

The COLA Update

Publication of Hubbard County Coalition Of Lake Associations

PO Box 746 • Park Rapids Minnesota 56470

Spring 1996

The First 'Children's Water Festival' is Coming!!

By Shelly Hanson

Maintaining water quality is a priority with Lake Association members, COLA and Hubbard County. COLA has consistently shown its commitment to protecting surface water quality through its educational efforts, involvement with the 'Citizen's Lake Monitoring Program' (CLMP), and lake water quality sampling to establish baseline information. More recently, volunteer efforts of several Lake Associations in Hubbard County's domestic well testing clinic indicate members recognize that protection of surface water quality is not enough.

All of our water resources are connected and finite. The water we use and waste today is the same water that was here when the earth was formed.

Dinosaurs drank the water we drink and our children's children will drink and reuse the same water! Children must be taught about the importance of conserving water and be prepared to accept responsible stewardship of this valuable resource. The Children's Freshwater Festival is an educational effort with these goals in mind.

On May 2nd, sixth graders from all over Hubbard county will gather at the Nevis School for a day of learning

about Hubbard County's water resources in an atmosphere of fun at the *Children's Freshwater Festival*. COLA has been involved in organizing the festival from the start. They will sponsor an activity at the Festival and COLA members will also serve as volunteers on May 2nd.

The Hubbard County COLA and their Lake Association members are to be commended for their dedication, foresight, and recognition that ... "WE ALL LIVE DOWNSTREAM".



We All Live Downstream

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Tracking the Spread of Eurasian Milfoil

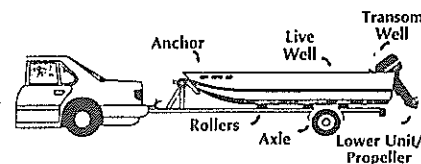
"You don't want it - We don't want it - It's too green for me!" (Remember that old song 'She's Too Fat for Me'?) Well, nobody wants Eurasian Milfoil in their lake - it crowds out other water plants and can make a nuisance 'mat' of weeds that is hard to get a boat through - much less humans trying to swim.

A recent DNR news release reported that no new lakes outside the seven county metro area of St. Paul and Minneapolis were found to have the fast growing weed. However, inside that seven county metro area seven new lakes were found to be infested.

Many Lake Associations try to stop Eurasian Milfoil from entering their lake by inspecting boats at landing on busy weekends/holidays to look for the weed on props, etc.

Lake Associations sometimes do a check of the lake in the fall to see if the weed might be present. Some Lake Associations send out brochures with their newsletter to help member become familiar with the weed and the threat.

It has been said that all it takes for a lake to become infested is one boat coming from an infested lake with some Eurasian Milfoil to drop into the water of our beautiful lakes. So far, no lake in Hubbard County has had any sign of the weed. Let's hope we can keep clear of it.



By Ted Spencer

President's Report

On Feb. 13th, the Hubbard County Planning Commission started the process of the Shoreland Ordinance revisions dictated by County Board action on Feb. 1, 1995. The Planning Commission has some new faces. Larry Burgoon has left the Commission and is replaced by Ed DeLaHunt as the new representative from the County Commissioners and Andy McCarty is the new representative from the Board of Adjustment. Don Palm is also new to the Planning Commission, but a familiar and welcome face to all of us.

This first meeting of the Planning Commission proved to be a disaster. When they got to the Shoreland Ordinance considerations, both Ed DeLaHunt and Andy McCarty dominated the discussion with a litany of what they wanted on their own property and a tirade against anyone who disagreed with them. Several COLA members attended this meeting and we all left there dismayed by the blatant exhibition of self-interest. The meeting was so disruptive that it was abruptly adjourned without any positive action being taken.

This obvious misuse of power could not be ignored. Immediately after the meeting, COLA began an intensive effort directed towards the County Commissioners to get this type of action stopped. We had some very valid facts on our side. When the County Commissioners opened up the Shoreland Ordinance for revision, they also requested public written input. COLA had obtained a copy of all this material and had spent considerable time reading and analyzing what the public had to say. The results showed that out of the 289 re-

plies, 164 (58%) favored either keeping the Ordinance as-is or making it stronger. Only 41 replies had specific changes requested. The rest were replies that did not address the subject directly. So we felt the Commissioners had asked the public their opinion and the public replied that the Ordinance should be left alone.

