



Short Ears, Long Tales

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

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Lac Courte Oreilles Boat Landings Summer Fun Also Means Summer Monitoring

By Kathy Hanson
Contributing Writer

Three public boat landings on Lac Courte Oreilles assist the public in launching and retrieving their boats all summer long. There is a launch on Victory Heights (Town of Sand Lake) in the west basin; another launch in Anchor Bay (Town of Bass Lake) in the East Basin; and the primary launch (Lac Courte Oreilles Access), also known as the DNR ramp in Chicago Bay in the central basin. Both the Victory Heights and Anchor Bay ramps serve the immediate neighborhoods and are primarily used by the local populations. The DNR Chicago Bay ramp is used by lake visitors—and that is why COLA monitors it for aquatic invasive species.



Photo by Mark Lastrup.

According to Mark Lastrup, COLA Secretary and Website Coordinator, the Chicago Bay ramp "is by far and away the heaviest used of the three."

The cost of monitoring the Chicago Bay ramp approaches \$6,000 per year, according to Lastrup who added that the Wisconsin DNR Clean Boats, Clean Waters Program provides grants of up to \$4,000 to carry out such activities with in-kind matching from grant participants.

None of the three launches have fish cleaning areas; Victory Heights and Anchor Bay have 1-5 vehicles/trailer stalls, while the DNR ramp in Chicago Bay has 25+. Since they are public access ramps there is no cost to use them.



Eli Robbins is employed by COLA to monitor LCO boat landings. Photos by Mark Lastrup.

Eli Robbins, 18, and a recent Hayward High School graduate, works for COLA, monitoring the Chicago Bay ramp for [aquatic invasive species](#) (AIS). He begins monitoring from fishing opener day through Labor Day, working Friday through Sunday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. His job involves approaching each boat as it enters or leaves the lake, and he asks the boater the following questions:

- Have you been contacted by a watercraft inspector this season?
- Are you willing to answer questions?
- Was this boat used during the past five days on a different body of water?

He then inspects the boat, trailer and equipment for any attached plants/animals.

Then he asks that they drain all water from the boat, including livewells, and proceeds to record the information on a [data form](#) that will eventually be entered into the DNR SWIMS database.

Eli's task amounts to a lot of work. He inspected 758 boats and interacted with 920 people in May, June, and July of this year.

Lastrup said for the most part people are aware of the AIS issues and people are quite cooperative.

"It's getting better. On occasion, (Eli) will find plants hanging from the trailers. And then there is the occasional anarchist who wants nothing to do with government in any form," said Lastrup.



Aquatic plants hanging from trailer. Photo by Steve Umland.

Eli said he sees anywhere from six to 60 boats a day at the ramp, mostly fishing boats, pontoons, inboards and outboards, and a few wakeboard boats. "They're mostly from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois," he said.

When asked what he finds in the way of AIS, Eli said, "I usually don't find any invasive species going into the lake but coming out of the lake when it's windy there is usually a lot on there." Eli removes the invasive species when he finds it—normally one day a weekend and when it's windy in the bay, he explained.



Eurasian water milfoil (top) was discovered in little LCO in 2016. One of the most serious invasive species in big LCO is curly leaf pondweed (bottom). Photos by Elizabeth J. Czarapata (top) and Steve Umland (bottom).

Steve Umland, COLA's AIS coordinator, reported that, "Invasive species Curly-Leaf Pondweed (CLP) was discovered in Musky Bay in 2008. We have aggressively treated this infestation every year since. We have reduced the acres from over ninety acres in 2009 to just under five acres year before last. CLP has been discovered and treated in Stuckey Bay and Barbertown Bay as well. Both locations have under one to three acres depending on the year."

Until recently, COLA has focused exclusively on the control of CLP in Lac Courte Oreilles. But in the last three years Umland noted that Eurasian Water Milfoil and CLP have been found in Little Lac Courte Oreilles.

COLA applied for and received a quick-response grant to develop and implement a treatment plan for little LCO. Both invasive species were treated in 2017 using both herbicides and hand-pulling. Post treatment surveys have been encouraging.

Fortunately, the three other invasive species that are in the upper Couderay River watershed, Purple Loosestrife, Zebra Mussels, and Rusty Crayfish, have not been found in LCO.

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Kathy Hanson is a free-lance writer for various local and regional newspapers and Duluth magazines. She is the Sawyer County Field Editor for Our Wisconsin magazine and copy editor for the Bayfield County Journal. She was previously a staff reporter, business writer, columnist and copy editor for the Sawyer County Record.

COLA Mission: 1) to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Lac Courte Oreilles and Little Lac Courte Oreilles, their shorelands and surrounding areas, while respecting the interests of property owners and the rights of the general public; and 2) to consider, study, survey and respond to issues deemed relevant by COLA's membership.

