



The COLA Update

PO Box 746, Park Rapids MN 56470

Spring 1999



Canoeing in the Hubbard County Region

By Paul Child 5/6 Crow Wing Assn

Canoeing in the Hubbard County region has a history that goes far back into the dim past, times when rivers were a significant means of transportation for the Native American tribes as they moved through the region's numerous picturesque waterways. Then later, the early explorers such as Henry Schoolcraft and his guide Ozawindib paddled a canoe to locate the Headwaters of the Mississippi River. In fact, next to the Boundary Waters, we probably have the finest concentration of canoeing trails in the Midwest.

A COLA member who is deeply involved in paddling our waterways is Tony McKeown, who grew up in Minnesota, then pursued a career in the Navy before returning to the state in the summer of 1982 to build a home on the river between 1st and 2nd Crow Wing lakes and only a short distance from 3rd Crow Wing Lake. He originally purchased 23 acres sight-unseen knowing only that the property had woods and water. He continues to love it and has since added another 46 acres to his holdings. His interest in canoeing actually started in 1976 when he took his family down an 18-mile stretch of the St. Croix River, after which he began to seriously read up on canoeing. The following year he bought two We-no-nah canoes, which he still owns.

A week-long trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, which his youngsters cite as one of the highlights of their youth, justified the purchase.

After locating in our area, he joined the Headwaters Canoe Club (an affiliate of the Minnesota Canoe Association) and has been one of their most active members. The club of some 40 members sponsors a number of events each season, mostly day trips on the various regional waters. In fact, the club has plans this year for some 30 events from April to September, each on a different stretch of the area's waterways. Tony has led several expeditions in the past, and this year is scheduled to take groups on the following:

July 11: A 10 mile paddle down the Straight River from Osage to Hubbard County Road 115

Aug 15: A 9 mile paddle down the Sand River (Lake Emma through Big Sand, Little Sand, Round, Clausen and Shallow Lake to County road 18.

Tony has an especially significant assignment this May (15th to 22nd) during the National River Cleanup Week, when he will head up the Headwaters Canoe Club in a cleanup of the first 82 miles of the Mississippi River, from Lake Itasca to Cass Lake.

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The President's Message

It's hard to believe spring is here and the Blizzard of November 10th is now a memory, leaving many of us and our returning friends with a lot of cleanup to be done.

Those of us that were here can tell tales of the wind and snow that blew, causing trees and branches to down the power lines. Schools were closed and homes became cold due to the lack of heat, no water, no toilets, only water from the lake to flush. This lasted four to five days for most of the resident's around the lake area.

We can now look forward to the activities, pristine lakes and the environment that attracted us to this majestic area. It is ours to protect and preserve. The Hubbard County Shoreland Ordinance has finally been approved by the County Commissioners with a few language changes. It is quite inconceivable that it has taken approximately four years for the County Commissioners to review and approve an ordinance that is virtually unchanged from the original version. The COLA Board and its association members are to be complimented on their steadfast and valiant efforts in making this ordinance in effect possibly stronger than the original ordinance.

Many changes have taken place in the political arena since our last COLA UPDATE with Swede Nelson defeating Ed DeLaHunt in the District 1 County Commissioners race. Shelly Hanson has resigned as Wetlands Administrator/Local Water Plan Coordinator. Garry Johanson plans to divide the wetlands coordinator duties between two staff members. The board also agreed to turn local water planning efforts over to the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) on an interim basis and assess the situation at the end of the year. It is said these changes should not effect the future of the Children's Freshwater Festival, but this does create a concern to many of our COLA members.

Septic inspections on our lakes will continue, but not by the County Staff. It will now be done through a letter process, which will request the property owner contact an outside service to inspect their system and if not approved must be upgraded within one year from the issuance of the letter.

Under the direction of Jerry Knoblich we will again be doing our 1999 lakes water testing, starting with training on May 13th and the first sampling on May 16th and 17th.

With many of these changes 1999 could be a very interesting and challenging year for COLA and our membership. I am very confident with your help and dedication it will again be a very rewarding and successful 1999..

Thanks to all of you for the support and hours of work you have given to COLA in the past and we know that it will continue in the future. You are a great group. It is my pleasure to serve as your president. Thank You.