On Feb. 21, supported by a room full of COLA members and COLA friends, I read a statement at the County Board meeting stating our objections to the Planning Commission meeting of Feb. 13 and asked that the Commissioners reverse their motion to open the Shoreland Ordinance for revision. The chairman of the County Board, Floyd Frank stated that they would take our request under advisement.

To date, nothing has happened. However, it is easy to see that our actions have had considerable effect. At the Planning Commission meeting on March 12th, the members, including DeLaHunt and McCarty conducted themselves in a business-like manner without the personal demands. Although one meeting does not indicate a trend, there is reason to hope that our message will influence the County Officials and that the Shoreland Ordinance will not be greatly changed. At this time, our best action is to adopt a wait-and-see attitude and also to attend the various County public meetings and hearings and make the necessary input where required.

I want to thank all the COLA members and others who provided the magnificent support for our efforts. With solidarity like this we are bound to succeed in protecting our beautiful lakes for future generations.

Frank T. Smith



COLA Quotes

The eight members of the COLA Print Committee have completed a successful first season under the leadership of Chairman Paul Child. Their informative articles have appeared weekly in both the Park Rapids Enterprise and the Northwoods Press. There has been such a positive response from the public that once again a new series of articles will be printed each week beginning in April.

The Print Committee meets once a month and each member submits their assignment for critique by the group so that any additions or corrections take place at that time. The goal is to have educational and current information ready for publication available six weeks ahead of schedule.

For those of us fortunate enough to be part of the group, it has proven to be enjoyable and educational for us as well. Friendships have developed that mean a great deal to each of us. Our "talking loon" logo was designed by a member of our group and continues to represent us.

We hope you will find the upcoming articles as informative as the ones in the past. Our goal is to continue putting forth our best efforts to achieve that objective. Thank you all for your support, and a special thanks to the Enterprise and the Northwoods Press. We couldn't do it without them.

By Joan Smith

Shoreland Ordinance Amendment update

Fifteen months ago a movement was initiated to amend the Hubbard County Shoreland Ordinance. This is a brief summary of what has happened.

The driving forces behind the effort to weaken the Ordinance have been a County Commissioner who ran on a "restore property rights" platform and who himself had been charged with a violation of the Ordinance, and a Park Rapids realtor who headed the Shoreland Ordinance Amendment Coalition (SOAC). Their efforts resulted in action by the County Commissioners to open the entire Ordinance to the amendment process.

Public comment was solicited on the Ordinance generally and on the parts of the Ordinance complained of by SOAC. Meetings and hearings were held. Hundreds, probably thousands, of hours were spent by elected and appointed public officials, local and state, and by private individuals, at a cost that can't be calculated, to review the Ordinance that had been reviewed in detail, at length and at considerable expense in 1991.

When the period for comment ended in the summer of 1995, 289 public responses had been received. Fifty-eight percent—164—asked for no change or for making the Ordinance more restrictive. Only 41 responses—14%—requested specific change. The remaining 84 responses failed to identify any particular section, but expressed a general opinion that the Ordinance be relaxed.

Only one section of the Ordinance has been addressed and acted on, that being the section dealing with non-conforming contiguous lots under single ownership. This section has been changed to permit the owner of non-conforming contiguous lots to deal with each lot as though the lots were in separate ownership. COLA does not oppose this. But the change goes farther, and in fact erases minimum sizes for buildable lots. If a lot will accommodate set-back requirements, and if septic systems and wells can be put in place in conformity with applicable codes, the lot is buildable.

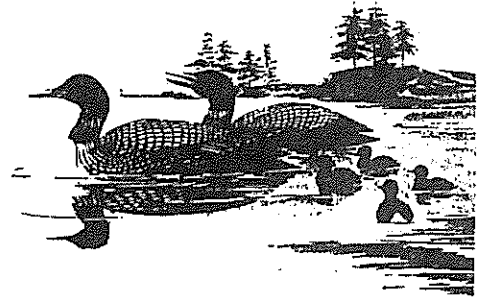
The composition of the members of the County Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment have been

changed, shifting the balance from environmentally concerned to advocacy of "property rights." The County Commissioners have "lifted" stop orders issued by the Environmental Services Office which were imposed to halt construction in violation of the Ordinance. Actions pending against persons charged with violations of the Ordinance have, at the direction of the Commissioners, been abandoned.

