trivia questions ranged from questions about the Gull Chain and GCOLA to some questions only true trivia experts could answer correctly. Interspersed with the trivia game were two audience participation contests. Winner of the largest "walleye" caught on the Gull Lake Chain was a gentleman who claimed he caught a walleye about three feet long when he was five years old back in the 1940's. Now is that a fish tale or what? Winner of the person living on the Gull Chain the longest time was none other than Dutch Cragun, who has lived on the chain over 82 years!! The top three teams from the first two rounds of trivia were brought to the stage for a "Wheel of Fortune" style contest to name the tune, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald." On the spins of the wheel, in addition to providing a letter for the name of the tune, the participants had to perform some wild, crowd-pleasing antics like drawing a loon while blind-folded or trying to empty a container of ping-pong balls attached to their bootie. It was hilarious fun! The grand prize-winning team was the "Lucky Ginnys", with each member winning a round of golf at Cragun's Legacy Courses.

Finally, a big thank you to our GCOLA members who have supported the Gala year after year. The Gala is our association's single fund-raising event and is key to providing financial support for all that GCOLA does for the preservation of water quality and environmental standards, promotion of the responsible use of land and water resources and recreational safety on the Gull Chain of Lakes. We sincerely hope to see all of you next year at our 11th annual Gala. *Photos on pages 5-6*



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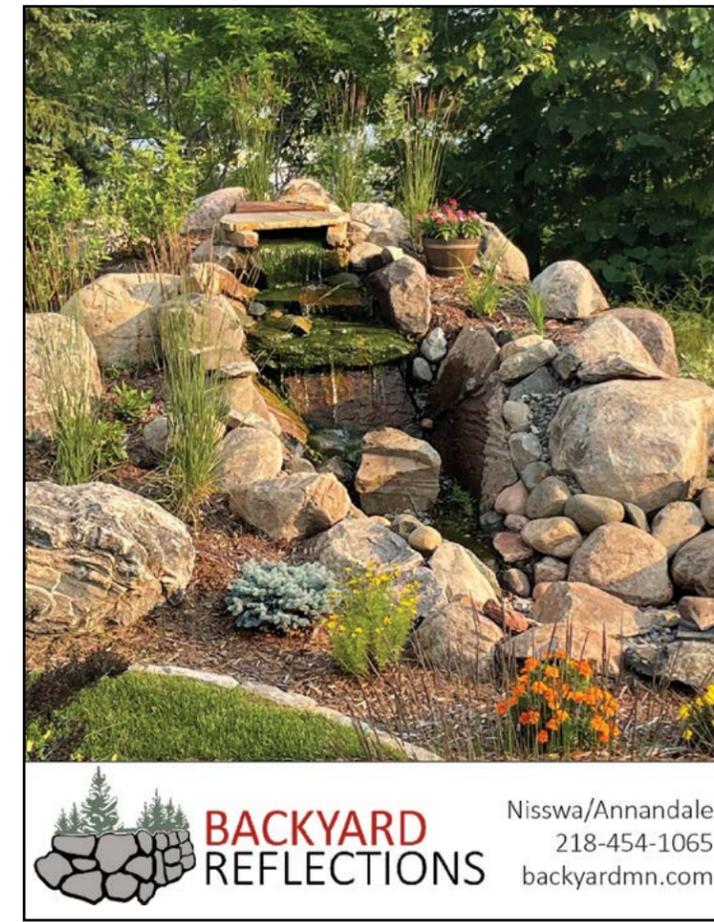
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LOVE OUR LAKES 10TH ANNUAL GALA

Photos by Joey Halvorson



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GALA COMMITTEE

Claudia Allene
 Uldis Birznieks
 Steve Frawley
 Sue Friedrichs
 Rosemary Goff
 Mary Beth Jones
 Vicki Smith
 Jennie Ward



DAY OF EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Vicki Frawley
 Larry Friedrichs
 Joey Halvorson
 Kathy Lundberg & Chuk Batko
 Cheryl & Jon Mendel
 Jane & Joel Meyer
 Heather & Mark Mullane
 Cindy & Kip Sandoz
 Lynn & Mike Smith
 Patricia & Tim Thoele
 Beckie Wahlin & Bill Tucker
 Jim Ward



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CASS COUNTY – CITY OF LAKE SHORE AIS PARTNERSHIP

Kathy Lundberg, Communications Committee Chair

Here are some things you may not know about the battle to combat aquatic invasive species (AIS) in the Gull Lake Chain:

- The Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) AIS Program financially supports the City of Lake Shore Police Department for 315 hours of law enforcement coverage at the Gull Narrows (Zorbaz) access with focus on AIS inspections and education. GCOLA has also consistently supported additional hours at that access and contributed funds to pay for officer-hours.
- The Cass SWCD AIS Program has coordinated with the Minnesota DNR for AIS enforcement training in 2022 for the City of Lake Shore officers that work at the access. For some of the officers this training was a refresher course, but others were able to take the course for the first time.
- The Cass SWCD AIS Program appreciates the participation of law enforcement in watercraft inspections. It helps to have multiple entities trained and involved in preventing the spread of AIS.