Larry Battey



Ole, Lena and Sven were lost in the woods of Northern Minnesota and were becoming desperate having run out of food several days ago. It was winter, the snow was deep, their situation was looking very bleak. When Ole dug down into the snow to look for nuts, he found an oil lamp and upon rubbing it to get the snow off, a genie came out. The genie says, "I am da great genie of Norderm Minnesoota and I can grant each of you vun vish." Ole says, "I vish I vas back on da farm." Poof, Ole was gone. Lena quickly says, "I vish I vas back on da farm wit Ole." Poof, Lena was gone. Sven was sitting there looking sad and the genie finally says, "Sven, vat is your vish?" and Sven says, "Gee, I'm really lonely. I vish Ole and Lena were here with me".

Special Insert to the COLA Update

Shown below is a letter presented to the Hubbard County Board of Commissioners by COLA President Larry Battey expressing COLA's concern about the loss of four valuable employees at the Environmental Services Office. Beth Kluthe, Shelly Hanson, Norma Loomis and technician Ed Allito. All have resigned to take jobs in other Counties or other government agencies. At the present time the work force, that a year ago consisted of seven qualified employees is now down to two employees, the Director and one technician. This loss of valuable and qualified employees seems to be more than just normal attrition. The COLA Board of Directors feels that something must be done to reverse this situation

Hubbard County Board of Commissioners
Hubbard County Courthouse
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 5, 1999

Commissioners:

At its regular monthly meeting on April 29th, the Board of Directors of Hubbard County COLA had an extensive discussion on the personnel situation in the Environmental Services Office in the courthouse. Deep concern was expressed as to the reasons that the staff turnover in this important office seems to have reached epidemic proportions with the loss of a Director and three staff members, which is a loss of 72% of the staff within a year.

The COLA Board recognizes that the majority of the Property Taxes collected in Hubbard County are paid by lakeshore property owners, and that most of these taxpayers are non-homestead seasonal residents who also have a minimum impact on County services such as the welfare, judicial and educational facilities. The principal interface that these lakeshore property owners do have is with the Environmental Services Office.

As such, these taxpayers have the right to expect that the Environmental Services Office be staffed with sufficient and properly qualified personnel to do the job of administrating and enforcing the Shoreland Ordinance to protect our lakes and rivers. They pay their taxes and are very interested in protecting their investment as well as their environment, now and in the future.

Therefore, the Hubbard County COLA Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed the following resolution:

"The Hubbard County COLA Board of Directors recommends that the Hubbard County Board of Commissioners take action as necessary to hire and staff the Environmental Services Office with sufficient qualified personnel to accomplish all of the work required by statute or ordinance. The COLA board also recommends that the re-staffing be accomplished as expeditiously and speedily as possible so that the summer work load for this office be done by a fully staffed office."

Yours truly

Larry Battey

Larry Battey
President, Hubbard County COLA

cc: member Lake Associations:

Bad Ax, Kabekona, Big Mantrap, Emma, Stocking, Bottle Lakes, Eagle, Spider, Blue, Big Sand, Gilmore, Portage, Fish Hook, Little Sand, Belle Taine, 5/6 Crow Wing, 8th Crow Wing, Lower Crow Wing Lakes, Ham Lake, Palmer, Stony, Island Lake, Hinds, Upper Twin Lake and 1457 COLA members

Fish Hook River Corridor Project

By Russ Connick

A Cussin' Situation

Thirty-one years ago when I first fished on Twin Lakes as a guest of J. Berkley Wilson, I heard the old timers fussin' and cussin' about what the straightened channel of the Fish Hook and Shell rivers was doing to Twin Lakes. First of all, as any fool could plainly see, the increased velocity of the water flow was flushing a greater amount of sediment into Upper Twin forming a rapidly enlarging delta. Secondly, they were concerned about the loss of fish and wildlife habitat in the corridor itself; specifically the loss of nesting area for water fowl and spawning beds for walleyes and northerners.

They would have liked to restore the river to its original meandering course but were frustrated by two factors. First, it was tricky politically. Because of the location the water shed area involved two counties and multiple regional offices of state agencies. Secondly, no one knew who channelized the corridor or why. They had ideas; the actions of loggers, farmers or perhaps just a busyness project of the WPA or the US corps of Engineers, but it was all speculation.

