



Hubbard County Cola Update SUMMER 2007

From the President Ken Grob

Welcome back to all of the "summer residents". I hope you had a safe, healthy, and enjoyable winter – wherever you spent it. The full time residents enjoyed a nice winter season; however, we could have used a lot more snow for winter sports. We all look forward to another nice summer in our slice of heaven. I know it is easy to think in terms of just sitting back and relaxing at the lake, especially after the great fishing opener on May 12. The weather and fish were very cooperative. However we all have some responsibility to help improve the quality of our lakes and rivers, along with enjoying our avocations.

Restore the Shore; Water Quality Monitoring

The "COLA Season Opener" also occurred in May. The Restore-The-Shore shrub/tree orders were distributed the first week of May 6. Thanks to Gary Stolzenberg for his work. The Children's Freshwater Festival on May 9 was a success again this year. Even the weather cooperated for once. Thanks to Jerry Lamp's efforts we had all the volunteers we needed. The 2007 Water Quality Monitoring training session and sampling equipment distribution was held on May 11. Thanks to Jerry Knoblich/Vince Poppler/Judy Sheldon for leading this effort. These projects are core to COLA's focus on education and water quality. I should note that in February, RMB Environmental Labs presented a summary of the results of our water monitoring program, covering 10 years of history. The COLA volunteer monitoring project is considered a critical link in the MPCA's lake monitoring program. As displayed by the results on 44 lakes in the county, some lakes improved, some showed no change, and some declined in TSI value. A full copy of the report has been mailed to all lake association presidents and given to the lake testers. More info on your lake can be reviewed on line at www.rmbel.info. I encourage all lake associations to review the detailed results of the study and take appropriate action.



HLRP Lake Management Plans

The HLRP Lake Management Plan initiative continues to make steady progress. All the lakes in the 2005 Class, except Long Lake, have completed all four steps of the project and received \$2400 in milestone funding from Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NMF). Portage and Potato have also received \$4000 grants for special projects. Big Mantrap, Bad Axe, and 8th/9th Crow

Wing Associations are considering applications for special grants. NMF is requesting that the special grant applications be submitted by late July, or we will lose the allocated funds. We will not be sponsoring a 2007 Class, because NMF was not able to receive funding from the McKnight Foundation. The reason is that we have been too delinquent in finishing the 2005 Class milestones. The is unfortunate because their were several COLA lake associations that wanted to participate this year. I would like add that the HLRP initiative has resulted in partnerships with many organizations such as the *DNR Fisheries & Ecological Services, Hubbard and Wadena SWCD, Minnesota Waters, North Central Lakes Project, Initiative Foundation, Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Beltrami County LARA, and the Hubbard County Commissioners.*



COLA Meetings with County Commissioners

Over the winter, a team of COLA members has been working with the County Commissioners on the Shoreland Ordinance. The team assembled a detailed briefing book with information about COLA and our many initiatives. The book also contained detailed information about the North Central Pilot Project's Alternate Shoreland Standards. The team provided recommendations and alternatives on each key element of the Standards and met individually with each commissioner. The discussions were very fruitful in sharing information and views on the matter. The next step for the team is to summarize the input and to make a formal proposal to the commissioners regarding updates to the Hubbard County Shoreland Ordinance. I continue to encourage lake associations and individuals to write letters to their commissioner supporting the initiative.

Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force

Arguably the most significant issue that COLA has been addressing this past winter is the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) threat that Hubbard County faces. The COLA AIS Team has been meeting regularly all winter. Many hours have been spent developing a comprehensive plan. The details were communicated to all lake association presidents in a February 23 letter. COLA's work on this issue has received attention in numerous newspaper articles in the Enterprise, Northwoods Press, and Bemidji paper. I hope all of you have had the opportunity to see and read the coverage, especially the coverage of the curly leaf pondweed "round-up" on 11th Crow Wing that has been in process every Saturday in May.