Jordyn Sullivan, City of Lake Shore Police Officer. One of Lake Shore's officers, hired and trained this year, working at the Gull Narrows access with information about AIS posted and flyers available at the new informational kiosk.

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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 fishing, boating 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 Eric Utter



Photo by Steve Wall



Photo by Jon Villella



OUR TOP PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

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

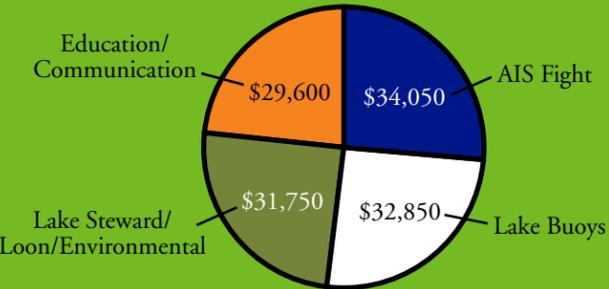


GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



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

2022 BUDGETED PRIORITIES



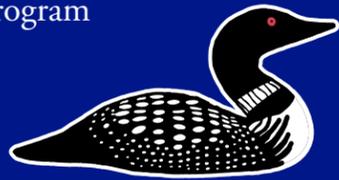
ENVIRONMENTAL

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



LOON CONSERVANCY

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



LAKE STEWARD

- Lake Steward recognition program
- Shoreland habitat protection and enhancement
- Tree giveaway



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BROADCAST LIGHTING POLLUTION

Robert Eliason, Environmental Committee Chair

In August 2003, New England experienced a massive power outage. The resulting blackout rid the sky of light pollution and provided the population with the unique opportunity to see the magical Milky Way. The appearance of the Milky Way was so spectacular that it was photographed (After picture). When the power was restored, the standard streetlights came on along with all the other nighttime polluting lights. The photographer then took the Before picture at the exact same spot as the After picture. This Before picture illustrates how the neighborhood appeared before the power outage. If you look carefully at the Before picture, you can just discern stars that match the brightest stars in the After picture. The fixture used for the streetlight allows light to be broadcast not only downward but also upward. This broadcast light illuminates the house from top to bottom and the tops of the trees. It is this upward light that hides the Milky Way due to light pollution. This upward light is easily seen from an airplane at night. The first time I experienced this I was at about 35,000

feet. I was just amazed. I could see the streetlights marching up and down the streets, the yard lights, the security lights, etc. I could see how densely populated the countryside was by all the farm lights. There was hardly any dark space.

Broadcast lighting exists all around our lakes. Stand at the end of your dock and scan along the shore. Those spots of light, which you see, come from broadcast lighting fixtures as in the Before picture. If dark sky compliant fixtures were used, you may see a little reflected light, but those spots would disappear, and the shoreline would appear dark. The beauty of dark sky compliant fixtures is that they put light where you want it without sacrificing the Milky Way.

Please be a Milky Way advocate: Only you can help the sky be dark by using dark sky compliant light fixtures for your outdoor lighting.



Before and during the 2003 Northeast blackout, a massive power outage that affected 55 million people. Photos by Todd Carlson, courtesy of DarkSky.org.

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NEW KIOSKS AT BOAT RAMPS

*Kathy Lundberg, Communications Committee Chair
and Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Committee Chair*



Chuk Batko, Sheila Johnston, Kevin Egan, and Ron Faust

Teamwork made this project happen. Sheila Johnston had the vision to develop new kiosks at several area boat launches – Zorbaz Landing, Government Point, Nisswa Landing, and Hole-in-the-Day Landing. Sheila secured the approvals from Cass and Crow Wing Counties for the new structures and a grant to partially cover the costs from Cass County with the help of Dana Gutzmann, AIS technician for Cass County Environmental Services. Sue Friedrichs brought the idea to the GCOLA board for approval and funding for the total costs of the four kiosks. Kathy Lundberg helped to coordinate all the elements needed for the kiosks and Kathy's husband, Chuk Batko, offered to design and build the kiosks, with help from Kevin Egan and Ron Faust, and has completed two of the four so far. They are large structures, about 8 feet tall prior to installation, and needed a truck and assistance to deliver them to the site along with implanting them in a cement base. Thanks to Leon Girard for his company's assistance in getting them delivered and placed.

Here's a look at the Zorbaz Landing kiosk with information about AIS prevention and loon conservation as well as loon-safe boating pointers and lake maps. It also includes important information

about lead-free tackle in the Get the Lead Out flyers.

We are looking for volunteers to help with stocking the literature boxes. Please contact Sheila Johnston at SheilaFJohnston@me.com if you are interested.

Thanks to all who made this possible – they should withstand the elements and help educate lake users for years to come!

THANK YOU JAY CHANEY



Photo by Dana Gutzmann

Dana Gutzmann, AIS Lake Technician with Cass SWCD, has expressed her thanks to Jay Chaney, a GCOLA Board member and chair of the Safety and Recreation committee. He donated the use of a large pontoon from his company, Boats and Beyond Rentals, for use in training a new level 2 watercraft inspector for the Gull Lake Government Point Access. Level 2 inspectors are trained in hot water decontamination of watercrafts to help control and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). With the use of the pontoon the Cass AIS Program was able to provide the necessary training to secure staffing to continue to run the decontamination station at Gull Government Point for the remainder of the 2022 open water season.

