

HUBBARD COUNTY COLA

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www.minnesotawaters.org/group/hccola/welcome



November, 2011

Presidents Letter: by Dan Kittilson

As the open water season is rapidly coming to an end, Hubbard COLA is concluding another successful year. This newsletter highlights several of our major projects and accomplishment from 2011. However, COLA is not dormant during the winter season! We are continuing to plan for the coming year and to identify our priorities for 2012.

One new project that is just getting started and will be a major focus during the upcoming winter season is the new “Hubbard County Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force”. This initiative will feature multiple levels of partners including county, state, COLA, lake associations, citizens, and our local business community. The key message will be that “Everyone is Responsible”, including the state legislature, DNR, local government, organizations, lakeshore property owners, and boaters/anglers.

On behalf of COLA, I would like to thank the Hubbard County Commissioners for their support with this initiative. Please look for further information about the Hubbard County AIS Task Force within this newsletter.

With the recent, alarming Zebra Mussel stories from Rose Lake in Ottertail County to Lake Irene in Douglas County, the transfer of lakeshore equipment (docks and lifts) is rapidly being elevated as a major pathway for the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, especially Zebra Mussels. Consequently, we all need to monitor our lakeshore equipment for early signs of a Zebra Mussel infestation. If you are moving a lift or dock from a nearby lake, exercise extreme caution by having this equipment decontaminated and dried for a minimum of 14 days.

In the past year our Hubbard COLA board meetings have witnessed an increase in attendance and participation from our Lake Association Presidents. I would like to thank the Presidents for their active participation and encourage continued participation in 2012. As I emphasized in my last president’s letter, “You are COLA”. I encourage you to step up and get involved and continue to learn about COLA’s mission. Remember the COLA Story and the importance of a community effort to protect our lakes in Hubbard County.

To demonstrate the increasing interest of our lake presidents, I would like share a quote from one of them: “I’ve really enjoyed the meetings I’ve attended and have learned so much. Great job by you and your team! Thanks for all you are doing for our lakes and area!” Sharon Natzel, Long Lake Area Association President. Thank you Sharon for your interest and support of Hubbard COLA!

If you would like to contribute to our COLA Newsletter or have a story idea, please email your information to drkittil@q.com or give me a call at 218-732-5566.

In closing, please help us build our membership and support by spreading the word about Hubbard COLA. Again, thank you to our many COLA volunteers.



Service Awards for COLA contributors: by John Hastings

Jerry Knoblich was recognized at the November board meeting for his many years as chairperson of our government Liaison Committee. He will be continuing working on the committee but has given up the leadership position. Jerry has been our key leader in working with the Civic committee including the children's Freshwater Festival, restore-the-shore tree program, and the water quality monitoring. Thank you, Jerry for all your service to COLA.



Shane Foley also received recognition at the November meeting for his contributions for the technical support and assistance to COLA for the past four years from his position with the Soil and Water Conservation Division. Shane has recently taken a new position with Centrol, Inc. in Fargo. Thanks Shane, we will miss you.

Chuck Tritz: Congratulations Chuck! He was recognized by the MPCA for completing 10 years of volunteer service to the Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. As part of the program, Chuck visits the Shell River in Hubbard County each week during the summer and conducts a test to measure water depth and clarity of the stream. He conducts this test at the Bridge on Upper Twin Road and at the Bridge on Twin Lakes Road. Chuck is a member of the Twin Lakes Lake Association.

COLA Collaborative Update: by Dan Kittilson

Chuck Diessner and I attended the COLA Collaborative meeting Nov 15th at Breezy Point. The meeting was well attended with representatives from 14 COLA's which was somewhat surprising. A few COLA's had several or more participants. The meeting started unexpectedly with a discussion of MN Waters and their new **legislative/public policy initiative**.

