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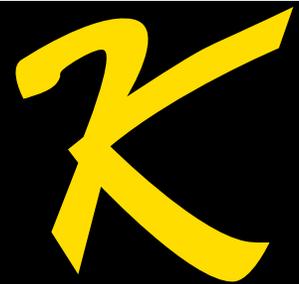
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You are always welcome to join us at our monthly Board of Directors' meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. Contact Info@GCOLA.org for meeting details.



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Gull Dam tour given by Brian Turner, USACE

I'm looking out the window at the lake and 70-degree weather in early November with a big smile on my face. Although my dock was recently removed, I continue to bathe in the warm sunshine and try my luck fishing off the lake bank edge. It's times like these that I feel grateful living on the Gull Lake Chain. Alas, the weather forecast indicates that these days will soon be over and winter season is on

its way. Just as we're entering a transition in seasons, we are about to face significant changes in our state governance with elections beginning next week. By the time you read this message, we will potentially have a new slate of candidates locally and across the state that we hope will be supportive of GCOLA's focus on protecting and preserving our land and water resources.

During September, Uldis Birznieks and I attended a meeting coordinated by Jeff Forester, Executive Director of Minnesota

Lakes, and Rivers (MLR) and hosted by GCOLA at Cragun's Resort. Senator Carrie Ruud was an invited speaker and offered advice on dealing with newly elected House and Senate legislative officials. Read more details about this important meeting in my Government Relations Committee update.

Committee Chairs have been busy updating their committee charters, goals and budgets, planning for 2023. Speaking of Chairs, we have a new Fisheries Committee Chair, Dan Simons, who is profiled in this newsmagazine edition. Welcome Dan!

This newsmagazine features several articles including Robert Eliason, Environmental Committee Chair, discussing how we can aid the furtherance of the winter night sky. He also discusses the detrimental impact of phosphorous on water quality. Dorothy Whitmer, Lake Steward Chair, wrote an article you'll enjoy "Fun at the lake while protecting our waters." Finally, Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Chair discusses the results of the 2022 Loon report on the Gull Lake Chain.

Thank you GCOLA members for all you do to protect and conserve our precious lake resources!

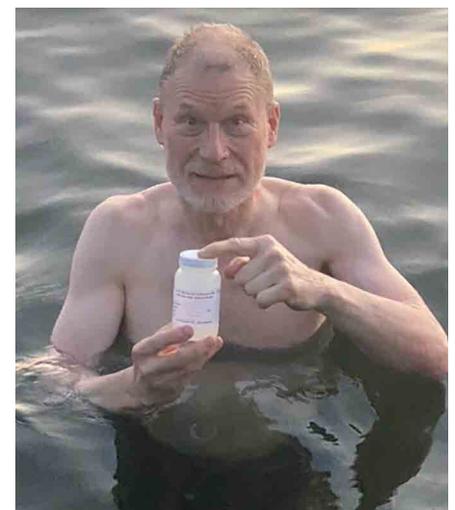
Steve

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Robert Eliason, Environmental Committee Chair

Each of following initiatives needs a volunteer.

- **Water Quality.** The volunteer would be responsible for water quality monitoring, processing of data collected, and communicating results to the membership.
- **Dark Sky.** The volunteer would write articles on the benefits of darkness for people and animals and on appropriate outdoor lighting. If a survey of the membership seemed appropriate, the volunteer would conduct it.
- **Lakeshed.** The lakeshed is that area around a lake where water flows naturally directly into the lake. Impervious surfaces and private waste water treatment systems can have impact on the lake. The volunteer would contribute articles addressing these and other land use impacts. If a survey of the membership seemed appropriate, the volunteer would conduct it.



THE LIONS OF LAKE STEWARDSHIP 2022

Dorothy Whitmer, Lake Steward Committee Chair



Claire and Ron Faust



Sharon Spahr and Wes Streed

GCOLA salutes our new Lake Stewards:

- **Ron Faust**, dedicated founder and former champion of GCOLA's Shoreline Restoration Program (now part of Lake Steward)
- **Wes Streed**, former President, Bad Medicine Lake Area Association and champion for clean lakes

Both families freed themselves from using broadcast fertilizers and pesticides to earn the Lake Steward Award.

The Lakes Thank You!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Robert & Jacquelyn Barton - Spider
Calvin Brager - Gull
David & Donna Burggraff - Gull
Joan Ebert - Upper Gull
Jon & Judy Foust - Gull

Lola Glendenning
Bart & Nicole Harmer - Gull
Thomas Hauge - Spider
Jeffrey Klinefelter - Upper Gull
Jean LaPlace - Gull

Jody Lawler - Gull
Michael Mugaas - Upper Gull
Grant & Shaney Stewart - Gull
Dawn & Patrick Wiebusch - Gull
Members now total 1031!

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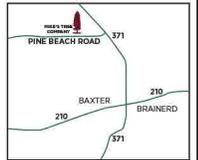
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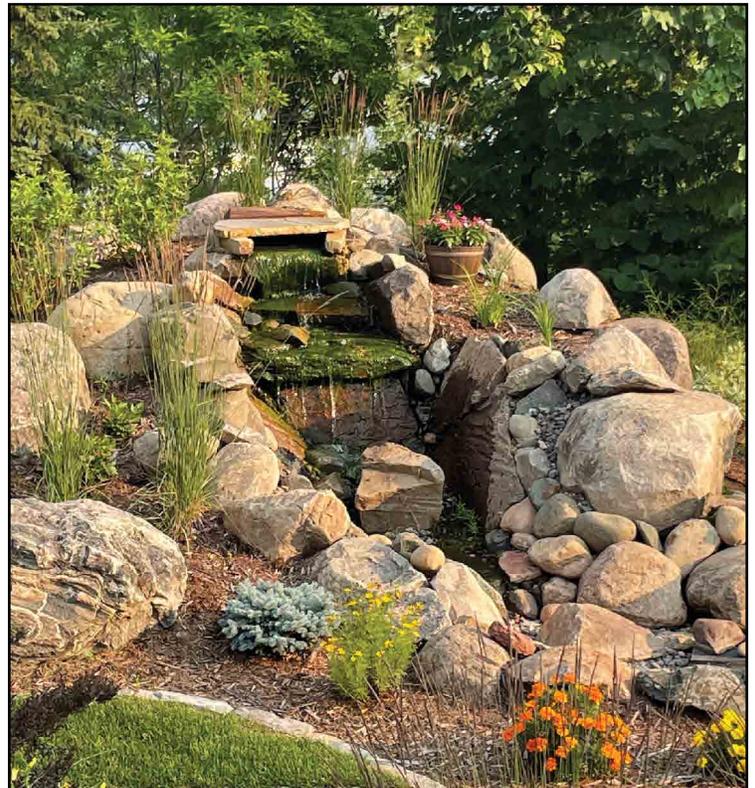
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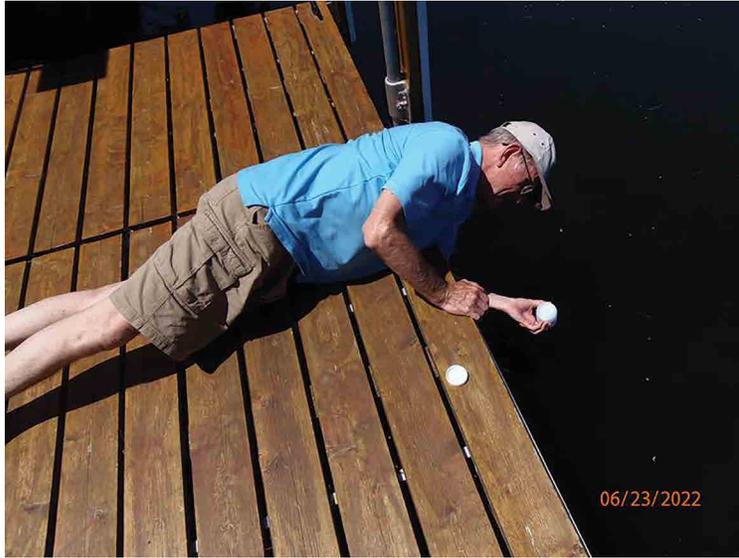


