



Short Ears, Long Tales

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

Issue #29 July 1, 2018

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It's all about the lakes

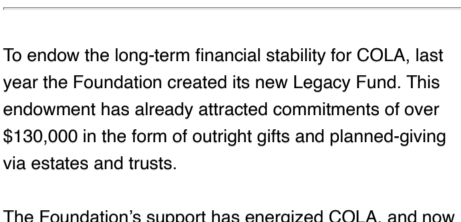
By Jim Coors
COLA Board of Directors

The St. Francis Solanus Mission was a wonderful setting for COLA's June 16, 2018 annual meeting. Lots of room for the crowd, and [Sister Felissa](#) provided an overstock of delicious freshly-baked cinnamon buns. Top it off with two urns of coffee, and all was good.

What's even better, though, was hearing all that COLA has been doing for the LCO lakes. In his introductory comments, COLA's President, Kevin Horrocks, praised the hours of dedication from COLA's volunteers, board members, contractors, friends, and the LCO tribe. COLA is now regarded as one of the most effective and proactive lake associations in Wisconsin. COLA's annual meeting highlighted the reasons why.

The LCO Foundation and Nine Years of Sustained Support – Rob Gales

Nine years ago, COLA needed some financial muscle to take on the lakes' many challenges. Membership dues were not nearly enough. So, in 2009 several concerned COLA members created the LCO Foundation, an independent 501(c)(3) with the sole purpose of supporting COLA through donations. Rob Gales, the Foundation's current vice-president, praised the sustained support provided by COLA's membership and friends ever since – a total of over \$900,000 in contributions, and even more impressive, 200+ donors have contributed to the Foundation in each of five or more years.



LCO Foundation's vice-president, Rob Gales. Photo by Chris Gales.

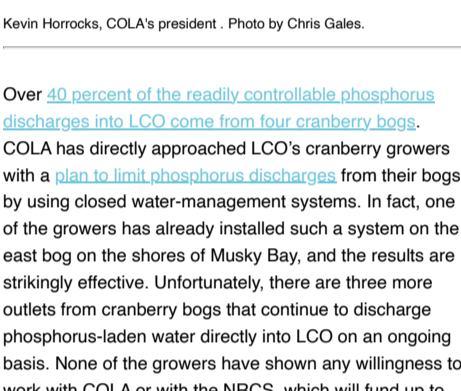
To endow the long-term financial stability for COLA, last year the Foundation created its new Legacy Fund. This endowment has already attracted commitments of over \$130,000 in the form of outright gifts and planned-giving via estates and trusts.

The Foundation's support has energized COLA, and now COLA has the resources needed to do all it can on behalf of the lakes.

The LCO Lake Management Plan – Kevin Horrocks

Kevin outlined COLA's main mission – to maintain and improve LCO's two-story, cisco and whitefish fishery. This means protecting the water quality, and, as with most of Wisconsin's lakes, phosphorus pollution is the primary cause of poor water quality. Phosphorus pollution in LCO has several sources, but it's not just an LCO issue, it's a watershed problem. So, in 2011 COLA developed its [Lake Management Plan](#) that included five management areas: aquatic invasive species (AIS), lake and stream monitoring, shoreland development, changing land use, and cranberry bog discharges.

LCO is classified as an [Outstanding Resource Water](#), which requires WDNR to set anti-degradation standards for the lake. The process involves determining site-specific criteria for pollutants such as phosphorus. Unfortunately, this process has broken down. Despite extensive efforts by COLA and the LCO tribe to set a protective standard for phosphorus at 10 ppb, the WDNR has refused to acknowledge years of scientific study justifying the request. They maintain that the state-wide standard of 15 ppb is adequate for LCO. This is in spite of the fact that several years ago Musky Bay was declared an impaired water on the basis of phosphorus pollution (>40 ppb), and late in 2017 WDNR declared that [all of big LCO was impaired because of low dissolved oxygen](#), a direct effect of excessive phosphorus. Low dissolved oxygen combined with high water temperature was the cause of the large [fish kill of 2016](#). The LCO tribe and COLA are now in the midst of a prolonged legal battle to force WDNR to act appropriately.



Kevin Horrocks, COLA's president. Photo by Chris Gales.