Chuck and I encouraged the group to look into a partnership with the new MN Waters Action Advocacy Leadership Circle but very few participants knew anything about the new program. Most COLA's felt that the COLA Collaborative provided stronger grass roots approach and wanted to continue to explore the formation of the Collaborative. However, a number of COLA's also value a partnership with MN Waters and I think would be interested in some sort of joint effort working together on legislative issues.

After the group finalized the Articles, the biggest struggle of the day was formulating the bylaws which consumed most of our time. Thanks to Chuck we made it through that exciting process. After the bylaws were completed we decided to send a written copy to all the COLA's for final review before official approval which will be done electronically.

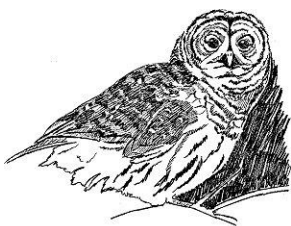
The next item on the agenda was the election of officers. Bonnie Huettel (Douglas COLA) was elected Treasurer and Barb Halbakken (Becker COLA) was elected Secretary. The difficult part was President and Vice President. Shawn Olson volunteered to be Vice President but a glitch with the bylaws prevented her election. No one wanted to serve as President. They all wanted me to fill this position but I declined. So the plan was to wait to fill the President and Vice President at the next meeting.

To keep things going they wanted to appoint an acting president and again wanted me to do that, so I guess I agreed to serve as acting president until our next meeting in January. Hopefully, we can find that mystery person out there to step up.

The next meeting is tentatively planned after the Legislative Forum in Detroit Lakes on January 14th. The meeting will be hosted by Becker and Ottertail COLA. The plan now is to have Lois Sinn Lingquist present MN Waters legislative initiative and hopefully, find a way to work together. Unfortunately, it should probably happen before that but we will need to wait and see how that develops. As you know, December can be a wild and crazy month.

The bylaws approval made for a long afternoon, but I think they finally came to realize that if they would have taken Chuck's input from the get-go it would have happened much more quickly. Thank God that he's on our side and such a willing and great volunteer.

Interesting tidbits: by John Hastings



Minnesota has 90,000 miles of shoreline, more than California, Florida and Hawaii combined.

HUBBARD COUNTY TAKES ACTION TO PARTNER WITH COLA TO DECLARE WAR ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES: By: Dan Kittilson

On October 19th the Hubbard County Commissioners adopted a resolution to establish a “Hubbard County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force” to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. In support of establishing the resolution, Commissioner Lyle Robinson emphasized that AIS prevention is certainly not something that COLA can do alone. It’s not something the DNR can do alone and it’s not something the County can do alone. As the commissioners approved the AIS resolution, Commissioner Dick Devine stressed that “forming a task force was a great idea and that the liability will be astronomical if it gets into our lakes.”

The resolution establishes that:

- The County’s policy is to preserve and enhance the quality of surface waters and to preserve the economic and environmental values of shorelands;
- Aquatic invasive species, especially zebra mussels, are a danger and threat to the vital interests of Hubbard County.
- In order to protect the vital interests of our lakes and rivers, it is critical that the County Board be well informed regarding the AIS threat and be proactive in taking action to prevent the spread of AIS within the County.

Therefore, the Board of Commissioners of Hubbard County establishes the Hubbard County AIS Task Force which will:

- Update the County Commissioners on the status and threat of AIS in Hubbard County on a regular basis;
- Develop an AIS Sustainable Prevention and Containment Plan, including but not limited to, early detection and rapid response;
- Make recommendations to the County Board regarding changes to the AIS Sustainable Prevention and Containment Plan;
- Make recommendations to the County Board regarding actions to be taken by the County Board consistent with the AIS Sustainable Prevention and Containment Plan in order to prevent the spread of AIS within the County; and
- Implement educational programs and awareness campaigns for the business community, resorts, fishing organizations, lakeshore owners, county personnel, lake associations, lake service providers and the general public.

