

HUBBARD COUNTY COALITION OF LAKE ASSOCIATIONS (HC COLA)
The Board of Directors Meeting - May 31, 2018, 6 PM
Held at Northwoods Bank Community Room
Approved on 6-28-18

“HC COLA is the Leader in Protecting Hubbard County Lakes and Rivers for this and future generations.”

THANK YOU to the meeting hosts: Duck, Spider, Gilmore and Twin Lakes.

1. **Call to Order:** Pass the microphone introductions. Those present: **45** members present representing **26** lake associations, **5** guests/2 lakes.

Speaker: Doug Kingsley, MN DNR Fisheries presenting materials regarding changes in the Lake Winnibigoshish Ecosystem. (Presentation was created by Gerry Albert MN DNR Large Lake Specialist and was given in Grand Rapids in March 2018.)

http://www.hubbardcolamn.org/uploads/3/4/5/6/34563649/ecosystem_changes_2018_dnr_lake_winne_public_forum.pdf

- A. **Zebra Mussel Veligers** were discovered in Lake Winnibigoshish in 2012. Starry stonewort was discovered in 2016. By 2017, zebra mussels covered nearly every hard surface.
- B. **Zebra Mussels** change water quality resulting in decreased dissolved solids and increased water clarity.
- C. **Most Zebra Mussel invasions are in clustered lake regions.** Zebra Mussels live 3-5 years, producing up to 1 million eggs per year. As many as 700,000 mussels can occupy one square meter of substrate. They can filter the entire water volume of a lake in 2-3 days.
- D. **Lake Michigan Statistics Without Zebra Mussels:** 70-80% phytoplankton, 10-15% zooplankton, 6-9% scavengers and decomposers, 0% mussels. **Lake Michigan Statistics With Zebra Mussels:** 5% phytoplankton, 2-5% zooplankton, 1-2% scavengers and decomposers, 75-90% mussels.
- E. **Status of Walleye Population:** When a 17-26 inch slot was enacted in Lake Winnibigoshish in 2000, the lake showed an increase of walleye in general. In 2015 the regulation was relaxed to a 18-23 inch slot. Now they are seeing a decline in abundance. Walleye reproduction rates (class strength) also plays an important part. Years 2000 and 2012 were particularly low. This is most likely a part of the decline. Walleye growth rate has increased while abundance decreases. Pounds of mature female walleyes has increased to the point that it is almost again a concern. Young walleyes eat zooplankton. Zooplankton levels in Lake Winnibigoshish are currently doing well. Despite a decline in 2017 it is believed that zebra mussels are not affecting the walleye population at this time. Forage fish do not seem to be a problem in Winnie even though perch sizes seem to be declining.
- F. **Spawning habitat plays an important part in Walleye abundance.** On Lake Winnibigoshish, water levels below 1298 ft elevation, two-thirds of classes were weak. When above 1298 ft, 83% were strong classes. Water level manipulation may play a part in having stronger year classes. Additionally, there is a policy to return 10% of fry where the eggs were collected from. So why not return more? Walleye class strength peaks at about 1000 fry per literal acre. If there are too many fry, there is too much competition for food.
- G. **Since 1983 Winnie has seen an increase of Northern Pike.** They haven't seen a decrease in NOP size in general, but have seen a decline in the largest size NOP. This could be a density dependence issue. There is a decline in total perch, especially the largest size perch. Perch could be declining because the NOP have increased as that is a food source.
- H. **Zebra Mussels are not seen at this time as being the “smoking gun” or directly responsible for declining walleye recruitment or abundance.**
- I. **Website for original presentation given in Grand Rapids:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tl55kD_-j7Q

2. **Consent approval** of the April Minutes and May Treasurer's Report.

3. Updates on HC COLA (activities and plans):

- A. **Update from AIS Volunteer Training (5/30):** Another class is being planned. Those completing the training are required to have back ground checks prior to completing 25 hours of volunteer service. For the first 2 years of service, online classes will be provided, followed by refresher in person training.
- B. **MAISRC Update & Legislative Listening Session on June 8 in Detroit Lakes.** Hubbard COLA is drafting talking points for the listening session. The goal is to attain sustainable funding for the MN AIS Resource Ctr. Attendees worked with neighbor and generated many ideas which were collected for talking point ideas.
- C. **Determine specific shoreland and/or subsystem septic treatment system topics and questions.** Attendees worked with their neighbor to develop these topics / questions. These will be used as topics for our Hubbard County Environmental Service speaker to address at an upcoming COLA meeting.
- D. **Committee Reports & Info from Organizations HC COLA is a member of.** These reports were provided as a handout at the meeting.
- E. **What's Happening on Your Lake:**
 - 1. **Twin Lakes:** Kari Tomperi, HC COLA Rep and Rose Ragole President of the Lakes Association made a presentation. Upper and lower twin are connected by the Shell River. There are 370,000 acres of watershed feeding into the lakes. Twin Lakes is the perfect "circular/bowl" watershed. Looking at it from Crow Wing River in Staples/Motley, the Kettle River, Blueberry, Shell, Straight, Fish Hook, and Long Lake all feed into Twin. Water comes in and out in 90 days. There is a good amount of vegetation & wild life. Lower Twin has a depth of 24-26 feet, upper twin has a depth of 6-8 feet with deepest at 12 feet. Twin Lakes is currently awaiting an assessment & feasibility study on the Shell and Fish Hook Rivers. In the 1900's, the channel was straightened, impacting first upper, then lower twin and a loss of stream miles. The ideal would be that the river be returned as closely as possible to it's original path. This area however is considered a legal drain. Hubbard County would need to abandon that "legal drain" status before any change can be made and this would take the support of landowners along the stream. In-state funding sources are now available for this type of project. Like all lakes, Twin is not without some issues. Enbridge is looking at Upper Twin wetlands for a part of their proposed pipeline. The lakes are invested with faucet snails, and in 2005 had an issue with curly leaf pondweed. That was successfully treated.
 - 2. **Gilmore:** Voiced concern over private rental property having a private boat launch area. There were suggestions from others in attendance including to call Environmental Services.
 - 3. **Duck:** Shared a fundraising idea for AIS. They sold Duck Lake T-Shirts.
 - 4. **Spider Lake:** Has wonderful wild life including bears. An issue is that geese are chasing loons off their nests. Swans (even plastic ones) will deter the geese.

Next Meeting: Thurs June 28th, 5:30 PM Coffee & Conversation – Mtg at 6 pm, Northwoods Bank Community Room.
Host lakes: Big Mantrap, Belle Taine, Emma-Stocking-Bottle (ESB).

Motion to adjourn. Adjourned.

Deb Massey - HC COLA Secretary - May 31 Meeting Host