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SAVE OUR LOONS AND USE LEAD-FREE TACKLE

Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Chair

Another Gull Lake loon died of lead poisoning despite the best efforts of the veterinarians at Wild and Free Rehabilitation Center. Loons pick up lost lead tackle while gathering pebbles to aid digestion. Loons are also exposed when eating fish that have ingested lead. Just one small lead sinker can kill a loon!

Please use lead-free tackle and save our loons! Visit gcola.org to find an extensive list of lead-free tackle suppliers. Go to **Get Involved**, then click on **Loon Safe Fishing** in the drop-down menu. You can also help by requesting store managers to stock their shelves with lead-free tackle.



Beached loon is typically on level area or gradual slope which can be a sandy or grassy area or even under a dock or pontoon.



Nesting loon is at water's edge with nest often elevated. Typically nests mid-May to early June.

A beached loon is a sick or injured loon! If you see a sick or injured loon, call Sheila Johnston, 612 226-6571.

Photos by Sheila Farrell Johnston

THANK YOU END-OF-DOCK VOLUNTEERS

Robert Eliason, Environmental Committee Chair

Thank you to all who volunteered to take water samples for this survey. The results will be published in the winter newsmagazine.



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Maddie Cook

John Witmer

Barb Lindenmeyer

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LOON MANAGEMENT PLAN ACTIONS

Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Committee Chair

GCOLA accomplished a great deal during our first year as a Minnesota Loon Restoration Project (MLRP) member lake association! As a member lake association, we are responsible for implementing a loon management plan that supports the reproduction, health, and safety of the loons on the Gull Chain of Lakes.

Loon Surveys

We conducted three surveys: the Spring Nest Survey, the July Adult Loon and Chick Survey, and the August Fledgling Survey. Over 40 volunteers helped with the surveys! Results will be shared with the MLRP and will be published in the winter newsletter.



Upper Gull loon dad and chick Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston

Loon Watchers

Our new Loon Watchers Program was initiated. Loon Watchers from Gull Lake, Lake Margaret, Upper Gull Lake, and Roy Lake observed and recorded observations of loons in their areas from May to November. The volunteers followed the MLRP's observation protocols, and this valuable information will be submitted to the MLRP in November.



Upper Gull territorial loon Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston

Get the Lead Out Events and Education

We held two Get the Lead Out events to educate anglers on the dangers of lead tackle to loons and the benefits of using lead-free tackle. The first event was held in June at Jack Pine Brewery, and professional fishing guide, Tim Edinger of S and W Guide Service, was on hand to share his expertise with anglers. The second event was at GCOLA's Gala in July. We collected 58 pounds of lead tackle, and many anglers received free samples of lead-free tackle. Get the Lead Out information is also posted on our new boat access kiosks and in the newsletter. Sources for lead-free tackle are posted on the GCOLA website.



Dana Gutzmann, Cass County AIS, and Tim Edinger, S and W Guide Service teamed up to help at the GTLO event at Jack Pine Brewery.

Kiosks

Thanks to volunteer master builders Chuk Batko, Ron Faust, and Kevin Egan, we will have four beautiful new kiosks at the public boat accesses on the Gull Lake Chain. Two of them are in place at Government Point and the Zorbaz/Gull Narrows accesses. We received a grant from Cass County to help fund these kiosks. Two more kiosks are being installed at the Hole in the Day and Nisswa Lake accesses. Posted on the kiosks are large Tips for Loon-Safe Boating posters and Get the Lead Out information, along with AIS and other info. Loon-Safe Boating tip cards are also in the information boxes.

Thanks to the creative problem solving and work of Brian Turner, US Army Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Specialist -Site Lead, and USACE volunteers, Brian Zahler and Joe Faust, there is a new GCOLA information kiosk at the Gull Lake Government Point access. Digging was not allowed on the site, and the team designed and built concrete bases for the kiosk in order to protect potential cultural resources.



Brian Turner, Joe Faust, Sheila Johnston, and Brian Zahler. Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston

Loon-Safe Boating Education

Over 1000 Tips for Loon-Safe Boating cards were distributed to boat rental customers by Boats and Beyond, Lake Fun Rentals, Your Boat Club, and Grand View Lodge Resort. The tip cards were also included in the summer GCOLA newsletter which was sent to close to 2,200 property owners on the Gull Chain of Lakes.

Loon Caution Buoys

Loon Caution buoys were placed near three high risk chick rearing areas outside no wake zones on Upper Gull and on the north end of Lake Margaret.

Loon Rescue

Trained volunteers are equipped to safely capture and transport sick or injured loons to Wild and Free, the DNR certified wildlife rehabilitation clinic at the Garrison Animal Hospital. If you see a sick or injured loon call Sheila Johnston, 612 226-6571.

A huge thank you goes out to all our volunteers and supporters for their help! Please email info@gcola.org if you would like to volunteer for Loon Surveys and Loon Watchers.



10-day old chick rides on dad's back Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

Steve Frawley, Government Relations Committee Chair

Since this is an election year, we expect there will be a number of new faces in both the House and Senate beginning January 1, 2023. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, re-districting will play a major role in these future elections. We will be saddened to see strong supporters in the past, Senator Carrie Ruud, district 10, and Representative John Poston, district 9A, retire at the end of the current year.