The Hubbard County Commissioners appointed Commissioner Kathy Grell to represent the Commissioners on the task force. Other task force members will include COLA and lake association representatives, county personnel and DNR personnel. Additional members will include representatives on behalf of the townships, the business community, the resorts and campgrounds, the local fishing organizations and the lake service providers.

Hubbard COLA commends the Hubbard County Commissioners for their bold action to protect our lakes in Hubbard County and throughout Minnesota.



La Salle Lake State Recreation Area : By Dan Kittilson

Have you heard the news? Hubbard County has a new park. It's the La Salle Lake State Recreation Area located north of Itasca State Park near Becida, MN. The 1,000-acre parcel of land in Hubbard County, which will now be known as the La Salle Lake State Recreation Area (SRA), was acquired October 27, 2011 by the Minnesota DNR. This large area of habitat, which is of regional and statewide significance, includes one of Minnesota's deepest lakes, a coldwater stream, high-quality forest and wetlands and more than one-half mile of Mississippi River Headwaters shoreline.

"This is a very inspiring property," said DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr, who toured the area on October 25. Commissioner Landwehr credited many partners in making the acquisition possible. Local partners that were instrumental in the acquisition of La Salle Lake included Hubbard COLA and area lake associations including Kabekona Lake Association, Duck Lake Association, Potato Lake Association and the Little Sand Lake Area Association.

Bob McGillivray, with the Trust for Public Land, noted the support from Hubbard COLA and area lake associations with his comments....."The support of the Hubbard County COLA, participating lake associations and their members was critical to the La Salle Lake protection effort," said TPL Senior Project Manager Bob McGillivray. "Members gave letters of support, attended public meetings and contacted elected officials to let them know how important this resource is. Without such concerned citizens, it is nearly impossible to complete projects like this one. Thank you COLA members."

Blane Klemek, Detroit Lakes area wildlife manager, who has been directly involved in the acquisition partnership, recognized Hubbard COLA for their involvement in making this acquisition possible with his comments....."Representatives from COLA, including Dan Kittilson, were present at the DNR public informational meeting sponsored by Fern Township and held at Fern Township Hall west of Becida last winter. During the public comment period where attendees had the opportunity to voice their concerns, ask questions and convey their support or opposition at the meeting, Dan Kittilson delivered his comments with conviction, intelligence and sincerity. His message of the importance of preserving the La Salle Lake property through acquisition was spoken convincingly and, I believe, helped to sway those present who may have had opposite or neutral viewpoints—especially by Hubbard County Board of Commissioners who were in attendance. As well, Dan wrote a formal letter of support, which was as well written as his spoken word. It is my belief that the support of COLA was a critical component in the ultimate acquisition of the La Salle Lake property."

Hubbard COLA would like to thank the Hubbard County Commissioners & the Fern Township Supervisors for their support in the acquisition of this property. Further kudos goes to our lake associations and COLA members, whose efforts helped acquire this property.

Lake Property Values, Your Property Taxes, and Aquatic Invasive Species:

By Bob Berdahl



Hubbard County Coalition of Lakes is committed to work that maintains our lakeshore property values

In recent months we have learned that Hubbard County water influenced properties account for about 60% of the total property value in Hubbard County and pay about 53% of the \$29 million dollar county tax bill. Most of us are also aware of studies that indicate lake and river shore

property values decline when there is a reduction in water quality. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are impacting the water quality on many of Minnesota's lakes. Many of us are aware the problems that aquatic invasives cause, not only in reduced property value but also in the expense to control the invasive (if possible!) and the reduced ability for all to enjoy the lakes and rivers.

A recent Wisconsin study relates the impact of Eurasian Milfoil infestation to declining property value. This study, from 2008, indicates a typical land value decrease of 13%.

While Eurasian water milfoil has clogged up more than 250 Minnesota lakes, Zebra Mussels are the latest aquatic invasive threat.