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END-OF-DOCK ANNUAL REPORT

Robert Eliason, End-of-Dock Program Coordinator



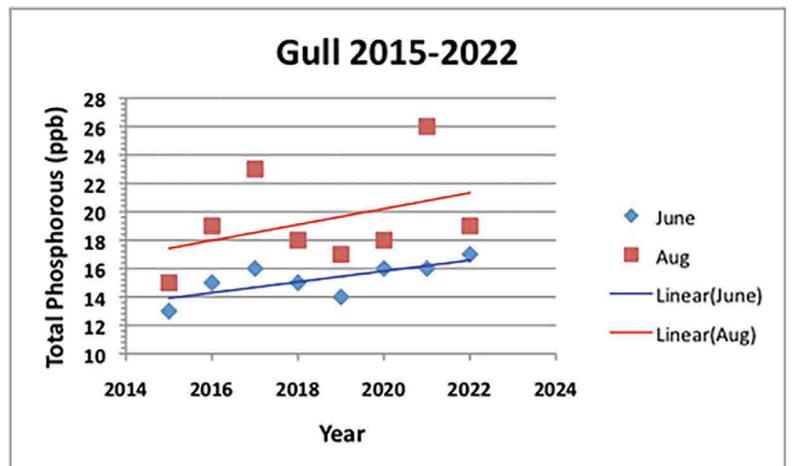
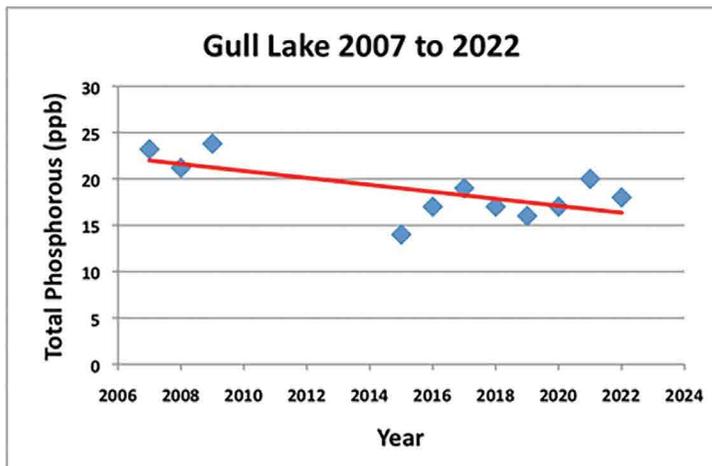
One measure of the health of our lakes is the concentration of phosphorus in the water. Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient that determines the amount of aquatic plant, especially algae, growth in the lake. High amounts of phosphorus in our lakes is bad because it promotes algae growth. Our members have been collecting samples to analyze for phosphorus for eight years. This year, over sixty members participated in the program!

A graph of the average phosphorus concentration in June and in August was prepared for Bass, Gull, Margaret, Nisswa, Roy, and Upper Gull. These are posted on our website (www.gcola.org). If you have questions or comments on them, please email me at: gcola.endofdock@gmail.com. The graph for Gull is shown with trend lines. The higher amounts of phosphorus in August may have two causes. As the water temperature goes up during the summer, more phosphorus is able to dissolve.

More boat traffic in July and August can stir up the bottom. This causes phosphorus to dissolve in the water resulting in higher phosphorus levels in August.

GCOLA previously sampled Gull Lake for phosphorus during the 2007-2009 summer seasons. In order to use this data with that obtained by our End-of-Dock data, I needed to average all the June and August data. I took these results and combined them with our 2007-2009 results. The End-of-Dock data alone suggest that the phosphorus level has been increasing. The combined data set (2007-2022) indicate that the phosphorus level has decreased. More years of sampling are needed to sort out the actual trend.

Samplers are always needed, especially for the smaller lakes. Please volunteer by contacting me at gcola.endofdock@gmail.com.



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MINNESOTA LOON RESCUE NETWORK

Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Committee Chair



MINNESOTA LOON RESCUE NETWORK

If you encounter a sick or injured loon contact:

Sheila Johnston 612-226-6571 or Julie Hepburn 816-516-0759

Or visit us on facebook: www.facebook.com/MinnesotaLoonRescueNetwork

The Common Loon is Minnesota's state bird, and it is beloved for its haunting calls and dramatic beauty. Minnesota is home to an estimated 12,000 loons! Alaska is the only state with more loons.

With 12,000 loons in the state, it is no surprise that some of them succumb to illness and injury. The three leading causes of loon deaths are human caused: lead poisoning, fishing line entanglement or hooking, and boat strikes. Explosions from private lakeside fireworks displays also pose a grave danger to loons and can injure or kill them. Chicks can be lost after separating from parents in the chaos.

Minnesota has excellent wildlife rehabilitation clinics that are well prepared to care for sick or injured loons, and orphaned chicks. However, finding skilled help with the rescue of a sick or injured loon can be a challenge. The new Minnesota Loon Rescue Network is here to help!



Volunteer rescuing lead poisoned loon

The Minnesota Loon Rescue Network is a network of trained volunteers assisting with the capture and transport of sick or injured loons to Minnesota DNR certified rehabilitation clinics.

Our goal is to have teams of trained volunteers in all areas of the state with loon populations. There is also a team of volunteers that can travel to areas without loon rescue volunteers.

Volunteers are needed and lake associations can help!