The past year has presented a number of challenges impacting our land and water resources. GCOLA has played a prominent role, when requested by GCOLA members, to defeat encroachment of a helipad on the Gull Lake Chain, as well as property development in protected wetlands areas on the chain. We have continued to foster positive relationships with state and local legislators as well as with local units of government at the city, township, and county level when lake-related issues occur.

As many of you are aware, the University of Minnesota Saint Anthony Falls (SAFL) study concluded phase one of a study in February 2022, which found that wake waves during wake surfing are measurably higher than non-wake surf boats in terms of wave height, total wave energy and maximum power. Phase two of the SAFL Healthy Waters Initiative Fund will examine the characteristics of propeller wash to see how it impacts lake bottoms, aquatic vegetation, and shorelines. If you wish to contribute to this crowdfunding campaign visit: <https://crowdfund.umn.edu>

Here are the current GCOLA 2022 key priorities for Government Relations:

1. 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
2. Provide sustained funding to Minnesota Aquatic Research Center (MAISRC) for finding solution(s) to eradicate zebra mussels, starry stonewort, and other aquatic invasive species (AIS)
3. Maintain/increase current funding level to counties to prevent the spread of new or existing aquatic invasive species
4. No more stocking of muskies in the Gull Lake Chain.

During this upcoming GCOLA year beginning in September, we will survey GCOLA members, as in the past, to solicit feedback on key future priorities.

Government Relations and the GCOLA board will continue to represent our members' concerns to protect our precious land and water resources.



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GULL LAKE CHAIN FUN FISHERIES FACTS

Marc Bacigalupi, Fisheries Area Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Division, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Nick Brown with his first walleye keeper Photo by Cindy Peters

Fishing Report

The Gull Lake Chain walleye fishing has been fair to good this season. Larger sized, 21-29-inch walleyes are being caught. Through early July, walleyes were being caught shallower than 20 feet of water rather than deeper.

Stocking Update

Walleye fry (newly hatched) are stocked each year in May and walleye fingerlings (4-6" long) are stocked in the fall in the second consecutive year where fall surveys indicate poor stocked fry survival. This contingency fingerling stocking occurred in 2018 and 2020. In September this year, electrofishing (a specialized sampling boat used after dark, that has a lot of lights) survey will determine if fingerlings will again be stocked in October 2022. The threshold used is 30 young-of-the-year walleyes per hour of electrofishing, below which, fingerlings are stocked; above which, fingerlings are not stocked.

The Numbers

2755 lbs. (28,046 walleyes) of fingerlings were stocked in 2018, originating from DNR rearing ponds, harvested, and stocked by DNR staff. The market value of these fish is approximately \$50,000. In 2020 when no walleye fry were stocked due to COVID, 2500 lbs. (45,420 walleyes) of fingerlings were purchased by DNR from private growers and stocked in Gull Lake at a price of \$47,000. 225 lbs. (5000 walleyes) were purchased by the Walleye Alliance Inc. and stocked in spring 2021 for \$4275.

The Future

A planned 2023 DNR Fisheries lake survey will reveal whether a strong crop of 14-16-inchers is recruiting to the fishery. Fingerling walleyes stocked in 2020, along with some natural reproduction, observed, would be in that size category.

Muskie Update

Muskellunge management in the Gull Lake Chain began in 2016. 2000 muskellunge fingerlings (8-12" long) were stocked in 2016, 2018 and 2021. No muskellunge were stocked in 2020 due to COVID and 2021 was a "make-up" stocking for 2020. Muskellunge fingerlings are planned for stocking in 2022 to continue the planned even-numbered years stocking. A few reports of 30-35-inch muskellunge being caught trickle in. Currently, most anglers are fishing for something else when they see or catch a muskie. Muskellunge can reach large sizes; females can reach just over 50" in length after 10-plus years of growth.

2022 MID YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Uldis Birznieks, Finance & Audit Committee Chair

The 2022 GCOLA mid-year financial summary was presented to GCOLA members at the Annual Meeting on August 10. The actuals for the first half of 2022, the 2022 budget and the 2021 actuals were presented as shown in the figure below. For GCOLA, 2021 was a good year financially. GCOLA ended up with a net income of +\$59.9K, which is the best ever for GCOLA.

The budget for 2022 as passed by the GCOLA Board of Directors had small increases in income compared to 2021 for dues and the Gala, a 20% increase in donations reflecting an upward trend over the last several years and a \$10K increase in grants as result of increased grants expected from Cass County for AIS projects. On the expense side, there were upward tweaks for the buoy system/safety and administration, communications, government relations and membership. The environmental/AIS area increased by \$14K for the Lake Steward program and the loon conservancy projects, both of which are getting additional emphasis. The Gala budget was increased by \$18K with food, entertainment and venue expenses all expected to increase. The budgeted net income for 2022 was set with a negative net income of -\$21K, which as noted in our Spring newsmagazine, the Board was comfortable with that figure as we had a healthy balance in our checking account, and we had bettered budgeted net income each year since 2015 by an average of +\$27.3K.