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THANKS TO ALL FOR A GREAT COLA PICNIC!

By all accounts the COLA picnic was a success. Attendance was ~135, and the new venue at Trails End worked well. [Let us know what you think.](#)

COLA ACHIEVES CRITICAL STEP IN GETTING LONG-NEEDED PROTECTIONS IN PLACE

Governor Scott Walker has approved a scope statement submitted by the WDNR on May 15, 2017 that initiates the rulemaking process to establish a more protective water quality standard for LCO. The current phosphorus standard for the lake is set at 15 ppb by the state. COLA and the LCO tribe have asked that the limit be lowered to 10 ppb ([more](#)).

LCO WILL BE FEATURED AT THE 2017 MINNESOTA WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE

Hans Holmberg, a Senior Engineer and Associate Vice President with LimnoTech, will be presenting a talk entitled,

"Protecting Two-Story Lakes: A Battle Against Phosphorus and Climate Change"

at the 2017 Minnesota Water Resources Conference to be held at the Saint Paul RiverCentre in Saint Paul, Minnesota, on October 17-18, 2017.

This presentation will discuss the basis for and approach used to develop a site-specific phosphorus criterion for Lac Courte Oreilles. The conference will be attended by about 700 water resource professionals.

Holmberg's presentation will be provided in upcoming SELT issues and on COLA's website.

ALL OF LAC COURTE OREILLES WILL LIKELY BE LISTED AS AN IMPAIRED WATER BODY

In addition to Musky Bay, all of Lac Courte Oreilles will probably be included in Wisconsin's list of impaired waters for 2018 based on depleted dissolved oxygen levels.

COLA requested this action, which was spurred, in part, by last fall's extensive fish kill along with the well-documented low oxygen levels and high water temperatures. More information will follow in upcoming weeks.

VULNERABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS TO EROSION IN THE UPPER COUDERAY RIVER WATERSHED

COLA recently commissioned the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point to conduct an erosion study of the Upper Couderay River Watershed. Results are summarized by UWSP GIS Education Specialist, Douglas Miskowiak, in this [presentation](#).

"LEGACY PHOSPHORUS" AND OUR WATERS

A [new study](#) quantifies the need to reduce phosphorus in our soils—for the health of our lakes and rivers

By Jenny Seifert, Grow - Wisconsin's Magazine for the Life Sciences, UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR COLA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2017!

COLA membership is a pretty good deal. For only 25\$/year, you help COLA protect LCO, and you get a picnic in return!

[Renew your membership](#) today in one of Wisconsin's most active and respected lake associations.

Are your neighbors and extended family members of COLA? If not, please ask them to [join](#).

LAKESHORE PROPERTY OWNER GUIDES

These guides provide guidance on selection of native plants as well as simple and inexpensive best practices for lakeshore property owners.

[Healthy Lakes 350 ft2 Native Planting Companion Guide](#)

[2014-2017 Wisconsin's Healthy Lakes Implementation Plan](#)

SAWYER COUNTY LAND & WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017 - 2026

Sawyer County is faced with ever increasing public demands on its unique natural resources.

This plan is an important tool to guide local government, various state and federal agencies, and individuals ([more](#)).

SHORELAND BUFFER GRANT MONEY AVAILABLE

COLA has received a WDNR grant to develop shoreland restoration plans and designs, make bulk plant purchases, and arrange construction and installation services from area landscapers. COLA will also help provide continuing education and a hands-on buffer zone training in partnership with the Sawyer County Lakes Forum and other local groups. The primary intended audience for education efforts extends to the Upper Couderay River Watershed lakes including Whitefish, Sand, Grindstone, Windigo, Sissabagama, Osprey, Round and Little Round.

For questions and details, email Kris Sivertson, at krisw3690@gmail.com or call [715-210-0818](tel:715-210-0818).

NEW COLA WEBSITE FEATURE - LAKE OBSERVATION FORMS

The COLA website has been revised to include a much-needed feature - a place to record [lake observations](#). There are forms available for those who want to report dying fish, invasive aquatic plant species, algae blooms, ice on/off dates, loon sightings, and other events.

COLA'S LAND USE POLICY STATEMENT

COLA recently developed a new land use [policy statement](#) addressing developmental pressures on LCO, and it proved useful for evaluating the merits of a recent request to [rezone a property adjacent to Fleur de Lane](#).

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS

If you have friends or family on nearby lakes who would enjoy Short Ears, Long Tales, [let us know](#).

Help COLA by sharing this newsletter with friends.

[ARCHIVED ISSUES OF SHORT EARS, LONG TALES](#)