A bird's eye view

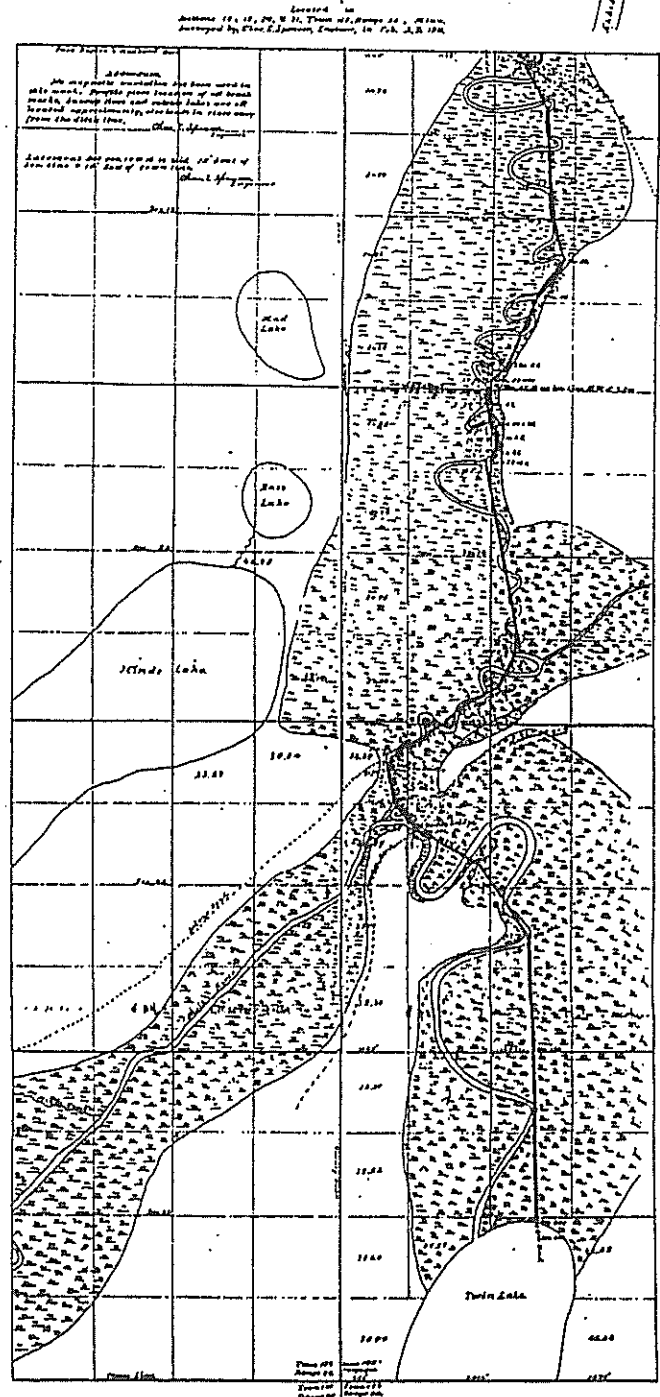
The area of the Fish Hook River Corridor under consideration is a three and one-half mile long stretch of brushy, wooded wetland about a mile wide. The channel of the Fish Hook River begins at State highway 87 about one mile west of Hubbard and flows southward into Upper Twin. As it courses southward it first picks up flow from Long Lake Creek and about a mile above Upper Twin it is joined by the Shell River. From this point on, the water flow is filled with rolling sediment at all times. About 40% of the wetland is public.

A voice in the wilderness

Ever aware that Upper Twin was progressively losing more and more lake surface and depth because of silting, the Twin Lakes Association Board in desperation invited the US Corps of Engineers to make a site visit to assess the situation and consider the feasibility of restoring the Fish Hook River to its original meandering and filtering flow.

The map below shows Hubbard County Ditch #3 (dark line) which straightened out the meandering Fish Hook and Shell Rivers above North Twin Lake. It now believed that the ditch was created to provide extra hayland for adjacent farming operations. The survey for the ditch was done in 1911 and the ditch was built in 1915

HUBBARD CO. DITCH NO. 3.