- Follow our public Facebook group, Minnesota Loon Rescue Network, where you can find information on loon rescue and report sick or injured loons.
- Share the news about the Minnesota Loon Rescue Network with your lake association and friends.
- There are many ways to get involved.
 - o Loon Watcher: observe and report loons in your area exhibiting signs of illness or injury to the Minnesota Loon Rescue Network
 - o Spotter: help locate injured or sick loons for the rescue team
 - o Provide and/or drive a boat for the rescue team
 - o Operate the spotlight for a nighttime water rescue
 - o Rescue: capture sick or injured loons
 - o Transport sick or injured loons to the rehabilitation clinic

MLR will be hosting a training webinar for Minnesota Loon Rescue Network volunteers in the spring of 2023. If you are interested in volunteering, contact sheilafjohnston@me.com.

If you encounter a sick or injured loon, call 612 226-6571 or 816 516-0759. Or visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/MinnesotaLoonRescueNetwork



Loons will chase fishing tackle. Note the jig hooked into this loon's neck.

Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston



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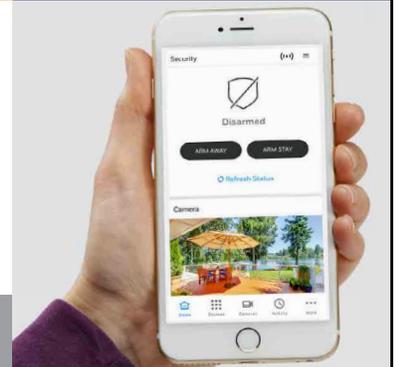
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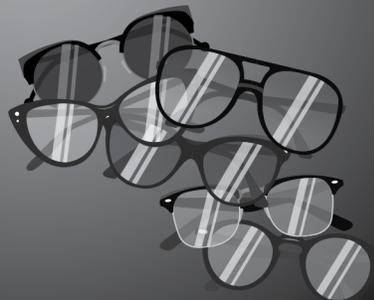


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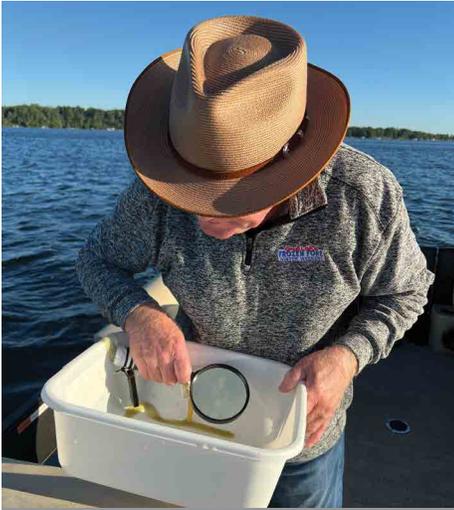
THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

LEGEND:

A – AIS
 C – Communications
 EOD – End-of-dock water survey
 F – Fisheries
 FA – Finance & Audit

G – Gala
 GR – Government Relations
 GTLO - Get the Lead Out
 K – Kiosk
 LR – Loon Rescue

LS – Loon Survey
 LSB – Loon Safe Boating
 LST – Lake Steward
 SR – Safety & Recreation



Larry Friedrichs searching for spiny water flea

Volunteer	Activity	Volunteer	Activity
Sharon Gibbons	LS	Heather Mullane	C, G, LS
Rosemary Goff.....	G, GR, LST, LS	Mark Mullane	C, G, LS
Dale Goodhue.....	LS	Jim Orrock.....	LST
Grand View Lodge.....	LSB	Rep John Poston.....	LSB
Jeanne & Matt Green.....	LS	Nate Reilly	LR
Dana Gutzmann	GTLO, K	Rex Rundquist	LS
Joey Halvorson.....	G	Carol & Gerry Rupp.....	LS
Alice Harris	LST, LS	Phil Saari.....	LST
Diane Hartogh.....	LS	Cindy & Kip Sandoz.....	G
Julie Hepburn	LR, LS	Dan Simons	F
Lise Herren	LST, LR, LS	Vicki Smith	G, LS
Chuck Herrig.....	F	Lynn & Mike Smith.....	G
John Hunter.....	LS	Maris Speckmann.....	LST
Jack Pine Brewery.....	GTLO	Dorothy Stewart.....	LST
Sheila Johnston..	GTLO, LST, LR, LS	Ken Stover.....	F
Doug Johnston.....	LR	Erin Strachan	LS
Mary Beth Jones.....	G	Mark Swenson.....	LST
Molly Krakowski & family.....	LS	Patricia Thoele	G
Lake Fun Rentals.....	LSB	Tim Thoele	A, FA, G
Jeanne & Tom Lefevere	LST	Bob Toborg	LS
Lost Lake Lodge.....	LSB	Bill Tucker.....	G, LS
Kathy Lundberg	C, G, LST, LS	Brian Turner (USACE).....	K
Tom Lundeen.....	LS	Jon Villella	LST
Susan Lutz.....	LS	Beckie Wahlin	G, LS
Madden's Resort.....	LSB	Rocky Waldin	LS
Joe Marchel.....	LST	Jennie Ward.....	G
Shelley McDonald.....	LST	Jim Ward.....	G
Regina McGrath.....	LST	Terri Whitman	LST
Mike McGray.....	LS	Dorothy Whitmer	LST
David McNair.....	LS	Michelle & Alex Wilson.....	LS
Cheryl & Jon Mendel.....	G, GR	Jane Witmer.....	LS
Joel Meyer	G, SR	John, Jane & Scott Witmer	LST
Jane Meyer	G	Jim & Mary Woll	LS
Kristen Moran & family.....	LS	Your Boat Club	LSB

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- Fund 3,300+ boat inspections annually
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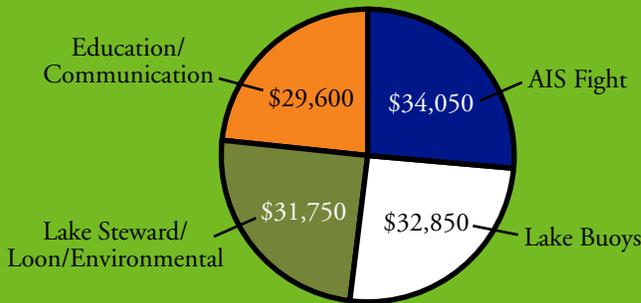


GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



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

2022 BUDGETED PRIORITIES



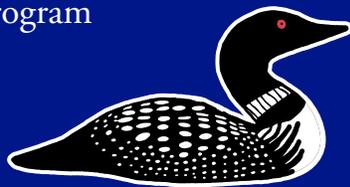
ENVIRONMENTAL

- 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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LAKE STEWARD MATCHING QUIZ

Dorothy Whitmer, Lake Steward Committee Chair

Which lakeshore on the left goes with the water quality on the right?



Native plants along shoreline



Clear lake water



Lawn down to the lake



Algae bloom

Yes, that's right! In the upper left, the native plants, *wild and free*, filter and absorb nutrients and runoff from the land, helping to promote crystal clear lake water. The sterile monoculture lawn at bottom left looks neat and tidy, but it is harming the water quality in our lakes because it is a racetrack for nutrient runoff. The short roots can't absorb effectively, and they can't protect against erosion. Fertilizers and pesticides easily wash into the lake, harming wildlife and encouraging invasive species. The result can be algae blooms and lake water that is not fit for swimming or recreation.