SOAC, now calling itself "The Shoreland Coalition," has broadly circulated a "Property Owner Questionnaire," consisting of twelve questions to be responded to by marking Y or N. The questions are phrased so that virtually all suggest the preferability of a SOAC favorable answer, and most permit no Y or N answer that would be COLA's response. An editorial in the Park Rapids *Enterprise* addressing the questionnaire states, "Most, if not all, of the 12 questions implied the bias of the organization framing the questions." The editorial also echoes COLA's position that "...these issues have been debated ad nauseam every few years and it is expensive to continually go through the process." While none of the questions quite reaches the "Have you stopped beating your wife?" level, they did not permit COLA members to express their opinions. If you read or hear that SOAC received responses supporting its positions, understand that the questionnaire permitted nothing else.

COLA is opposing and will continue to oppose vigorously the efforts to gut the Shoreland Ordinance. Our president Frank Smith and his wife Joan have proved to be forceful spokespersons for our cause. We ask you too to speak out, to attend meetings when requested, to write letters, to contact your County Commissioner, and to do whatever you can to ethically and in good conscience to defeat these misguided and often selfish attempts to permit use of our shorelands in ways that would certainly, and irrevocably, result in the trashing of our lakes. Your reward will be the thanks of the generations who will come to our shorelands and enjoy the same wilderness environment and clean lakes that brought us and keep us here.

By Herm Bailey



Minnesota's Loons

By Herm Bailey

Twelve thousand loons—over half of the breeding population in the lower 48 states—make Minnesota's waters their summer residence.

This number—approximately 12,000—is based on a count made by the Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program, a volunteer-based project of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, to track loon populations in each of six regions. About 100 lakes in each region are surveyed, last year from July 14 to 18, by volunteers, 425 of who showed up along with DNR personnel to count adult and juvenile loons on 650 lakes. The 1994 count, the first year of the project, was 862 adults and 195 juveniles, and the 1995 totals were about the same.

The Monitoring program has as its objective the detection of any long term trend in the number of loons and the number of chicks hatched successfully. Year-to-year changes are expected to be small, because loons have life spans of 20 to 30 years and are believed to return to the same lakes each year. But over a longer period of time decreases in population or breeding success suggest problems, and if the problems can be identified solutions can be developed before the point of no return.

The lakes of Hubbard County aren't pristine, but many of them support stable loon populations. Almost all of us are thrilled by the calls—the tremulo that sounds like an insane laugh, the mysterious, mournful cry of the wail, the aggressive yodel of the male staking out his territory, and the happy communication carried on with the gentle hoot. And when we have guests from parts of the country where there are no loons, we take pride in introducing them to the sights and sounds of this

cont. on page 4

Loons (cont'd)

Great Northern Diver, as the loon is called in Europe.

Loons will stay with us as long as they find our lakes and waterways to be comfortable and safe for breeding. Contamination of the water, and encroachment by humans, are the biggest threats they face. COLA members understand what pollutes lakes; we avoid polluting ourselves, and we do battle with those who are polluters.

Encroachment by humans takes several forms: so much development around the lake that the loons can find no private, isolated place to nest; humans approaching nests too closely, usually by boat; and harassment of loons by watercraft, especially "personal watercraft," the jet ski type.

Three things you can do:

1. Support COLA in its efforts to protect water quality and to prevent overdevelopment, overuse of the shorelands.
2. There is a law prohibiting harassment of loons. If you observe a watercraft harassing a loon, get all the information you can about the offender and call the DNR Law Enforcement office in Park Rapids: 732-8037.
3. Volunteer to take part in the 1996 Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program. Write Rich Baker, DNR Nongame Wildlife Program, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul MN 55155-5007.

Loons have been around for 60 million years. It is the oldest bird in North America, one of the oldest on earth. Man and the loon can coexist. But the loon has gone from many lakes because of encroachment by humans. We here in Hubbard County are fortunate; we still have loons! Let us work to keep them. More than any other part of our environment, they create the sense of wilderness that draws us to these forests and lakes.

Joan Dunning wrote and illustrated a book entitled "The Loon-Voice of the Wilderness." She writes: "Have you ever heard a loon....deep in the night? The sound is often distant, coming from some remote, inaccessible corner of a lake..... And then it comes again—the call known as a wail—but heard for the first time, it isn't neatly called by any name. It is a sensation up the spine, a chill to the skin, a creator of that little gap in the mind through which one sees eternity."

