

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Background 2014

As you know COLA has been seeking impaired water status for Musky Bay since 2006. We're still at it because despite overwhelming scientific evidence documenting the severely degraded nature of Musky Bay and the effect it is having on the rest of the lake, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) continues to vacillate on whether or not to declare Musky Bay an impaired water (as of when this Loon Call went to print). It has been over a year now since WDNR seemed to be moving forward and at that time seemed to have made a decision to include Musky Bay on the 2012 State list of impaired waters. Many COLA members commented to WDNR during the public comment a year ago relaying your impressions of the impaired nature of Musky Bay and what it means to you.



But...between then and now WDNR has yet to make a final decision regarding Musky Bay and the 2012 impaired water list in general. We do not know why, in spite of documented, scientific facts WDNR hasn't moved to declare Musky Bay impaired. We have had a number of disagreements with WDNR regarding their approach and how they have made some of their decisions. For example, the DNR has stated that Musky Bay is a separate body of water from Lac Courte Oreilles and therefore held to different, much lower standards of water quality than the lake as a whole. How anyone who takes a boat to the west end of the lake and looks at the wide mouth of Musky Bay, 4/5 of a mile wide, and can conclude that it is a "separate body of water" is pretty hard to understand.

COLA will continue to press the state, while at the same time examine other options including legal and appealing directly to the federal government to secure the listing of Musky Bay. Without impaired water status we lose one legal basis to eliminate the polluted discharges to Musky Bay and LCO and lose possibly millions of dollars of funds needed to help restore the Bay and its habitat. The COLA Board will update the membership at the Annual Meeting with anything that changes between now and the end of June.

As for the TMDL study.....COLA is charging ahead with implementing the second year of the study. This summer COLA contractors, volunteers and the LCO Conservation Department will again be collecting weekly water samples for chemical analysis, measuring dissolved oxygen levels and water clarity and measuring the flow rates at the three stream inlets and the outlet of LCO. COLA volunteers will also be collecting water samples from public road right-of-way locations at the major cranberry bog discharge points into the lake. In your travels out on the lake this summer.... if you see folks in a boat that look like they're working....give em a wide berth or better yet slow way down ...and holler a big "Thank You".

Later this summer LimnoTech Inc., COLA's prime contractor, using all the data collected over two summers will begin the task of computer modeling different scenarios that will pinpoint the sources of phosphorus that will need to be reduced in order to protect and preserve the LCO lakes. The final report and reduction allocation are expected by March or April of next year.