If you have lawn down to the lake, like the photo in the lower left, here's the terrific news: the solution is so easy, and water quality can start to improve **almost immediately: just stop mowing!** There is a natural seed bank of native seeds at the shoreline that will give you wonderful native plants up to ten feet from the water's edge, provided you also stop fertilizer and pesticides. Our 82 **GCOLA Lake Stewards have saved over one and a half TONS of algae from entering the lakes, every year!** Imagine what would happen if you become a Lake Steward, too. Take the Quiz! by scanning the QR code. Or go to gcola.org, click **Lake Steward**. Become a *wild and free* Lake Steward with simple changes and make Gull Lake Chain water quality sustainable for our children and grandchildren. And thank you!



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PHOTOS WANTED

Do you have photos taken around the Gull Lake Chain that you'd like to share? We always need pictures for the newsmagazine, website and social media. We especially have a shortage of 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 Maria Mason



Photo by Tammy Anderson



Photo by Eric Utter

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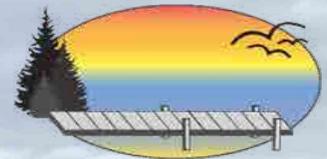
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(Dale Goodhue not shown)

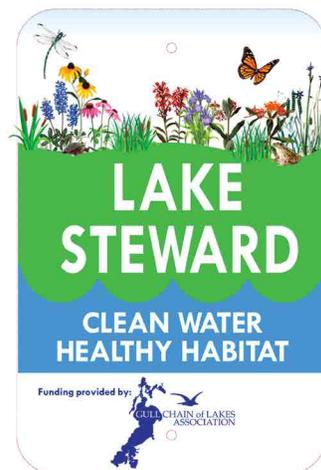


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DONATING EXTRA FOOD MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Lakes Area Food Shelf

The arrival of fall likely means cleaning out your cabin or home to get it ready for the cold Minnesota winter ahead. You can end your season on the lakes and help those in need of food assistance by donating any unopened and unexpired food to the Lakes Area Food Shelf (LAFS).

“We can use donated food items at any time of year, but this year is proving to be especially challenging,” explained Tim Moore, Chairperson of the LAFS Board. “We’re serving record numbers of people who don’t have money for basic groceries.”

The increase is stunning, driven by the expiration of pandemic relief programs and the bite of inflation. LAFS is expected to serve as many as 10,000 by the end of 2022 – more than double the 4,600 who visited the food shelf in all of 2021. Particularly sobering for LAFS in 2022 is the growing number of families coming to the food shelf. That number has tripled compared to 2021.

“We’re all one surprise incident away from not having enough for groceries,” LAFS Director Kathy Adams said, describing many who rely on LAFS as their primary source of food. “Sometimes it’s a choice between paying rent or eating, and often it’s choosing between medical care and dinner.”

So, if you don’t have space in your pantry for unopened and unexpired food from your lake home, it can make a huge difference at the food shelf. Donations can also contribute to a more sustainable planet. Feeding America, the non-profit organization that monitors hunger in the U.S.A. estimates that each year, our nation wastes 108 billion pounds of food.

“That equates to 130 billion meals and more than \$408 billion in food thrown away each year. Shockingly, nearly 40% of all food in America is wasted,” Feeding America reports. “Food waste in our homes makes up about 39% of all food waste - about 42 billion pounds”

Perfectly good food clogging landfills; transported aboard trains and trucks leaving a huge carbon footprint. Donating food from you cabin both makes a difference in people’s lives and in a small way, cuts waste.

LAFS is open to take your donations from 9AM to Noon each Tuesday and Thursday and from 3PM to 6PM each Wednesday. Items can be dropped off at LAFS, located at 29316 Patriot Avenue in Pequot Lakes, adjacent to the campus of Grace United Methodist Church.

Lakes Area Food Shelf is grateful to have served the Brainerd Lakes area since 1980. We were established through Nisswa’s Lutheran Church of the Cross and Christ Community Church. Due to rapid growth, we were named “Lakes Area Food Shelf” in 1991. We’re a 501(c)(3) public charity, operating solely on financial, food, and other donations.



Photo by Eric Utter

LAFS is a COMMUNITY FOOD SHELF. Its mission is to provide emergency and supplemental food assistance to those facing food insecurity. It belongs to EVERYONE, and we welcome our friends, neighbors, churches, volunteers, business community, EVERYONE, into the Food Shelf.

Our goal is to be a temporary resource for our Friends and Neighbors, providing food assistance and other resources that can help them address some of the economic and social barriers they face including, job training, housing, transportation, mental health.

“We rely exclusively on donations to help our Friends and Neighbors,” said LAFS Director Adams. “If you don’t have extra food to donate, we encourage direct contributions through our website <https://lakesareafoodshelf.org/donate>. Or checks can be sent to LAFS - PO Box 423 - Pequot Lakes, MN 56472.”



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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

Steve Frawley, Government Relations Committee Chair



Senator Ruud with meeting attendees

By the time the winter edition GCOLA newsmagazine reaches your doorstep newly elected House and Senate candidates representing our districts will have taken office. As of this writing, several positions are up for grabs with the retirement of Senator Carrie Ruud (district 10) and Representative John Poston (district 9A) primarily due to redistricting. Your Government Relations committee will have reached out to newly elected members in our districts and other key legislators focused on protecting our river and lake resources across the state.

On September 24, both Uldis Birznieks and I attended a meeting coordinated by Minnesota Lakes & Rivers (MLR) Executive Director, Jeff Forester, and hosted by GCOLA at Cragun's resort. The meeting featured Senator Carrie Ruud as well as over a dozen lake association and water resource leaders from around the state. The purpose was to discuss common concerns that lake associations from around the state face and how we might present a unified voice to the state legislature, given that the upcoming legislative session focuses on budget funding several critical areas. These include Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), and Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) were identified as funding priorities. Senator Ruud offered suggestions in how to work effectively with newly elected state legislators. She also emphasized the importance of making legislators aware of the significant tax base impact of property owners and if we fail to protect our lake and rivers this base, will deteriorate over time.

A few recent developments related to wake surfing and enhanced wakes:

1. The Cook County board recently approved the Caribou Lakes Property Owners Association request to ban wake

boarding and wake surfing on 760-acre Caribou Lake, near Lutsen, Minnesota. According to the Property Owners Association "wake boats and wake surfing pose a threat to the lake by causing shoreline erosion, turbulent disruption of lake bottom sediment, increased risk of the introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and disruption of the normal usage of the lake by fisherman, pontoon boats, and non-motorized watercraft." The next step will include a petition and request signed by lake association members to be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for final approval.