The income for the first half of 2022 shows we have received 67% of our year-end budgeted income, which is similar to last year, but higher than years prior to 2021. Dues income

is at 82% of budget which is close to its historical average but below last year's 92% of budget at the time. Donations already are 129% above budget as result of a very generous anonymous donation by a GCOLA member couple. Thank you to all our members for your donations! The Endowment Fund totals through June were at \$399.9K, a drop of \$67K from year-end 2021 due to financial market performance, of which we are all aware. On the expense side, total expenses are at 34% of budget, which is close to historical averages. Environmental/AIS expenses are running well below normal, but we have several outstanding bills which will be recognized in the coming months. The shoreline restoration program has not had any expenses to date for which we have budgeted \$15K, so potential Lake Stewards have an opportunity to have GCOLA partially reimburse (50/50 share) them for restoration work. The buoy system/safety, Gala, Administration and Communications/Government Relations/Membership expenses are in the normal mid-year ranges.

Year-to-date, our net income is +\$46.5K, which is close to 2021 mid-year net income of \$50.8K. Thus, exclusive of any major unknown expense, we should finish the year with a positive net income versus the budgeted negative net income of -\$21K. With the potential for reasonable positive 2021 net income, we might be able to contribute to the AIS Contingency Fund once again in 2022, which now stands at \$219.2K. The major portion of that Fund is invested by our GCOLA Board in stair-step CD's and thus not impacted by the bear stock market in the first half of 2022.

With our AIS Contingency Fund reserve of \$219.7K and our Endowment Fund at \$399.9K, we have \$620K available, if needed, for any new aquatic invasive species that might get introduced into our beloved Gull Chain of Lakes. All of us should be diligent to make sure that does not happen, as starry stonewort is only 45 miles away in Leech Lake.

In summary, GCOLA is in a sound financial position through the first half of 2022. Your Board will work hard to ensure sound 2022 financial performance while performing critical projects that align with our mission. Thank you for your support of GCOLA in our vital mission.

	2022 ACTUALS		2022 BUDGET		2021 ACTUALS	
	THRU	JUNE				
	\$ (K)	% of Budget	\$ (K)	% of Total	\$ (K)	% of Total
INCOME						
DUES	43.4	82%	53.0	33%	54.2	31%
DONATIONS	58.3	129%	45.0	28%	51.2	29%
GALA	7.9	16%	49.5	30%	52.6	30%
GRANTS*/OTHER	0.2	2%	15.6	10%	16.6	10%
INCOME TOTALS	109.8	67%	163.1		174.6	
ENDOWMENT IN	3.3				28.0	
ENDOWMENT TOTAL	399.9				467.5	
EXPENSES						
ENVIRONMENTAL/AIS	9.5	14%	65.8	36%	30.1	26%
BUOY SYSTEM/SAFETY	15.8	45%	34.9	19%	32.4	28%
GALA	6.2	18%	34.6	19%	21.3	19%
ADMINISTRATION	12.8	64%	20.2	11%	19.0	17%
COMM/GOVT REL/MEMBERSHIP/MISC	19.0	66%	28.6	16%	11.9	10%
EXPENSES TOTALS	63.3	34%	184.1		114.7	
NET INCOME	46.5		-21.0		59.9	
AIS Contingency Fund In			0.0		25.0	
AIS Contingency Fund Cum	219.2				219.0	

*Note 1 - Does not include cost of Watercraft Inspections directly paid by counties to inspectors



I'd like to believe we can learn some of life's most important lessons from one another when we travel. In May 2022, several GCOLA members joined me on a tour to Ireland where we learned what that beautiful country has been doing successfully for over thirty years: Biodiversity and Dark Skies.

Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you will find in one area. The variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms works together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. Biodiversity describes the richness and variety of life on earth. It is the most complex and important feature of our planet. Without biodiversity, life does not survive.

The Dark Sky movement is a campaign to reduce light pollution. The advantages of reducing light pollution include an increased number of stars visible at night, reducing the effects of electric lighting on the environment, improving the well-being, health, and safety of both people and wildlife, and cutting down on energy.

I would like to challenge each of you reading this to learn and do your part and to seriously consider our impact on biodiversity and help to adopt the Dark Sky movement in your neighborhood. Let's talk to our neighbors and encourage them not only to be GCOLA members but to be good stewards of our lake.

Let us not forget GCOLA's mission: '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.'

What can we do as GCOLA members to preserve and improve biodiversity in our own homes? As a rule, increasing biodiversity can be achieved by diversifying the range of habitats or vegetation. This can be achieved by varying and limiting mowing regimes, planting, or seeding with native plants, trees, and shrub species. Plant fruit and nut trees!

We should create gardens to attract specific birds, bees, and butterflies! Pollinators are the unsung heroes of our gardens, and yes, insects do the bulk of pollination, so please AVOID using insecticides.

Leave the dandelions alone! Let's go wild! Allow a small area to grow wild or leave a patch of fallen leaves, or a small pile of logs. Many creatures are dependent on rotting wood, but it is often removed. Also, rotting wood is slow-release fertilizer. Insects, birds, and small mammals will benefit, and we must respect their local habitats.

Inspire the future! Get children involved in outdoor activities. Inspiring future generations to love and respect wildlife is the best way to protect nature in the long run.