News From the Lake Associations

5th and 6th Crow Wing Lake Association

Our Association has had two loon nesting platforms out that have not had any results. We plan this spring to look at moving them to better locations. Our membership increased this past year 10% to 111 and our almost monthly newsletter and monthly get togethers continue. An active group!

Potato Lake Association

We are pleased to have had a record high membership last year and hope to increase participation even more in the future. The annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, July 6th at 9:30 AM at the Pines Supper Club.

Belle Taine Lake Association

In cooperation with Spider and 5th/6th Crow Wing Lake Associations, Belle Taine is sponsoring two Nevis 6th grade students to the Deep Portage Aquatics Camp this summer. The camp is a week long environmental education experience emphasizing the importance of our water resources. The students are competing for the opportunity by completing Environmental activities. The winners will be chosen by their teachers based on the thought and effort put into the projects.

Following the lead of the 'party animals' on 5th/6th Crow Wing Lakes, Belle Taine held two informal dinners this winter. Our good neighbors to the south do have good ideas. The dinners did nothing to speed up spring but did make our winter a bit more bearable.

As expected, our Eurasian Milfoil inspections turned up no milfoil, but we have found that people are becoming more aware of the problem and danger. During the summer we had two or three reports of suspicious looking vegetation which were quickly investigated and found to be harmless northern milfoil.

Even though summer still seems to be a distant dream, we are looking forward to 'Muskie Days', the 'Gene

Cirks Fishing Classic', our 4th of July Boat Parade and our sailboat regatta. We invite everyone to Nevis for 'Muskie Days'-there will be a water-ski show, plenty of concession stands and lots of good food. For the souvenir hunters we offer an excellent variety of Belle Taine T-shirts, coffee mugs and caps.

A meeting has been scheduled to discuss the possibility of a satellite composting site for the Nevis-Akeley area. If approved, seasonal location could be made available for the disposal of yard waste, similar to the site at Park Rapids. It would give our area greater convenience to those who want to avoid the dangers and hassle of burning leaves in the fall and spring. Look for updates of this project in the 'Northwoods Press' and 'Enterprise'.

Little Sand, Gilmore, Lake Ida Association

We function as a combined Lake Association. Smaller lakes do have the opportunity to join a larger Association if the larger group is agreeable. We normally refer to it as the Little Sand Association.

The Ladies Luncheon which is held each year, will be in June at 'Companeros' in Dorset. Men have never officially been invited to the Ladies' Luncheon, but none would be turned away if they wanted to come. Of course, advance reservations would have to be made, the same as the ladies do. However, plans are being made to have an evening get-together sometime this summer at the 'Spider's Web'. This, of course, would include both women and men.

The annual business meeting will be held this summer and will be catered by Lynn Denman of "Moms Catering". Please watch the papers for the actual dates of all upcoming events.

Lake Gilmore will have its 12th Annual "Gilly Fest" on Saturday, August 3rd. The event is held each year regardless of the weather. The day ends after dark when the light float depicting the year's theme circles the lake amid the popping of flash bulbs and the appreciative cheers of the residents and their guests.

The following is a condensation of a paper authored by Michele E. Hanson, Office of Environmental Services, Hubbard County. For a copy of the paper in its entirety, and for advice on matters presented in the paper, contact Ms. Hanson at 218-732-3890.

Protecting Hubbard County Waters Naturalizing Shorelines & Creating Buffer Zones Lake Landscape Erosion Control Project

SHORELINE NATURALIZATION IS...a method of coordinating plantings that beautify your lakeshore property yet maintain water quality. Instead of creating an artificial urban landscape, native species and other plants suited to the soil and water environment are grouped in a manner that highlights the surrounding natural setting. Plant species selection can be tailored to attract a diversity of wildlife or certain species.