2. The State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in September released a report entitled "Wake boats: concerns and recommendations related to natural resource management in Michigan waters." Their recommendations included the following to minimize the effects of wake surfing and wake boarding on natural resources:
 - Boats operating in wake surfing mode or wake boarding mode, during which boat speed, wave shapers, and/or ballast are used to increase wave height, should operate at least 500 feet from docks or the shoreline, regardless of water depth.
 - Boats operating in wake-surfing or wake-boarding modes should operate in water at least 15 feet deep.
 - Ballast tanks should be completely drained prior to transporting the watercraft over land.
 - Regulatory authorities and the boating industry should implement an increased education and outreach campaign that targets wake boat operators to improve awareness and implementation of best practices.
3. The Healthy Waters Initiative (HWI) in conjunction with the University of Minnesota St Anthony Falls (SAFL) recently completed phase two data collection identifying the impact of prop wash on lake bottoms. Currently the data from this research is being analyzed before results and recommendations are made. In addition, the HWI team presented a Phase 3 proposal to the Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) which would allow expansion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 work and begin to make connections to environmental impacts. Read more about this online at: <https://sites.google.com/umn.edu/healthywatersinitiative/project-updates>.

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2022 LOON REPORT

Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Committee Chair

Thanks to the efforts of a team of close to 40 dedicated volunteers GCOLA completed three loon surveys. A nest survey was done in June, and an adult loon and chick survey was conducted in mid-July to determine reproductive success. A juvenile survey was completed at the end of the season to ascertain chick survival rates.

The numbers only tell part of the story, and there is good news and bad news. First, the good news! The number of active nests was significantly higher in 2022. There was a total of 22 nests on the Gull chain, up from 14 in 2019-2021. The number of chicks increased significantly when compared to chick numbers in 2019-2021. There were 24 chicks counted in July. 15 chicks survived to the juvenile or fledgling stage of development when chicks can survive independently.

On Upper Gull there were six mated pairs, and all had active nests. The number of mated pairs with active nests has been increasing since the first loon survey in 2014 when there were only two nests on Upper Gull. During the May incubation period there was a heavy black fly hatch, and the blood sucking insects relentlessly attacked the loons as they sat on their nests. Due to the black fly attacks, all six Upper Gull pairs abandoned their nests before the eggs hatched. Three of the six pairs hatched chicks after mating a second time.

Gull Lake is by far our largest lake on the chain, but it had only two more active nests than Upper Gull. However, there was a much lower incidence of nest failure on Gull. The reason for this is unclear. One explanation could be that Upper Gull had an earlier ice out than Gull Lake. The Upper Gull loons' incubation period coincided with the black fly hatch while the Gull Lake loons may have nested a little later, and thus avoided the black fly problem. There was nest failure on some of the other smaller lakes on the chain, and they also had earlier ice out. This will be something to pay attention to next year.

Now the bad news. There were only 62 adult loons counted in the July survey. This is the lowest number of adult loons since our first survey in 2014 when 58 adult loons were counted. The highest number was in 2020 when 119 loons were counted. The lower number of adult loons counted this year may be due to the wind conditions on our July survey date. Due to heavy winds, volunteers were unable to survey some of the areas on Gull Lake where non-territorial adult loons are typically found.

The most unfortunate news is that loons on the Gull Chain of Lakes are needlessly falling victim to illness, injury, and death because of our human activities and carelessness.

- Witnesses observed wake boats operating closely to loon nests on Gull Lake and Lake Margaret, and two loon nests were washed out by the waves because of this carelessness.
- Witnesses observed a wake boat run over a loon family on Upper Gull, and a loon family was saved from a boat strike when a fisherman on Upper Gull blocked a ski boat from running them over.
- An adult loon from Hunter's Point died from lead poisoning caused by the ingestion of lead fishing tackle, leaving behind a mate who was unable to feed and care for their two chicks alone.
- A juvenile loon on Upper Gull was hooked with a lead jig.



17 year old Max Krokowski doing the Upper Gull Loon Survey. Max is a life-long Upper Gull resident and is passionate about protecting loons and the lake. He has been a Loon Survey and End of the Dock Water Sample volunteer for 4 years!

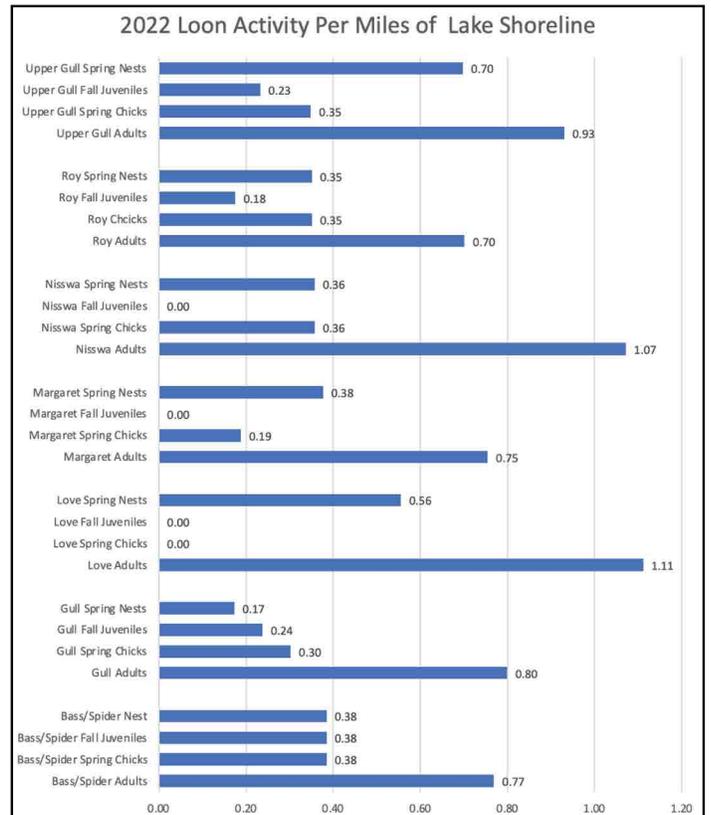
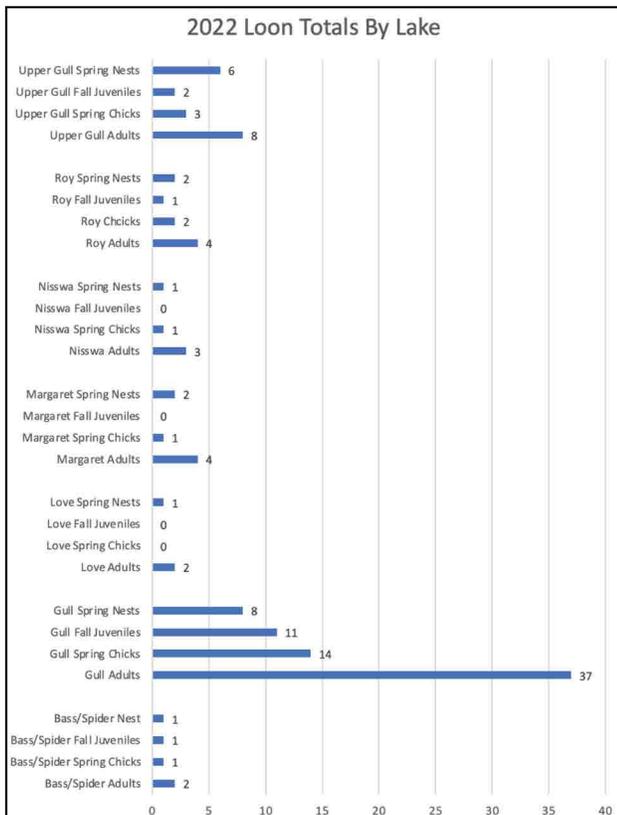
More information can be found in the Loon Count Spreadsheet, and chick and juvenile survival rate details are in the accompanying graph. It should be noted that Thor Lake had one mated pair and active nest. The pair hatched two chicks, and one survived until the end of the season. Because the pair moves out to Gull Lake after their chicks hatch, adult loons, chicks, and juveniles were recorded in the Gull Lake survey.

