

# Simple actions, tools protect our lakes, rivers



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BY SHARON NATZEL - PRESIDENT, HUBBARD COUNTY COALITION OF LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

With ice still floating in the middle of Cass Lake on a sunny day in early May, our group of paddlers met at the Bimijiwan (formerly Knutson Dam) Recreation Area in the Chippewa National Forest.

Our intent was to paddle on the Mississippi River downstream of the dam on the northeast side of Cass Lake to Smiling Joe's landing, where our staged vehicles awaited.

My sister and I had planned ahead to return to Bimijiwan after the paddle to use the free CD3 watercraft cleaning station there to clean, drain and dry our kayaks.

We wanted to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS), such as starry stonewort and zebra mussels, before our return to the Park Rapids lakes area.

The CD3 waterless toolsets, located at several public accesses on lakes infested with starry stonewort in Cass, Beltrami and Itasca counties, can help

us “Stop Starry!”

The toolset includes a wet-dry vacuum to suck water out of hard-to-reach places, a brush for sweeping off mud and vegetation and a blower to aid cleaning and drying.

It was very easy to use, with solar lights turning on as the sun set on that kayaking adventure highlighted by trumpeter swans, white pelicans, eagles and a variety of ducks.

### **COLA's 35th anniversary**

To provide further information about stopping the spread of starry stonewort and other invasive species, the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) is hosting a meet and greet on Tuesday, June 6.

The event is open to all ages and recognizes COLA's 35 th anniversary. It will take place at Zorbaz on the south end of Little Sand Lake (22036 County Road 7), from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

In addition to sharing information, you can try your hand at spinning the wheel or tossing a bean bag, and identify AIS using preserved samples.

One display will feature the Aqua Weed Sticks that will be placed at some Hubbard County public accesses this summer to help remove vegetation from boats.

Another will feature photos of successful “restore the shore” projects that provide wildlife and pollinator habitat and reduce nutrient runoff into our lakes.

Hubbard County COLA involves 31 lake associations, with more than 2,770 individual members. Monthly meetings are open to the public.

The next COLA meeting is Thursday, May 25. It will feature an educational presentation at 6:30 p.m. by Wade Massure, Park Rapids DNR area fisheries supervisor. Massure will help us learn more about fisheries survey data and the other information available in MN DNR Lake Finder. A business meeting will follow the presentation.

The meetings are hybrid, so you can attend in person at the Northwoods Bank lower level community room, or email [HCcolaMN@ gmail.com](mailto:HCcolaMN@gmail.com) for the Zoom link.

Our actions at public accesses and along the miles of beautiful shorelines help protect and preserve the lakes and rivers that we all enjoy.

Members of the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations write a monthly column in the Enterprise addressing water issues in the region.