By Marlene Weber



Natural Landscaping

What do our thoughts turn to in the spring? Well, for a lot of us, we start planning our flower gardens and our "landscaping"

A few thoughts on this: We are really blessed with wonderful natural landscaping! Our woods are full of beautiful plants like the Hepatica, Wood Anemones, Wild Lily of the Valley, Starflower, Twinflower, Clintonia and violets. The list goes on and on through the seasons.

Try to protect the plants we have in the woods, maybe by having a path winding through areas where we can enjoy seeing what is already around us. When we plant around our homes, use native plants as much as possible. They don't need fertilizing and they like the soil that is already here.

For perennials there are so many to choose from such as Monardas (AKA Bee Balm or Bergamot), Black-eyed Susan, asters, Foxglove and Coneflowers.

The annuals that we start from seed or select from the huge number of varieties available at the local nurseries, can be lots of fun. They are certainly colorful and profuse in bloom. Remember that butterflies like Zinnias, Cosmos and Marigolds plus many others. In that way, we can have flying flowers as well!

Hanging baskets are nice as are containers that we can move around as we like. I read about a woman who left her hanging basket on her porch at the end of the season. She pulled out the plants and put bird seed on the soil and she had an instant bird feeder.

If you are planning on adding trees or shrubs, do use those types that produce berries. The waxwings, thrushes and quite a few other birds will bless you for it! In addition you enjoy all the blossoms.

If you are reestablishing natural vegetation on your shoreline, the Environmental Services Office (732-3890) can be consulted and will help you.

If we plan more natural gardens, we can be more casual which will result in having more time to sit and enjoy. Make sure you have a bench in your garden where you can sit and sip a lemonade and think about how great life is in Northern Minnesota.

Springtime Reminders

Be good stewards of the land and water

DO--

• *Prevent runoff into the lake. It will cause erosion and can wash pollutants into the water. Remember, the more impervious surfaces we have, the less water can seep into the ground.*

• *Keep a buffer zone along the shoreline. A natural shoreline means good water quality! The more it is altered, the more problems there will be.*

• *Consider leaving fallen trees in the water to provide habitat for fish and wildlife.*

• *Eliminate the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer. They can cause more damage than good in the long run.*

• *Consider re-establishing aquatic plants along a shoreline if they've been removed. They help keep a lake clean and healthy, provide fish and wildlife habitat and reduce wave-caused erosion of the shore. Contact the DNR Fisheries Division at 732 4253 for guidelines.*

• *Any burning of any type of material must be at least 50 feet from a shoreline. This minimum distance should be greater than that if on a slope. The runoff from wood ash is detrimental to water quality.*

• *Remember the birds help the forest by eating insects. Leave the shrubs and brush that so many of them use for nesting.*

• *Have smaller areas of manicured lawn and more natural areas.*

Remember, mankind is part of the natural world, not separate from it. Walk softly on this land, love it, enjoy it and learn from it. (by Marlene Weber)

Sven was going for his morning walk one day when he walked past Ole's house and saw a sign that said, "Boat For Sale." This confused Sven because he knew that Ole didn't own a boat, so he decided to go in and ask Ole about it. "Hey Ole," said Sven, "I noticed da sign in your yard dat says 'Boat For Sale,' but ya don't even have a boat. All ya have is your old John Deere tractor and combine." Ole replied "Yup, and they're boat for sale."

CANOEING

(continued from page 1)

Although Tony has been on virtually every one of the viable canoeing routes in the area, two of his favorites are on the Shingobee River in Cass County and some runs on the Straight River. He has also, of course, a love of the Crow Wing Chain. A day trip that he particularly enjoys and recommends for those just starting out in this area is a stretch where the canoe is put in on Highway 13 between 6th and 7th Crow Wing Lakes and a paddle down the chain to where Highway 13 crosses the stream between 5th and 4th Crow Wing Lakes. It is normal in canoe trips to place a vehicle at the takeout point before starting out so there is transportation for the canoe and paddlers at the end of the trip. Tony has paddled down the Crow Wing Chain to his own home and then bicycled back to the starting point to pick up his car.