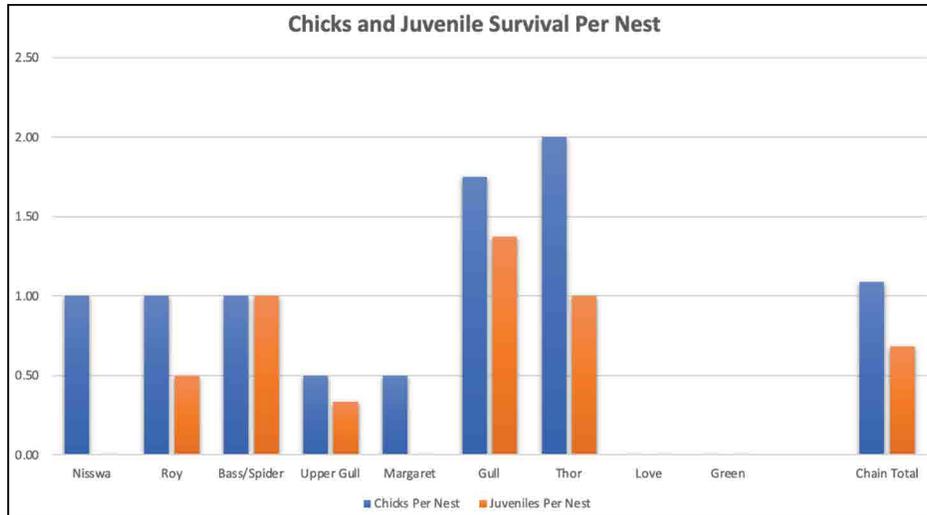


Matt and Jeanne Green, from Roy Lake. Jeanne keeps an eye on loons all over the Gull Lake Chain throughout the loon season, spring through fall!

Lake	Counts	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Nisswa										
Spring	Nests	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
Summer	Adults	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	3
Summer	Chicks	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1
Fall	Juveniles						1	0		0
Roy										
Spring	Nests	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Summer	Adults	7	6	4	9	4	10	6	2	4
Summer	Chicks	1	3	2	2	2	3	4	1	2
Fall	Juveniles						0	4		1
Bass/Spider										
Spring	Nests	2	2	2	3	1	0	0	1	1
Summer	Adults	4	3	4	2	4	7	2	3	2
Summer	Chicks	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	1
Fall	Juveniles						0	1		1
Upper Gull										
Spring	Nests	2	3	2	3	3	4	5	5	6
Summer	Adults	6	9	8	9	8	9	6	10	8
Summer	Chicks	1	6	2	2	5	2	2	1	3
Fall	Juveniles						2	2		2
Margaret										
Spring	Nests	1	2	1	2	2	1	0	1	2
Summer	Adults	4	2	2	4	3	6	3	4	4
Summer	Chicks	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	1
Fall	Juveniles						0	0		0
Gull										
Spring	Nests	7	6	5	4	3	8	6	5	8
Summer	Adults	29	54	49	81	49	73	98	68	37
Summer	Chicks	6	8	11	7	9	7	7	8	14
Fall	Juveniles						6	7		11
Thor										
Spring	Nests									1
Summer	Adults									2
Summer	Chicks									2
Fall	Juveniles									1
Love										
Spring	Nests	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Summer	Adults	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
Summer	Chicks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fall	Juveniles						0	0		0
Green										
Spring	Nests				1	0	0	0	0	0
Summer	Adults					0		2	2	0
Summer	Chicks					0		2	2	0
Fall	Juveniles						0	0		0
Totals										
	Nests	14	17	11	15	11	14	14	14	22
Summer	Adults	58	76	68	106	70	109	119	93	62
Summer	Chicks	9	18	17	13	21	15	16	13	24
	Chicks per Nest	0.64	1.06	1.55	0.87	1.91	1.07	1.14	0.93	1.09
Fall	Juveniles	0	0	0	0	0	9	14	0	16

Lake		2022 Chicks/ Juveniles per Nest	Per Lakeshore
Nisswa	Nests		0.36
	Chicks	1.00	0.36
	Juveniles	0.00	0.00
Roy	Nests		0.35
	Chicks	1.00	0.35
	Juveniles	0.50	0.18
Bass/Spider	Nests		0.38
	Chicks	1.00	0.38
	Juveniles	1.00	0.38
Upper Gull	Nests		0.70
	Chicks	0.50	0.35
	Juveniles	0.33	0.23
Margaret	Nests		0.38
	Chicks	0.50	0.19
	Juveniles	0.00	0.00
Gull	Nests		0.17
	Chicks	1.75	0.30
	Juveniles	1.38	0.24
Thor	Nests		3.33
	Chicks	2.00	6.67
	Juveniles	1.00	0.00
Love	Nests		0.56
	Chicks	0.00	0.00
	Juveniles	0.00	0.00
Green	Nests		0.00
	Chicks	0.00	0.00
	Juveniles	0.00	0.00
Totals	Nests		0.30
	Chicks	1.09	0.32
	Juveniles	0.68	0.20





How you can make a difference!

- Boat responsibly near loons and nests. Watch ahead and reduce your speed and wake near loons and nests. Adults will not dive out of your way when protecting chicks, and it is impossible to see chicks behind a loon parent or under their wing. Chicks cannot dive out of the way of boats.
- Use lead-free tackle. Lead tackle is the leading cause of loon deaths. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Get the Lead Out program has a list of lead-free tackle suppliers at pca.state.mn.us.
- Do not cast towards loons.
- Do not leave cut or broken line in the water. Loons can become entangled and injured by broken line and tackle in the water. When paddling and boating keep your eyes open for broken line or tackle and retrieve and dispose of it safely.
- Say no to personal lakeside fireworks displays. The explosions are extremely stressful for loons and can injure and kill them. Chicks can become separated and lost in the chaos.
- Preserve or restore natural shorelines to provide more nesting habitat. Riprap destroys loon nesting habitat and habitat for other birds and wildlife. For erosion concerns bioengineering is the best solution. GCOLA's Shoreline Restoration Program can help!
- Volunteer for GCOLA's Loon Rescue Team (see article on the Minnesota Loon Rescue in this newsletter for more information).