Zebra mussel's (ZM) impact lakes in a bigger way than any aquatic invasive identified to date and they are spreading at an exponential rate. In 2010, the MN DNR recognized 20 ZM infested water bodies. A year later, we now have at least 60 infested lakes. While most of our 10,000 lakes remain pristine, all are threatened.



So how will AIS and the latest ZM invasion impact the lakes of Hubbard County when they move into our area? We will not only lose much of the lake experience that we are here to enjoy, but will also face declining property values and a community that must pay higher property taxes to make up for the loss of lake property values. This last point is seldom discussed but important to understand. Hubbard County city and township expenses currently require an annual tax assessment of about 29 million dollars annually. A reduction in water influenced property values and the corresponding drop in property taxes for these properties will result in increased taxes for everyone in the county.

The current policy in Minnesota is that the lakes are for everyone to enjoy and no lake can restrict access. Popular lakes such as Mille Lacs, with more than 100,000 boats moving in and out of the lake annually, create the pathway to transfer ZM and other aquatic invasives to many healthy uninfested lakes. The current DNR led awareness and "Prevent the Spread" campaign is simply not aggressive enough to prevent the continuing spread of AIS and resulting loss of lake and river water quality.

Organizations like Minnesota Waters and Hubbard County COLA are becoming strong advocates for a much stronger, more aggressive AIS prevention program that includes 100% watercraft inspection, reducing the number of boat launch sites and a quarantine of infested lakes.

While many of these ideas will not be popular with everyone, we need to face this problem head on if we are to preserve the wonderful lakes and waters that Minnesota is known for. Everyone needs to learn about the AIS threat to our lakes and the resulting impact to our community so that they can support initiatives that manage this problem.

Volunteer Search – WE NEED YOU!!!!

HCOLA is looking for a person or persons with public relations experience to be a part of a public relations committee. We are also looking for a person or persons to form and function as a grant writing committee.

If you are not involved with your lake association consider volunteering to do something for them. It is fun to get involved and meet some really great folks.

We offer a special welcome to Diane Manlove, who has volunteered to become the editor of our COLA newsletter. Thanks for stepping up, Diane.

Please contact John Hastings if you are interested and willing to volunteer your services. johnhhastings@live.com or 218-732-3260.

2011 – A year in Review: by our COLA Executive Committee

Our COLA highlights and accomplishments:

- 30 member associations with 41 lakes and 2150 members.
- 7 membership meetings
- COLA coordinated the water quality testing program with 40 area lakes.
- COLA welcomes Tripp Lake as its newest lake association.
- COLA partners with Hubbard County SWCD, Lake Emma Township and area lake associations to develop Hubbard County Shoreland Guide to Lake Stewardship.
- COLA partners with Hubbard County Extension to sponsor Shoreland Expo.
- COLA co-sponsors with SWCD the Children's Freshwater Festival where 300 children learn about our lakes at this festival operated by 40 volunteers.
- COLA orders and distributes shoreline shrubs/trees for lake associations in Hubbard County.
- COLA has a line of Hubbard COLA labeled clothing articles available through Unknown Legends.
- COLA wins District Court lawsuit against Hubbard County and Rehkamp's.
- COLA testifies before legislative committee on changes to the proposed variance bill.
- COLA monitors all Board of Adjustment meetings.
- COLA amends bylaws
- COLA plays key role in the acquisition of La Salle Lake by the DNR.
- COLA co-sponsors Hunting & Fishing Heritage Initiative with the DNR.
- COLA awarded Lake Emma Township Healthy Lakes Partnership grant for watercraft inspection program.
- New COLA stationery completed by Attendance and Representation Committee.
- Hubbard COLA develops new AIS information card.
- Hubbard COLA awarded DNR AIS Prevention Grant for 2011.
- COLA major catalyst for the formation of the Hubbard County AIS Task Force.
- COLA distributes educational materials regarding AIS to 60 resorts and campgrounds.
- COLA co-sponsors Volunteer Watercraft Inspection Training programs in Hubbard County.
- Hubbard COLA was instrumental in the formation of the MN COLA Collaborative.
- COLA participates on Water Policy Legislative Committee with MN Waters, MSRPO, MCEA & MN COLA Collaborative.
- COLA monitors 2011 Minnesota Legislative Session and actively participated by writing letters to key legislators regarding important environmental issues, signed-on letters from MN Waters and the MN COLA Collaborative.
- Volunteers step up to participate on the COLA Finance Committee.
- COLA co-sponsors Tri-County Legislative AIS Summit on January 15, 2011 in Detroit Lakes.
- COLA refines Strategic Plan and Vision/Mission/Values
- COLA co-sponsors Aquatic Invasive Species video series with the Pelican River Watershed District.
- COLA gives presentation at several area lake associations.
- COLA participates with DNR AIS Stakeholder Group.