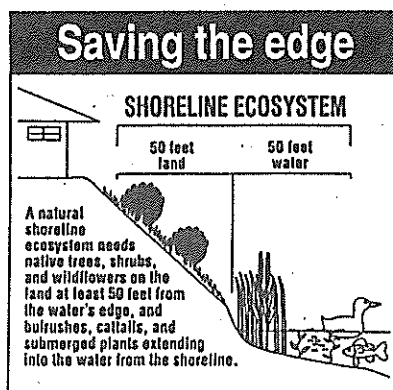
- **BEFORE YOU BEGIN...**Take an inventory of what you already have.
- Walk around your neighborhood to see what is growing & what others have completed.
- Draw a map of your property as it appears now and what you want it to look like when you are finished.
- Keep in mind what types of views you would like.
- Talk with local and state resource managers
- Decide how much you are willing to do at one time.
- Prevent erosion into your waters by exposing only a minimum of bare soil at one time.
 - **REMEMBER...**before you turn that first shovel full of soil or plant that first sapling—the words of ALDO LEOPOLD, noted naturalist, "The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the parts."

CERTAIN PLANT SPECIES ATTRACT BIRDS. Among them are silky dogwood, red osier dogwood, winterberry, elderberry, arrowwood, nanny berry, eastern white cedar and American highbush cranberry. Each of these plants and trees will provide food for many species of birds.

BUFFER ZONES. A vegetated buffer zone protects the open waters of the lake by minimizing the runoff from lakeshore properties. Maintaining natural vegetation on land as well as in the water does not mean you cannot enjoy a view of the lake. Intelligent planning can make all the difference! Buffer zones provide these functions: they filter nutrients from runoff; provide fish and wildlife habitat; stabilize shorelines and upland slopes; and preserve the natural shoreline beauty by screening development from view.

IN THE WATER & ALONG THE SHORE-

Aquatic plants and beach ridges (ice ridges) prevent shoreline erosion by acting as breakwaters. Herbaceous emergent, floating leaves, floating and submerged plants produce oxygen while they absorb phosphorus, nitrogen and other nutrients from the water. Rooted plants such as bulrushes help stabilize bottom sediment, weaken wave action and can absorb and break down polluting chemicals. Many aquatic plants produce food for waterfowl in the form of seeds, roots and tubers.



CREATING A VIEW WITH BUFFERS IN MIND-

When choosing where to create a view—consider what you want in relation to existing vegetation. Natural openings may already offer the view you want or can do so with a minimum of modification. Views are generally more aesthetically pleasing if they are framed in some manner

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NEWSLETTER DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY DICK AND CANDY NELSON-6TH CROW WING LAKE

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<i>Big Mantrap</i>	Sheryl Barta	Chas Gabbert	<i>Long</i>	Steve Prenevost	Tom Guinn
<i>Blue</i>	Eric Barth	Steve Lindeman	<i>Little Sand</i>	Leona Neilson	Wayne Classon
<i>Eagle</i>	Rose Loeffler	Mike Loeffler	<i>Palmer</i>	Phil Kirkegaard	Vern Schlong
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<i>Gilmore</i>	Leona Neilson	Joan Smith	<i>Portage</i>	Dick Nunn	Dick Nunn
<i>Potato</i>	Tony Platz	Rich Rothermel	<i>Fish Hook</i>	Vicki Hartz	Bob Theriault
<i>5th/6th Crow Wing</i>	Paul Child	Chuck Anderson	<i>Stony</i>	Stan Rotegard	Mark Carter

COLA Finances

EACH MEMBER LAKE ASSOCIATION PAYS \$2 ANNUALLY TO COLA FOR EACH OF ITS MEMBERS - THIS IS THE COLA DUES ASSESSMENT. THIS YEAR, COLA HAS RECEIVED \$2,852 FOR ITS CURRENT 1400-PLUS MEMBERS FROM 18 LAKE ASSOCIATIONS.

Other income is received from member Lake Associations that use the COLA copy machine for newsletters and copies of information they distribute. Five cents a page is charged for each copy and thus is a benefit for member lakes.

Monies were also received from member lakes for lake monitoring expenses and donations toward the "Children's Water Festival".

The largest expenses Paid Out are for postage and printing of the "COLA Update."

COLA has sponsored children to an environmental program at Deep Portage Conservation Reserve at Hackensack and has sent representatives to the Minnesota Lakes Assn. Conference.

Monies have been paid out for COLA's share of lake monitoring expenses, membership in the Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce and expenses for the copy machine (located at "Charley's Marine" in Park Rapids).

THE COLA UPDATE
HUBBARD COUNTY COUNTY COALITION OF LAKE ASSNS
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Your Spring "COLA Update"
& Welcome back to the Lake!!