Most importantly, enjoy your garden! Relish the sounds and sights and continually add to the biodiversity of your outdoor space. Boost your biodiversity and make your home a home for nature.

And don't forget to turn off all unnecessary lights at night. This not only helps the nocturnal animals thrive and survive, but we will also be able to see more beautiful stars at night.

Just like beautiful Ireland, we are a huge tourist destination, and fortunate to be surrounded by an abundance of nature. Let's do our part to protect it and recognize our responsibility to teach what we learn to someone else. Each one teaches one! The idea is to spread knowledge for the betterment of our community.

Photo by Claudia Allene



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FIREFLY HOSPITALITY

Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Committee Chair

Do you have childhood memories of fireflies sparkling in the dark as you ran through the grass on a warm summer night? Sadly, our children and grandchildren may not have those memories as fireflies are disappearing around the country and right here on the Gull Lake Chain. Widespread use of pesticides is the leading cause of firefly decline. You can reduce the impact of this problem and help draw fireflies to your yard by staying away from insecticides, herbicides, and other harmful chemicals.¹ Be firefly friendly and just use water!

Starting this fall there is something you can do to help!

Fireflies spend 95 % of their lives in larval stages. They live in soil/mud/leaf litter and spend from 1-2 years growing to become adults. Gardens can offer an oasis with a source of soil moisture good for their development.

How to Build Firefly Habitat

- Do not rake or blow and dispose of all your leaves. If you do, you are throwing away firefly larvae.
- Collect bags of leaves to make Bag Compost. Collect 5-15 bags.
- Wet bags down in a shady area. Keep moist/wet for 3-6 months or up to a year.
- Bags will attract snails/slugs, which is food for growing fireflies.

- In spring, but bag compost in your garden. Put it in mounds and gently fill it into your soil.
- Repeat each year. It might take as long as 5 years, or as quick as that same year, to get fireflies in your garden. It will be worth the effort!²

Other Ways to Attract Fireflies

- Turn off outside lights and reduce indoor lights spilling outside. Lights can interfere with a firefly's glow which is used to ward off predators and attract mates.
- DO NOT USE BROAD SPECTRUM INSECTICIDE INCLUDING MOSQUITO SPRAY.
- Segment an area of your yard or property to remain in a natural state. Let log and leaf litter accumulate.
- Plant trees and native grasses...fireflies love tall grasses.
- Don't over-mow your lawn.³

"A dark night lightened up by thousands of glowing fireflies ...it's magical."

Ama H Vanniarachchy

LET'S DO ALL WE CAN TO KEEP THE MAGIC!

- 1 Sciencing.com/attract-fireflies-2190453.html
- 2 Firefly.org/learn/
- 3 firefly.org/build-firefly-habitat

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GCOLA PROFILE - TIM THOELE



Tim Thoele,
AIS Committee Chair

When my children were very young we purchased a cabin on Lake Sylvan. It didn't take long before we realized how very special the Brainerd Lakes Area is. Over the years, it became an important part of our family history. The fond memories and great times we had "at the lake" are often a frequent topic of conversation at family gatherings to this day.

Four years ago, while visiting friends in the Brainerd Lakes Area and enjoying a pontoon ride, I said to my wife Patricia, "It would be my dream to own a home up here." Well, thanks to Patricia's hard work and perseverance, we moved into our home on Gull Lake one year later.

During our first summer on Gull Lake, Patricia and I attended the GCOLA Gala. During the Gala we learned of the broad spectrum of initiatives and responsibilities of GCOLA, and that its members sponsored and oversaw the effort to promote, protect and preserve the Gull Lake Chain, a beautiful and fragile resource.

Wanting to help in the GCOLA efforts, I volunteered to serve on the Government Relations Committee and subsequently the Finance Committee. Through volunteering I was able to witness first-hand the important contributions of GCOLA and its Board members. The Board members' dedication, passion, and integrity in working toward a responsible level of stewardship for the Gull Lake Chain was inspiring.

While attending a recent DNR meeting, the Gull Lake Chain was presented as a "high risk" system for continued spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). This was explained using several factors with the top of the list being the large number of access and launch points from public, to private, to resorts on the Gull Lake Chain. It is vitally important to focus on prevention, which is far easier and has a much higher chance of success than eradication. Now as Chair of the AIS Committee and working with the Board, Cass County, Crow Wing County, and GCOLA volunteers, I look forward to continuing and strengthening efforts to keep additional AIS from entering our chain of lakes.

I thank the Board and all GCOLA members for the opportunity to play a role in protecting this beautiful chain of lakes today, tomorrow, and hopefully for the next generation.

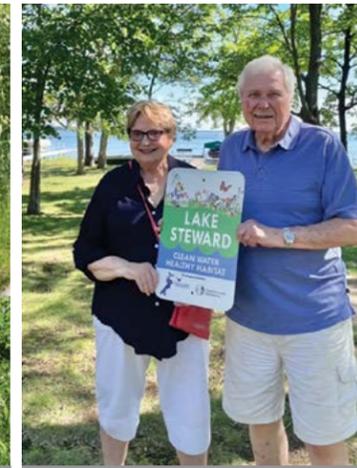
CONGRATULATIONS LAKE STEWARD AWARDEES



Sandy and Randy Hobbie on right, with close friends Mike and Kim Wehrman on Gull



Doug and Sheila Johnston with Laker on Upper Gull



Dick and Joey Lord on Gull Lake



Alice Harris and daughter Emily with canine companions on Gull

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

"Time is your most precious gift because you only have a set amount of it. That is why the greatest gift you can give someone is your time."