Over [40 percent of the readily controllable phosphorus discharges into LCO come from four cranberry bogs](#).

COLA has directly approached LCO's cranberry growers with a [plan to limit phosphorus discharges](#) from their bogs by using closed water-management systems. In fact, one of the growers has already installed such a system on the east bog on the shores of Musky Bay, and the results are strikingly effective. Unfortunately, there are three more outlets from cranberry bogs that continue to discharge phosphorus-laden water directly into LCO on an ongoing basis. None of the growers has shown any willingness to work with COLA or with the NRCS, which will fund up to 90% of the cost of eliminating these discharges.

In the meantime, septic systems have been cleaned up, shoreland buffers are being re-established, aquatic invasive plants are nearly under control – all because of COLA and its members.

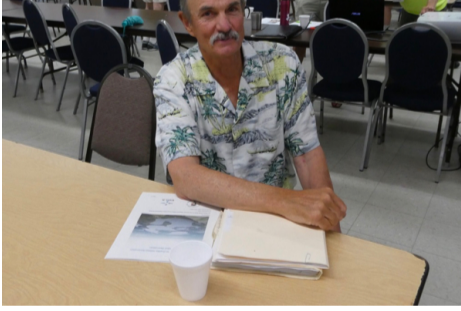
Agricultural Lands and the Lakes, Woods, and Water – Kevin Horrocks

Kevin again emphasized that water quality is a watershed issue, and he described how [COLA has been working with UW Stevens Point scientists](#) to map erosion-susceptible agricultural parcels throughout the Upper Couderay River Watershed. The watershed includes about 8,000 agricultural acres on potentially erodible lands. The UWSP study determined that 44 ag parcels, in particular, were of medium to high vulnerability and needed immediate attention. The 17 owners of these parcels are now working with Sawyer County and the NRCS to develop Best Management Practices to lessen erosion potential. ([more](#))

This same approach, again with UWSP scientists, is now being used to address erosion potential for the nearly 18,000 forested acres in the watershed. Stay tuned for more on COLA's forestry best management practices initiative.

Aquatic Invasive Species Management – Steve Umland

The fight to eliminate invasive plants will never be completed, but thanks to Steve Umland, COLA's AIS coordinator, what was once an annual pitched battle is now a mere skirmish. (See [2018 AIS Spring survey](#).) [Curly leaf pondweed](#) (CLP) fouled much of Musky Bay and many other parts (CLP) 10 years ago. Steve, his many volunteers and AIS "spotters," supported by several WDNR AIS grants, have helped reduce CLP infestations from a high of 90+ acres to less than five acres this year. Many of the remaining CLP patches can now be pulled by hand.

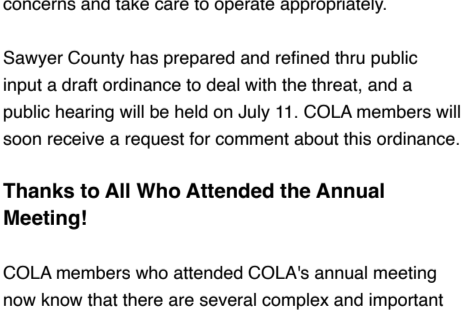


Steve Umland, COLA's AIS coordinator. Photo by Chris Gales.

Unfortunately, small patches of [Eurasian watermilfoil](#) have recently been spotted in big and little LCO. Eurasian watermilfoil has been termed "CLP on steroids," so Steve's job will not become any easier. At this point, these patches are being pulled by hand, but COLA needs more property owners to watch for new infestations.

Musky Spawning Habitat Restoration – Mike Persson

Let's put the musky back in Musky Bay! That's the charge that Mike Persson is leading. Mike who, along with the member of COLA's board of directors, represents the Hayward chapter of Muskies Inc. in their efforts to [reinvigorate the musky population in LCO](#). Since 2016 nearly 4,000 northern pike have been removed from LCO. This ensured better survival of the 3,500 muskies and 51,000 walleyes used to restock the fishery in 2017. Mike is also working to not only re-establish musky spawning in Musky Bay, but potentially, along with the LCO tribe and others, restore wild rice habitat and possibly treat the phosphorus laden sediment in Musky Bay. There are some big projects in the works.