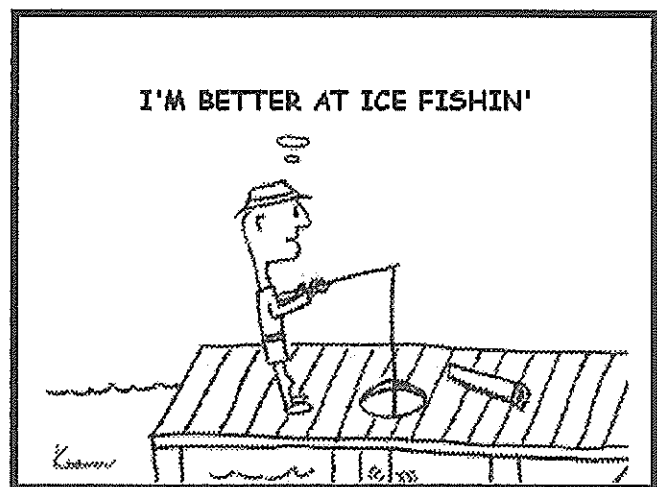
Tony cites a number of reasons why he loves canoeing. An obvious one is that it enables a person to get outside, to become immersed in nature, often in out-of-the-way places. Because a canoe has a draft of only a few inches, many places are only accessible by canoe. Also, canoeing has a tranquilizing effect, a low stress experience during which all one's cares just "float away." The surrounding beauty of the waterway, woods and wildlife just slows life down. Canoeing is not an expensive activity. Tony has had his canoes some 22 years now and they will continue to be serviceable well into the future. Then there is the physical challenge and joy of developing paddling skills. Tony says it just feels good to have a paddle in his hands.

In summary, we are located in the midst of some unusually fine canoe waters. Pleasant excursions are available for the inexperienced as well as the highly skilled paddler. Contact Tony McKeown (218) 732-3198 to get information about recommended trips. Also, it might be mentioned that Ron Phillips (Shady Lawn Resort 732-5836) on 5th Crow Wing Lake rents canoes and provides pickup service from the resort down to the Highway 13 crossing on the river between 3rd and 4th Crow Wing Lakes. An alternative take out point is further down on 3rd Crow Wing Lake. This is an ideal run for beginners.

Straight River Irrigation Moratorium Lifted

Earlier this year, a three-year moratorium on permits for new irrigation wells in the Straight River watershed was lifted. Will Yeliniemi of the Hubbard County Extension Service hastens to add that a permitting process is used for all applications. Permits are not automatically granted.

Back in 1988, the United States Geological Service (USGS) had studied the effects of groundwater withdrawal on Straight River which is a nationally famous trout stream. Initially, it was suspected that the Straight River was becoming warmer. This was quite alarming for trout fishermen and others concerned about aquatic plants and animals requiring cooler water temperatures. However, Yliniemi said heat-unit days (a measure of growing season temperatures) were higher for both 1987 and 1988. This, combined with some drought conditions, skewed the '88 study's findings of warmer water in the Straight River. He adds that preliminary findings during the three-year moratorium indicate no warming of the river. However, he adds that monitoring and studying of the river will continue. (By John Weber)



Lena stepped up to the clerk in the department store and said, "Can I try on dat dress in the window?"

The clerk responded, "We'd really prefer that you try it on in the dressing room."

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In this issue:

This issue of the COLA Update is focused on the streams and rivers of Hubbard County. Often overlooked and sometimes neglected, the streams and rivers of our area are nonetheless a vital and beautiful part of our area.

In addition, we have lots of information on plants and insects, the Lake Association news, presidents message and a touch of humor here and there.

**Hubbard County COLA
Member Lake Associations**

• Laporte

★ Kabekona

★ Bad Ax

★ Big Mantrap

★ Upper Bottle

★ Stocking ★ Lower Bottle

★ Eagle ★ Lake Emma

★ Potato ★ Blue ★ Big Sand ★ Spider

★ Gilmore

★ Portage

★ Fish Hook

★ Little Sand

• Akely

• Park Rapids

★ Belle Taine

• Nevis

★ 8th CW

★ 5&6th CW

★ Stony

★ Ham Lake

★ Palmer

★ Lower Crow Wings

★ Island

★ Hinds

★ Twin Lake

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and protect the beauty of

COLA-Working to preserve

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Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations

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