



Short Ears, Long Tales

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

Issue #34 June 7, 2019

Water, and Water Issues, Everywhere

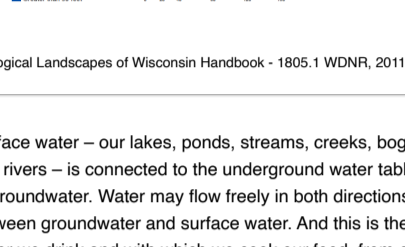
By Allison Slavick
Contributing Writer

"If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water."
-Loren Eiseley (1907-1977), American philosopher and natural science writer

Do we take water for granted? Surrounded by the tens of thousands of lakes of the Upper Midwest, it's easy to overlook the everyday magic of freshwater. Painted turtles on a sunny, mossy log, whirligig beetles, bank swallows and dragonflies overhead, and a diving kingfisher: can you picture that scene on sparkling Lac Courte Oreilles as you paddle a kayak along the shore or have a fish on the line?

Beneath the surface of many lakes, another scene unfolds. Two studies of the chemistry of fifty lakes in Minnesota, including some thought to be pristine, found a component of plastic, an antibacterial soap ingredient, antibiotics, a byproduct of cocaine, an antidepressant, a fungicide, and a drug used for treatment of Parkinson's. The most commonly detected chemical was the insect repellent DEET. Some of these chemicals are endocrine disrupters, which can act like (or block) hormones in fish and humans. According to Mark Ferrey, the Pollution Control Agency researcher who conducted the two studies, they "suggest that PPCPs (pharmaceuticals and personal care products) and endocrine active chemicals are widespread in lakes and rivers, and that fish are likely altered on genetic, cellular, organism, and population levels when exposed to the chemicals that find their way into surface water from a variety of sources."

Similar studies have not been carried out on Wisconsin lakes, but the Minnesota studies should cause more than concern alongside Wisconsin's known threats of mercury-tainted fish, pesticides, and nitrates.



Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin Handbook - 1805.1 WDNr, 2011

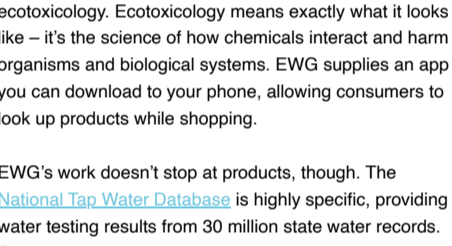
Surface water – our lakes, ponds, streams, creeks, bogs, and rivers – is connected to the underground water table, or groundwater. Water may flow freely in both directions between groundwater and surface water. And this is the water we drink and with which we cook our food, from our wells or from a municipal tap. The home septic systems common to northern Wisconsin may seep to both the groundwater and surface water, too. With the shallow depth of the water table throughout much of northern Wisconsin, "trickle down" takes on a new meaning when you realize the direct link between the products you're using outdoors and in your home and the water quality right outside our door and in our wells.

While we might rely on legislation and sustainable agriculture practices to protect us from mercury, pesticide, and nitrate contamination of Wisconsin's lakes, individuals at home and work, in schools and community centers, can prevent the contamination of freshwater from pharmaceuticals, personal care, and cleaning products. But with so many products on the market, how can consumers learn about product safety? And how does one handle unused pharmaceuticals?

If you live on a lake, and even if you don't, there are resources available to help. The [Environmental Working Group](#) (EWG) and the State of Wisconsin, through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Department of Justice (DOJ) provide resources you should know about.

Environmental Working Group is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization, founded in 1993, and dedicated to protecting human health and the environment. They employ scientists, policy experts, lawyers, and communications experts to issue reports, databases, and communications campaigns to help people live healthier lives in a healthier environment. You may have seen EWG in the news: the organization was active in working with Hawaii's state legislature to pass a bill that bans sunscreens that contain oxybenzone and octinoxate. These two chemicals are linked to hormone disruption in people and the bleaching and death of coral reefs. Key West, Florida will ban both chemicals beginning in 2021.

EWG's New Logo



If you visit [EWG's website](#) you'll find ratings for hundreds of sunscreens, and this is just one example of the resources helpful to consumers looking make good choices about every-day products that might find their way into our lakes, groundwater, and wells. Cleaning products, cosmetics, and insect repellents are also listed and rated according to their safety for human health and ecotoxicology. Ecotoxicology means exactly what it looks like – it's the science of how chemicals interact and harm organisms and biological systems. EWG supplies an app you can download to your phone, allowing consumers to look up products while shopping.