- Rick Warren



Committee	Committee Chair	Contact
Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)	Tim Thoele	612-834-3088
Communications	Kathy Lundberg	kathylundberg@comcast.net
Environmental	Robert Eliason	218-568-7868
Fisheries	Steve Frawley	612-750-2633
Loon Conservancy	Sheila Johnston	sheilafjohnston@me.com
Membership	Claudia Allene	218-513-8922
Safety & Recreation	Jay Chaney	760-213-2424

The time commitment required may vary but is typically from two to four hours per month. If you would like to learn more before becoming a volunteer, contact the appropriate Committee Chair. You can also learn more about several of the committees by reading the GCOLA "Our Priorities at A Glance" page 11.

Dive Guys

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ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY Uldis Birznieks, Former GCOLA Chair

The 2022 GCOLA Annual Meeting was convened on August 10 at 7 p.m. at the Gull Lake Yacht Club and also via Zoom again this year. The meeting was attended by over 35 members and board members.

After the call to order and thanking all for attending, the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes were approved, and Board members were introduced. Uldis Birznieks provided a mid-year financial summary (given on page page 26) in this newsmagazine reflecting a very good financial position. Preliminary data also shows our 2022 Gala was a successful fundraiser.

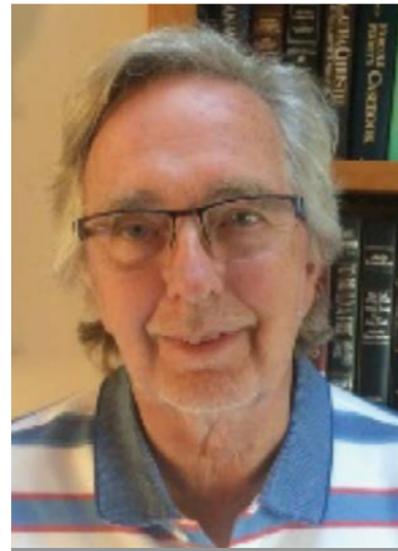
Chair Birznieks thanked three previous Board members who resigned during the previous year. Rick Quackenbush, our previous AIS Committee Chair; Linda Harrier, our former GCOLA Chair; and Todd Amerman, our former loon survey coordinator.



Linda Harrier



Todd Amerman



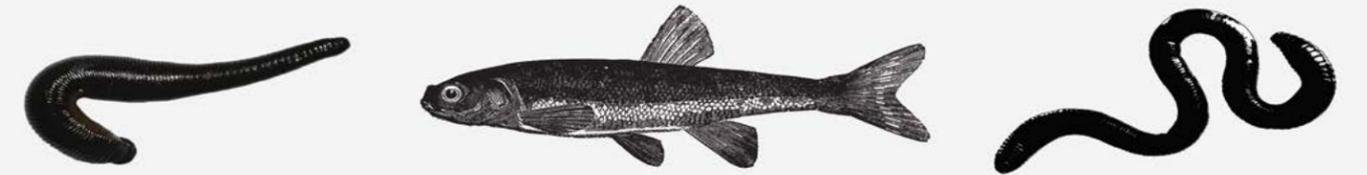
Rick Quackenbush

Dr. Robert Eliason was unanimously ratified by the GCOLA membership to serve another three-year term. He will continue as the Environmental Committee Chair. Tim Thoele was unanimously ratified by the GCOLA membership as a new member of the Board for a three-year term. Tim has taken on the AIS Committee Chair position and is a member of the Finance Committee.

Each of the nine committee chairs provided a summary of activities for the last year. A copy of the PowerPoint file for these summaries is available on the GCOLA website. Uldis Birznieks communicated that when Linda Harrier resigned as GCOLA Chair in early May, in taking on the Chair position as the result of being Vice Chair, he would fill out the remainder of Linda's first year term but would be handing the leadership of GCOLA to a new chair effective at the end of the 2022 Annual Meeting. Uldis had previously been GCOLA chair for a three-year term from 2015-2017 and felt that another Board member could take on that leadership role for the two years remaining of Linda's three-year term. Congratulations to Steve and Jay as they take on their new roles for GCOLA!!!

The annual meeting concluded with a short Q & A session.

CLEAN DRAIN DRY



DON'T LET IT LOOSE.



TOSS IT

Drain water from bait container on shore, away from water. Dispose of bait in the trash.



...OR KEEP IT

Drain water from bait container on shore, away from water. Refill container with bottle or tap water.

Releasing live bait threatens our environment. Bait and bait water can harbor fish diseases and aquatic invasive species.

Do your part to protect our lakes and rivers.

Scan to learn more and enter to win!



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Protect your health!