I am sure you are all aware of the increasing threat that Eurasian water-milfoil, curly leaf pondweed, zebra mussels, spiny waterfleas, as well as other exotics pose for our lakes and rivers. The DNR 2006 Summary Report identified 13 more lakes with milfoil (190 total state wide), 11 more with pondweed (740 total state wide), Zebra mussels have infected Lake Mille Lacs, milfoil has been detected in Leech Lake, spiny waterfleas in the Rainy Lake and River....and closer to home curly leaf pondweed in 11th Crow wing Lake and Portage Lake. Bottom line is the threat is all around us and puts Hubbard County lakes at risk. The loss of property value and the cost of control/eradication are extensive. More information can be found on the DNR website: http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/ecological_services/invasives/annualreport.pdf



The COLA AIS Team has initiated a set of actions to reduce the potential for introduction of exotics to our lakes:

- 1) Pursue an awareness program through placing signs on key roads: *Working with the DNR and Wildlife Forever, we have placed signs on four billboards. I hope you have seen the "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" message billboards as you travel to Hubbard County on Hwys 10, 34, and 71(North and South). With the help of the County Highway Department, We have also placed 11 smaller signs on county and twp roads. We intend to place more as the summer progresses. The project will cost us approximately \$12,000. We have been successful in raising about \$10,500 to date, including a \$4000 matching grant from the DNR. I encourage all lake associations to consider contributing to this project. Several have already. Some as much as \$1000.*
- 2) Conduct Invasive Species Volunteer Training Workshops: *Two training sessions have been scheduled, June 15 in the morning in Nevis, and June 16 in the afternoon at the Mantrap Valley Conservation Club. Letters have been sent to lake association presidents and press releases/ announcements are in the local newspapers on how to pre-register. I am encouraging all lake associations to have at least one person attend a session. The purpose of the training sessions is to certify individuals to participate in launch site inspections and awareness events.*
- 3) Work with resort/campground owners to provide their customers with tools to create awareness and guide inspections of watercraft and trailers: *Resort owners have been contacted and some have volunteered to be on an advisory team. They have all been invited to attend the June 15 volunteer training session. Several have ordered the "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" sign to be placed at their resort. This has a good start but needs a lot more work.*
- 4) Awareness/education campaigns, contingency planning for managing control of infested lakes, and evaluation of Environmental Sentry Systems are all on the agenda in the future: *The COLA AIS Team would welcome more members. Please call me if you would like to help.*



It is nice to talk about our successes, but there is still a lot of work to be done. As I look ahead, there is a lot of time required to get the COLA Standing Committees more active. During the winter months I assigned every COLA Representative to a committee. Now is the time for these committees to start working. These committees....Lakeshore Education/Lake Association Interface; Government Liaison; COLA Meeting Attendance and Representation...must become active and self-motivated to achieve their objectives. *Please note that any lake association member can participate on these committees. If you have an interest please contact me or your COLA Rep for information. We can use all the help that is available.*

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Let me say in closing that I am encouraged by the growth of the COLA membership and the many initiatives we have pursued. We now have grown to 30-lake associations, representing 40 lakes and over 2000 individuals. However, individual participation in the COLA initiatives is limited to a small number. Less than 15 people have done the majority of the work I have outlined above. That is less than 1% of the membership. If this sounds like exhorting - well, it is. In order for COLA to continue to grow and to "Take care of our lakes, not just care about our lakes", the COLA representatives and other lake association members must get more involved. Please consider volunteering a small part of your time. Citizens must get involved to protect our lakes and rivers.

Thanks to everyone for the continued support of the COLA mission. Enjoy the summer in our slice of heaven.

New COLA Web Site

Past COLA President Judy Novak has been doing yeoman's duty maintaining the COLA website, expending much additional effort recently to transfer data from the old site to a new one which is now online. The new address is www.mnwaters.org/hubbardcola. Make the site a regular surfing stop not only for information about COLA, its structure, function, and activities, but also for up to date news on various environmental happenings and lots of links to other sites of great interest and value to all citizens concerned about north central Minnesota's natural resources.