Mike Persson, COLA's musky recovery coordinator. Photo by Jim Coors.

Shoreline Buffers and Motorboat Wake Protection – Kevin Horrocks

LCO's shoreline is under continual assault, which is why COLA initiated its shoreland restoration program several years ago. There were three state-funded projects in 2017, and another two are scheduled for 2018, along with four continuing projects. A notable success is the [Broken Arrow Condominiums shoreline restoration](#).

State funding was conditioned on there being 35' wide buffer restorations from the high-water mark, and this has prevented some property owners from doing any restoration.

While WDNR will not fund buffers less than 35', COLA will co-fund mini-shoreland buffer projects. Any buffer of five feet or greater will lessen erosion potential to some degree. While it is difficult to find appropriate plants and small-project consultants, COLA will try to help property owners who want to take on mini-buffer projects.

Excessive boat wakes are another threat to the LCO lakes and their shorelines – more erosion introduces more sediment and phosphorus into the lake. Boat wake erosion is in addition to any erosion caused by extreme weather-related events. Wake boats, in particular, can disrupt fish spawning habitats and nesting sites for loons and other birds unless boaters are aware of these concerns and take care to operate appropriately.

Sawyer County has prepared and refined thru public input a draft ordinance to deal with the threat, and a public hearing will be held on July 11. COLA members will soon receive a request for comment about this ordinance.

Thanks to All Who Attended the Annual Meeting!

COLA members who attended COLA's annual meeting now know that there are several complex and important events affecting the lakes. Please look for and read all the communications COLA sends out: SELT, requests for comment Stay informed and let COLA know if you have any concerns.



COLA MEMBERS' PICNIC

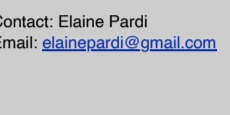
Saturday, July 14, 2018
11:00 am – 2:00 pm
Picnic lunch starts at 12:00 noon

Come by car: 8080 Co Hwy K
Come by boat: Barbortown Bay

Come and catch up on lake news with some of your COLA friends.

Food and beer/pop will be provided by COLA to current COLA members.

Buy Raffle Tickets for food and fun at the six LCO Lakes' restaurant/bars. Their crown your fingers when the winning numbers are drawn.



LCO BOAT PARADE

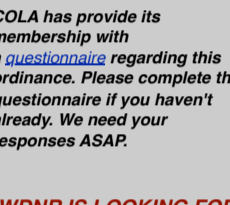
July 4th weekend
LCO Patriot Parade - July 4th at 1pm.

The parade will begin at The Sand Bar (Wismo Point) at 1pm and circle Chicago Bay then head back to the Sand Bar.

Best Patriot Boat of the parade will be crowned the winner of LCO Patriot Parade 2018.

Last year's July 4th boat parade was a big success, and we'd like to support Elaine Pardi organize this year's event. Let us know if you'd be able to help Elaine this year.

Contact: Elaine Pardi
Email: elainepardi@gmail.com



BOAT WAKE RESOLUTION

Sawyer County has proposed a [resolution/ordinance](#) about boat wakes in an attempt to, "provide safe and healthful condition for the enjoyment of aquatic recreation consistent with public rights and interests and the capability of the water resources to minimize shoreline erosion." The resolution proposes a 700-foot buffer from the shore for boats creating enhanced wakes ([map for proposed buffer zone on LCO](#)). For more information on effects of boat wakes on shoreline erosion, please refer to:

[The Effects of Motorized Watercraft on Aquatic Ecosystems](#) - Timothy R. Asplund, WDNR

[Low-Speed Boating... Managing the Wave](#) - Doug Keller, LakeLine Vol. 37, Fall 2017

[Protecting Water Quality & Resuspension Caused by Wakeboard Boats](#) - Heather Harwood, LakeLine Vol. 37, Fall 2017

[Wakeboarding in Michigan: Impacts and Best Practices](#) - Marlana Smith and Erin Jarvie, Michigan Chapter, North American Lake Management Society

COLA has provide its membership with a questionnaire regarding this ordinance. Please complete the questionnaire if you haven't already. We need your responses ASAP.