Test your well water for:

- Coliform Bacteria (Every year)
- Nitrate (Every other year)
- Arsenic (At least once)
- Lead (At least once)
- Manganese (Before a baby drinks the water)

AW research laboratories
218-829-7974
www.awlab.com

Testing is even more important if young children drink the water.
Recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health

WHAT WE DO

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 at the County Road 77 boat landing.
- 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 Gull Lake Recreation Area public access ramp managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Communications Committee

- Maintains a website (www.gcola.org), a member group email service and a Facebook page (@GullLakeChain) 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 Gull Chain Preservation Endowment Fund and AIS Contingency Fund which provides long term funding for stewardship activities.
- Manages budgeting process.
- Supervises financial statements 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.
- Reports findings in GCOLA newsletter.

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.

Lake Steward Committee

- Invites all lakeshore owners to Take the Quiz and receive the Lake Steward Award for managing shoreland to protect lake water quality.
- Provides funding for approved shoreland naturalization projects.
- Conducts a Tree Giveaway each spring to promote naturalization of shoreland to protect water quality.

Loon Preservation 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.
- Recruits new members through the Lake Ambassador program.

Safety & Recreation Committee

- Purchases, installs, and maintains one of the premier navigational buoy systems (90 buoys) in the State of Minnesota. We also install 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.



Photo by Pat Rugloski



www.NisswaMarine.com

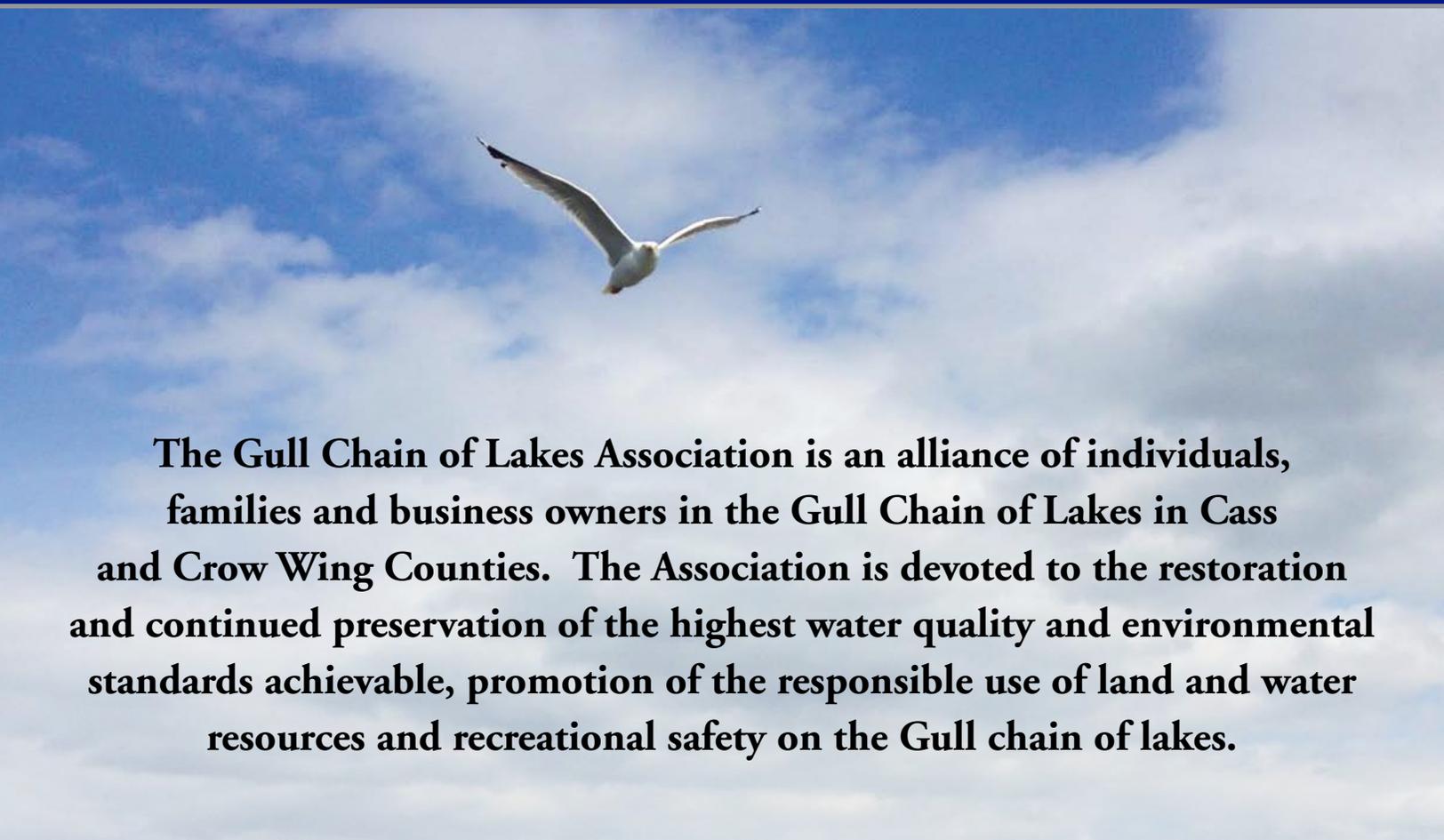


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MISSION STATEMENT

Photo by Joey Halvorson



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.