If you would like to volunteer for any of the 2023 loon surveys or be a season long Loon Watcher and record monthly observations on loons in your vicinity, please email info@gcola.org.

If you see a sick or injured loon, call the Minnesota Loon Rescue Network, which is administered by GCOLA volunteers Sheila Johnston and Julie Hepburn.

Sheila: 612 226-6571

Julie: 816 516-0759

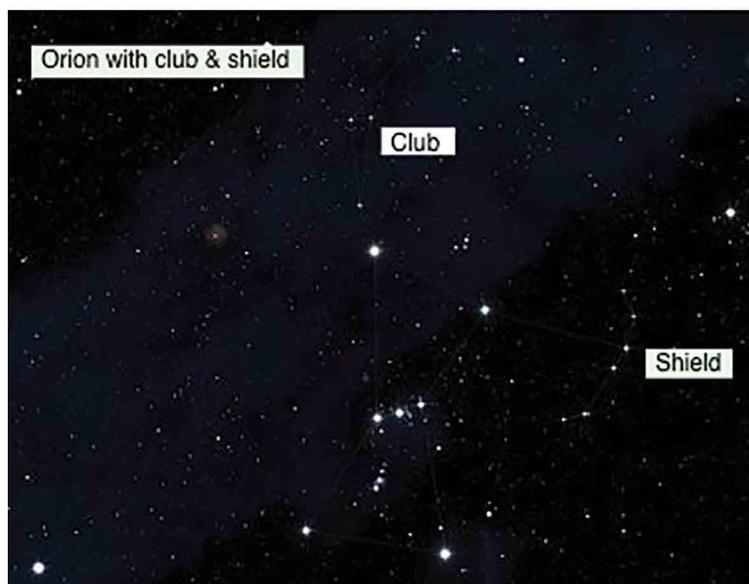


Lena feeding her day-old chick



One day old chick riding on dad's back

Photos by Sheila Farrell Johnston



Orion with club & shield

“The Moon on the breast of the new fallen snow, gave a lustre of mid-day to objects below.” Winter was magical for me walking home from scout meetings in the dark. The moonlit world was so bright that I didn’t need a flashlight. I didn’t need one even on moonless nights. The atmosphere was so crystal clear that starlight from the Milky Way was enough to see the way. Oh, how mesmerizing that was! I quickly learned to identify the constellation Orion, which seemed to dominate the sky. I learned to pick out the following features: belt, sword, shield, and arm holding a club. (See Orion with club & shield.) I’m still fascinated by it all on a winter’s night.

I grew up in Richfield, MN, on the very edge of town. Darkness prevailed to the south. There were very few street lights and no yard lights. All of that has changed, of course. Today, Orion is still visible from my boyhood home. (See Orion in light polluted sky.) But, only the brightest stars are visible and possibly the features belt and sword, and Orion’s arm holding the club and the shield are totally gone. Also, the mesmerizing Milky Way has disappeared. As urbanization crept southward, urban light pollution followed. Lights from the greatly expanded Metropolitan area now illuminate the sky. The lighting is so bright that you can easily pick out the Twin Cities in satellite pictures of North America. Orion just can’t compete.



Orion in light polluted sky

I was wondering if the sky is uniformly dark around our lakes or are some areas darker than others. One way to find out would be to conduct a survey. A very crude test of darkness would be to use Orion and its four features - belt, sword, shield, and arm holding club. If all of those features were visible, that would be the best. If none of those features were visible, that would be the worst. So, let’s have some fun. Go out between December 21, 2022 and March 20, 2023. Orion will be low in the eastern sky in December and rises throughout the winter to high in the southwestern sky in March. Bundle up warmly, go outside, let your eyes adjust to the dark, and look at Orion. You might have to do this several times to get a haze free view. Then send an email to me at gcola.endofdock@gmail.com with Orion in the Subject line. Tell me the features you saw. Include your lake address so I can locate the general area where you are on the lake. I will publish the results in the news magazine. Good viewing!

**PLEASE BE A CLEAR WINTER SKY ADVOCATE!
Only you can help the sky be dark by using dark sky
compliant light fixtures for your outdoor lighting.**

GET THE LEAD OUT IN WINTER

Steven Yang,

Program Coordinator - Get the Lead Out, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



Get the Lead Out is a program at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency working to protect common loons through education and outreach that encourages anglers to use lead-free fishing tackle.



A popular lead-free alternative that many ice anglers already use is tungsten. Tungsten is not only safe for loons and the environment, but also performs exceptionally on the ice. Tungsten is denser than lead, therefore has a smaller profile and sinks faster. Tungsten is more sensitive as well.

Also remember, leave no trace on the ice, pack out what you pack in! Everything you leave behind (garbage, fishing line, lead fishing tackle...) will go into the water when the ice melts this spring. Once spring rolls around, there's no need to stop using your tungsten ice fishing tackle, they can be used for open water fishing too!

To learn more, visit <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/getting-lead-out-of-fishing-tackle>, and like/follow Get the Lead Out's social media (www.facebook.com/LeadOutMN, www.instagram.com/LeadOutMN)

CLEAN DRAIN DRY



Brady searching for zebra mussels



LAKES PRINTING CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

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

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

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ADOPT-A-BUOY STILL AVAILABLE!

Jay Chaney, Safety & Recreation Committee Chair



Chewbacca on buoy patrol • Photo by Jay Chaney

I realize that most readers of the GCOLA Newsmagazine have enjoyed the Gull Lake Chain, and all of the charm and beauty it has to offer. Similarly, most readers have observed and appreciated our extensive, top-notch navigational buoys. And, you've likely noticed the numerous "memorialized" or "sponsored" buoys.

As a reminder, there are more than 100 buoys on the Gull Lake Chain and 62 of those are eligible for sponsorship. As of now, around 40 of those eligible have already been sponsored, leaving just 22 available. Most of these are on the north end of the lake, but each year we experience some turnover, leaving additional locations available.

Many of our buoys are sponsored to memorialize a loved one who has passed away, but that isn't the only reason for sponsoring a buoy. Many families adopt a buoy representing their family name or to recognize someone who has done outstanding things to benefit the Gull Lake Chain. In addition, many businesses have sponsored a buoy for marketing purposes or to recognize and give back to the chain of lakes that has benefited their business directly or indirectly.

The cost to sponsor a buoy with your personalized message is \$500.00 for a five-year commitment. This includes the cost of the decal as well as installation. Simply provide your message and we will provide you with a map detailing which buoys have already been sponsored and which are still available. We can't guarantee that the buoy selected will be available, but we will do our best to get it as close to your chosen location as possible.