EWG's work doesn't stop at products, though. The [National Tap Water Database](#) is highly specific, providing water testing results from 30 million state water records. Searchable by zip code, you can find results for even small water utilities and sanitary districts, including resorts and mobile home parks. You'll find information about drinking water standards and water filter guides, and a safety guide for private wells.



EWG's Tap Water Database

Since 2010, water utilities' testing has found pollutants in Americans' tap water, according to an EWG drinking water quality analysis of 30 million state water records.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Indeed, with about 25% of Wisconsin's population using private wells, the Wisconsin DNR recommends that residents test their wells annually for bacterial contamination. Nitrates, lead, and arsenic are other contaminants that can be tested for, and the DNR's site provides [names of laboratories](#) that can provide testing for those contaminants and others, including many groundwater pollutants and toxic chemicals found in products you might have in your home.

Safely disposing of unwanted pharmaceuticals – prescription and over the counter – requires attention and care from consumers. To keep these toxins out of lakes and groundwater, wells and water utilities, you should never wash drugs down the drain or flush in the toilet. Two entities in Wisconsin will help with disposal. [Permanent take-back locations](#) are found throughout the state, often at police stations, and the link will take you to mail-back programs and provides information on drug repositories that will redistribute certain classes of untampered drugs. The Wisconsin Department of Justice's Drug Take back Days (usually scheduled for spring and fall) will accept controlled, prescribed, and over-the-counter substances, including pet medications.

Protection of our lakes can start with individual action. Consumers can have an impact on the water quality of lakes and streams, and groundwater and drinking water. Peace of mind – and civic duty – will come from making careful choices at home and contribute to the peace one can feel when enjoying a day on the lake, keeping the magic alive.

COLA ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, June 15, 2019

St. Francis Mission

Topics for Informational Session:

Forest Management in LCO Watershed - Larry Partridge, WDNr Forestry

2019 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management - Steve Umland, COLA Invasive Species Chair

LCO 10 Year Point Intercept Aquatic Plants Study - Steve Umland, COLA Invasive Species Chair

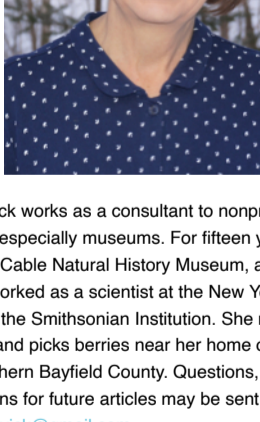
LCO Safety/Marker Buoys - Mike Persson, COLA Fishing Chair

Musky Bay Musky Spawning Area Restoration - Mike Persson, COLA Fishing Chair

LCO 10 Year Turtle Study - Beth Reinke, Assistant Professor, Northwestern Illinois University

COLA Legal Efforts at State and at Federal - Alf Sivertson, COLA Counsel

Questions from membership - Kevin Horrocks, COLA President



Allison Slavick works as a consultant to nonprofits all over the country, especially museums. For fifteen years she directed the Cable Natural History Museum, and previously worked as a scientist at the New York Botanical Garden and the Smithsonian Institution. She mountain bikes, skis, and picks berries near her home on Crystal Lake in southern Bayfield County. Her questions, comments, or suggestions for future articles may be sent to her at allison.slavick@gmail.com.

[View this email in your browser](#)

PLEASE RENEW YOUR COLA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2019-2020

COLA membership is a pretty good deal. For only 25\$/year, you help COLA protect the LCO Lakes, are informed about issues involving the LCO Lakes, 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](#).

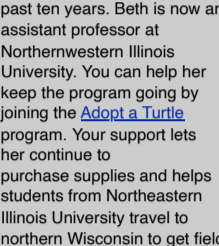
COLA ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, June 15, 2019

St. Francis Mission

8:30 Coffee and Rolls
9:00 – 9:30 COLA Business Meeting
9:30 – 9:45 Break
9:45 – 11:30 COLA Informational Meeting

(More information below)



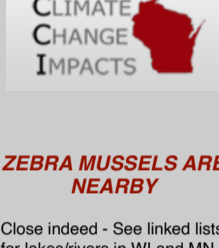
COLA MEMBER'S PICNIC

Saturday, July 13, 2019

Trails End Resort

ADOPT A TURTLE

Beth Reinke, with COLA's help, has been conducting turtle research on LCO for the past ten years. Beth is now an assistant professor at Northwestern Illinois University. You can help her keep the program going by joining the [Adopt a Turtle](#) program. Your support lets her continue to purchase supplies and helps students from Northeastern Illinois University travel to northern Wisconsin to get field experience. ([More on Beth's research on LCO.](#))



WISCONSIN INITIATIVE ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

The mission of WICCI is to generate and share information that can limit vulnerability to climate change in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest. The [Climate Wisconsin 2050](#) report is now available.