- COLA seminars include La Salle Lake acquisition, Variance Requirements under the New State Law and Impacts on Water Quality, Zebra Mussels impacts, COLA Representative Orientation Training, COLA Successes, Becker County Biological Survey.
- COLA display at the Park Rapids Legacy Week-end on September 21-22, 2011.
- COLA participates on Hubbard County Water Plan.
- COLA awarded Lake Protection Grant in conjunction with the SWCD.
- COLA promotes "Sparkle Lake" Children's Book written by Melissa Paakh from Detroit Lakes
- COLA recognizes Jerry Knoblich for leadership on the Government Liaison-Civic committee and his many years of service with Water Quality Monitoring.
- COLA recognizes Shane Foley with the SWCD for his partnership with Hubbard COLA.
- MPCA recognizes Chuck Tritz for 10 years of volunteer service to the Citizen Stream Monitoring Program.
- COLA is involved with local organizations including:
 - Progress Park Rapids
 - Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce
 - Hubbard County Water Plan & Hubbard County Extension Service

Hubbard COLA co-sponsors "Aquatic Invasive Species Legislative Summit January 14, 2012", in Detroit Lakes, MN

The theme of the AIS Legislative Summit is "***Taking Bold Action: Doing More Now***". The Summit is forward-looking to draw attention to what legislation, strategies, programs and activities have proved to be effective in containing and slowing the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Noted Minnesota aquatic ecologist, conservationist and author Darby Nelson, Ph.D. will keynote the event with his discussion of the newly-released book, "For Love of Lakes," just released by Michigan State University Press. He will be joined by a group of individuals actively engaged in this fight against aquatic invasive species.

Legislators from both this area and from the legislative leadership are already confirming their attendance.

Hubbard COLA is a co-sponsor of this event which includes recognition as a Founding Supporter, a tabletop exhibit during the continental breakfast and luncheon, along with recognition in all program and publicity materials.



Upcoming Meeting Dates, Events, and Times:

- December 13, 2011 - COLA Strategy Planning Session, 10:00 a.m., Park Rapids Chamber
- December 15, 2011 - Hubbard County AIS Task Force, 2-4 p.m., Hubbard County Courthouse
- January 10, 2012 - COLA Executive Committee meeting, 10:00 a.m., Park Rapids Chamber
- January 14, 2012 - Aquatic Invasive Species Legislative Forum, Detroit Lakes, MN
- February 2, 2012 - COLA meeting, 7:00 p.m., location to be announced.
- April 26, 2012 - COLA meeting, 7:00 p.m., Northwoods Bank
- June 28, 2012 - COLA meeting 7:00 p.m., Northwoods Bank
- July 26, 2012 - COLA meeting, 7:00 p.m., Northwoods Bank
- August 30, 2012 - COLA meeting, 7:00 p.m., Northwoods Bank
- September 27, 2012 - COLA meeting, 7:00 p.m., Northwoods Bank
- November 1, 2012 - COLA meeting, 7:00 p.m., Northwoods Bank