WDNR IS LOOKING FOR GEESE

From Max Wolter, WDNR Fisheries Biologist, Hayward Service Center:

"Our wildlife crew is looking for large flocks of geese for a banding project. Ideally, we'd be looking for groups of 60+ (that includes adults and goslings combined), but we have done as few as 20-40 in lean years (which this might be). **If you have big rafts of geese floating around on your lake, please let us know!** We'd like to band them."

Contact Max at:
phone (715) 634-7429
fax (715) 634-9232
e-mail
Max.wolter@wisconsin.gov

THANKS FOR USING COLA'S LAKE OBSERVATION FORMS

If you observe dead fish in the LCO Lakes, please report your observation using the [forms provided on COLA's website](#).

2018 LCO INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS PRE-TREATMENT SURVEY

Some good news, some not so good news. But, with a lot of help, COLA is keeping both curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian milfoil under control. See the [preliminary report](#) from James Scharf Senior Biologist - Lake Services Manager for Wisconsin Lake and Pond Resource, LLC.

CONTRIBUTE TO A LARGE-SCALE RESEARCH PROJECT ON SWIMMER'S ITCH

Dr. Patrick Hanington (University of Alberta) and Freshwater Solutions, LLC are embarking on a large, cross-continent research initiative focused on parasites (schistosomes) that cause swimmer's itch. They need your help ([more information](#)).

If you are interested, use the [Swimmer's Itch Report Card](#) to contribute your observations to this study.

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR INSTALLING SHORELINE BUFFERS

COLA will assist property owners with shoreland restoration plans including design, bulk plant purchases, and arrangements for construction and installation services from area landscapers. **For those looking to restore or enhance their shoreline... but don't want to go the full blown WDNR 35 foot route...try the new "COLA Lite" approach.**

Operating on the theory that "something is... better than nothing"...COLA has budgeted \$20K to assist property owners on the LCO Lakes to establish or enhance their shoreline buffer with native plants, with the size of the buffer pretty much to their choosing. So don't miss this one of a kind offer.....sign up today....first come, first served.

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 (krisw3690@gmail.com) or call 715-210-0818.

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

COLA NEEDS YOUR HELP

COLA is recruiting new members for its Board of Directors. Please [let us know](#) if you can lend a hand - it's fun and rewarding work.

THE LAC COURTE OREILLES LEGACY FUND

Many families have enjoyed LCO's pristine beauty for generations. Your generous donations over the past eight years have helped preserve the lake and remain the essential funding for current activities. But now we have another opportunity to protect the lake far into the future by putting the Lac Courte Oreilles Foundation into your estate plans.

The LCO Foundation teamed up with the Eau Claire Community Foundation to create the [Lac Courte Oreilles Legacy Fund](#). Endowment gifts include: planned gifts such as a bequest in a will, charitable remainder trust, or outright gifts, such as of cash, or stock.

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.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR COLA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2018!

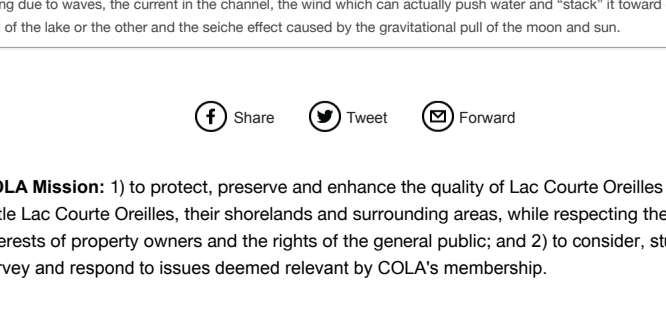
COLA membership is a pretty good deal. For only 25\$/year, you help COLA protect LCO, and you get a picnic in return!

[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](#).

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

LCO Water Depth Recorded at Thoroughfare Bridge Gauge



The first point on the chart, June 27, 2017, was when the gauge was first installed. Periodic readings are recorded as accurately as reasonable. The water itself is in perpetual motion, not only flowing downstream but rising and falling due to waves, the current in the channel, the wind which can actually push water and "stack" it toward one end of the lake or the other and the seiche effect caused by the gravitational pull of the moon and sun.

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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.

The eNewsletter Editor can be reached at:

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