ZEBRA MUSSELS ARE NEARBY

Close indeed - See linked lists for lakes/rivers in WI and MN within a 150 mile radius of Lac Courte Oreilles.

[Wisconsin lakes and rivers](#)
[Minnesota lakes and rivers](#)

The Zebra Mussel is a serious invasive species and could destroy our lakes. See the message from COLA President Kevin Horrocks [here](#).

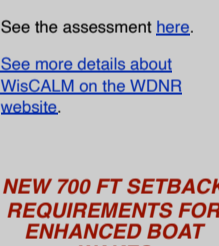
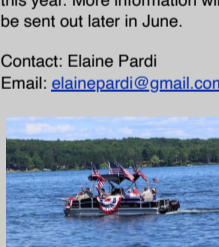


Photo provided by [USDA](#) and [USGS](#).

COMMUNITIES CARE FOR WETLANDS: STONE LAKE

The Winter-Spring issue of The Monitor is available and features a story about one of LCO's neighbors.

Citizens in the small town of Stone Lake in Washburn County came together to protect wetlands for the health of their lake, and, at the same time, created a treasured community resource.



Click to see video.

2018 ANNUAL LCO WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Wisconsin's Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (WisCALM), from the WDNr, provides guidance on assessment of water quality data against surface water quality standards and for Clean Water Act reporting on surface water quality status and trends.

This assessment has been prepared for each of the last 6 years by LimnoTech Inc.

See the assessment [here](#).

[See more details about WisCALM on the WDNr website.](#)

NEW 700 FT SETBACK REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCED BOAT WAKES

A new enhanced boat wake ordinance became effective on November 12, 2018. To view the ordinance [click here](#).



A higher resolution map of the new 700 ft setback requirements for enhanced boat wakes is provided [here](#).

LCO BOAT PARADE

July 4th weekend

Last year's July 4th boat parade was a little weather-challenged, but we're at it again to help Elaine Pardi organize this year's event (with a rain date). Let us know if you'd be able to help Elaine this year. More information will be sent out later in June.

Contact: Elaine Pardi
Email: elainepardi@gmail.com



THE LAC COURTE OREILLES LEGACY FUND

Many families have enjoyed LCO's pristine beauty for generations. Your generous donations over the past nine years have helped preserve the lake and remain the essential funding for current activities. 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](#) and the [Higbee Family 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.

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

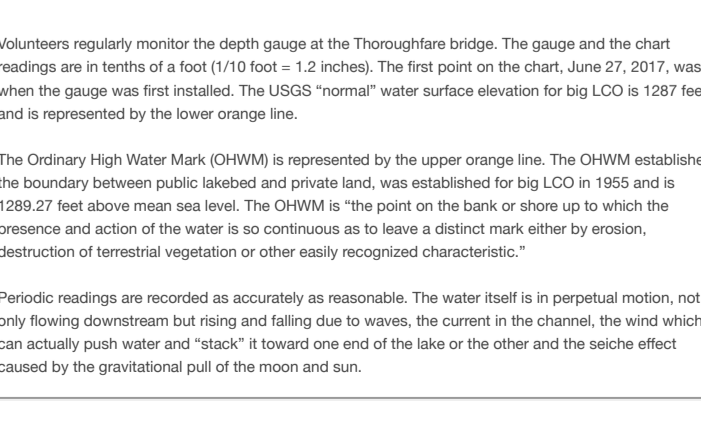
Share Tweet Forward

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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LCO Water Depth Recorded at Thoroughfare Bridge Gauge



Volunteers regularly monitor the depth gauge at the Thoroughfare bridge. The gauge and the chart readings are in tenths of a foot (1/10 foot = 1.2 inches). The first point on the chart, June 27, 2017, was when the gauge was first installed. The USGS "normal" water surface elevation for big LCO is 1287 feet and is represented by the lower orange line.

The Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) is represented by the upper orange line. The OHWM establishes the boundary between public lakebed and private land, was established for big LCO in 1955 and is 1289.27 feet above mean sea level. The OHWM is "the point on the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of the water is so continuous as to leave a distinct mark either by erosion, destruction of terrestrial vegetation or other easily recognized characteristic."

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.