So, don't miss out! If you're looking to recognize that special person or family, memorialize a loved one who has passed away, or to market your business entity, this is a wonderful opportunity. And, a sponsored buoy makes for a unique holiday gift as well. All funds collected will directly benefit our buoy system costs and will support the mission of The Gull Chain of Lakes Association.

GCOLA PROFILE

Dan Simons, Fisheries Committee Chair



My family came to Gull Lake in 1932. I have grown up -- and older -- on Gull. Now that I am semi-retired, I find my wife and I spending four to six months a year here. I have always been an avid fisherman, mainly here, but also in Colorado and Alaska. I always ask folks at the local bait shop or fly shop for advice. I don't claim to be an expert in any of the fields relating to fishing. I just love to get out, enjoy a sunrise or sunset, observe the beauty of a golden fall walleye, and spend time with family, people, or the family Labrador. I have never been a catch-and-keep fisherman and favor catch-and-release when possible. I am concerned about our fish population and how boating activity is affecting it. Now that I do have a bit of free time, I consider joining GCOLA as a way to help preserve and protect what I was fortunate to have growing up. I will ask questions and seek advice from all to help represent the fishing community.

2023 MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

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

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

THANK YOU FOR BEING A MEMBER

2023 Gull Chain of Lakes Association Dues (January 1 to December 31) \$50.00

Additional Donation (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 Committee Communications Gala Government Relations

Lake Steward Loon Programs Membership Committee Water Quality Testing

First Name(s) _____ Last Name _____

Second or Company Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Primary Phone _____ Alternate Phone _____

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

Email _____ Second Email _____

Lake Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

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

The Gull Chain of Lakes Association does not sell, trade, swap or in any other way use your data except for official GCOLA use.

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.

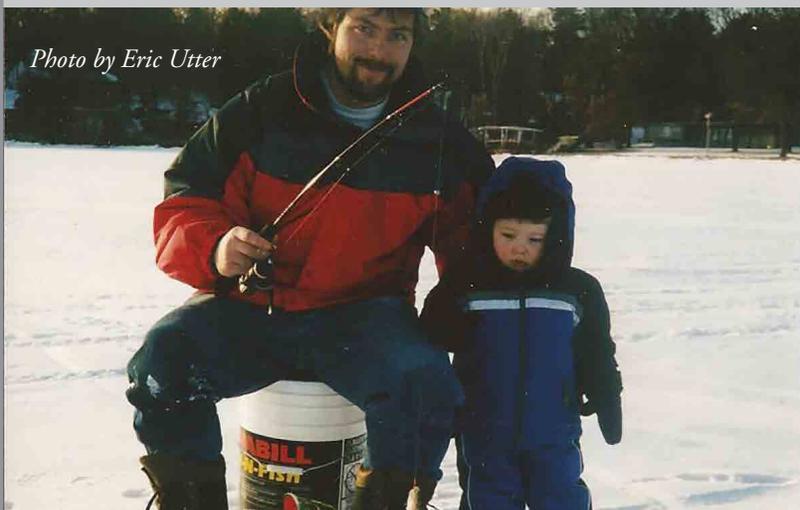
Membership Committee

- 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 Eric Utter



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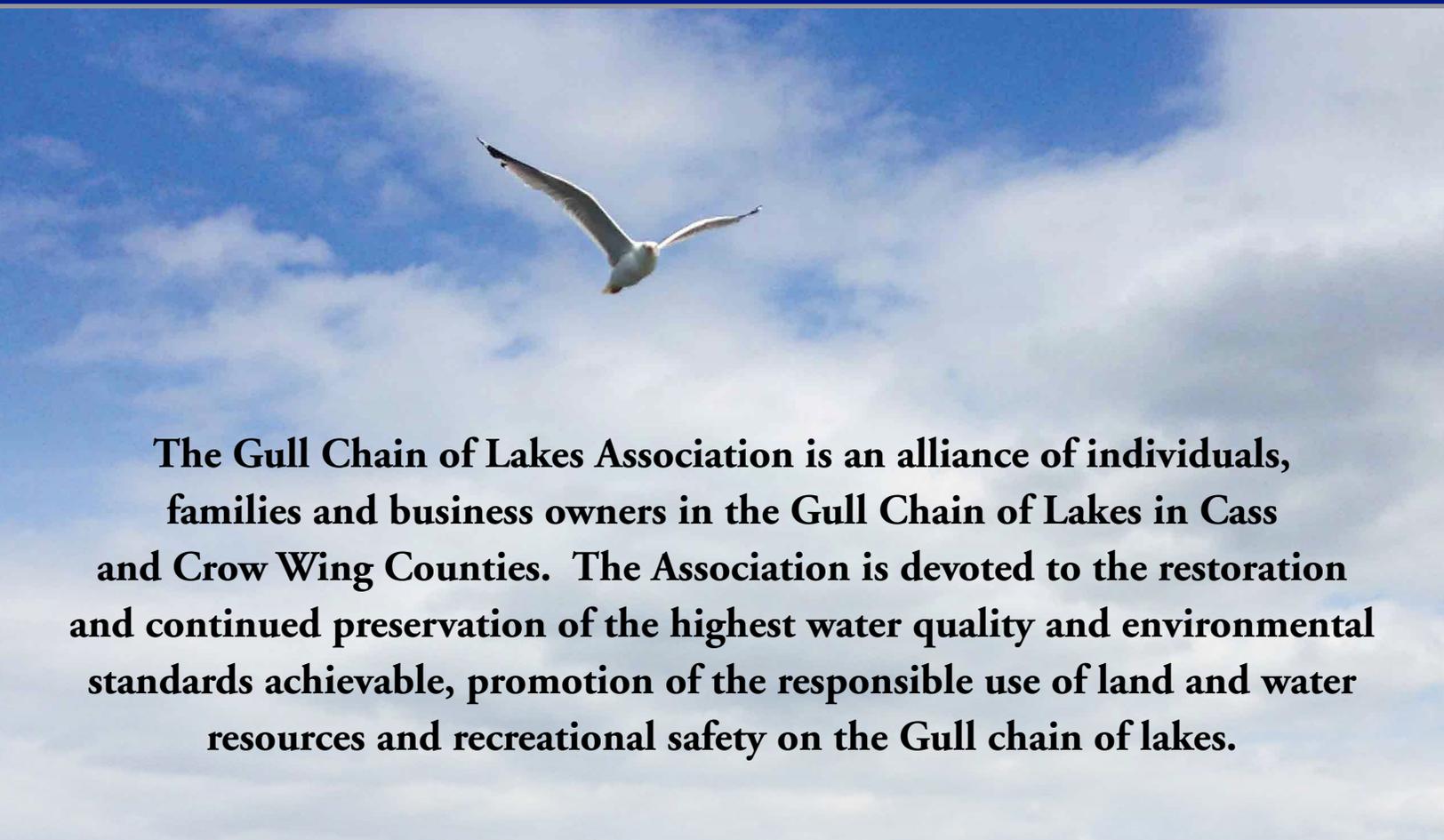
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Photo by Joey Halvorson



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.