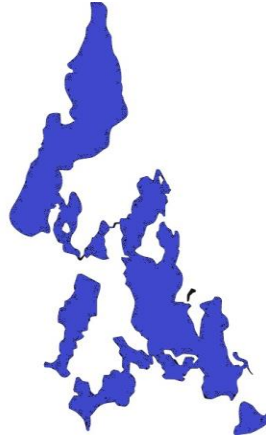


The Chain Letter

of the

**WABANA
CHAIN OF
LAKES
ASSOCIATION**



**February
2020**

Volume 23, Issue 1

Dedicated to the care and preservation of our lakes, for the enjoyment and safety of all.

WCOLA OFFICERS

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STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Tom Klatt (Social)

Doug Griffin (Government Liaison)

Mark Conover (Environmental)

Jean Melin (Communications)

James Olijnek (Past President & Historical Committee)

Roger Linder (Historical Committee)

Follow us on the [Wabana Chain of Lakes Facebook](#) page

Visit our web site www.wcola.org.

President's Corner February 2020



Well it's 2020, the start of a new decade. WCOLA finished 2019 in fine fiscal health with 153 household memberships.

For you seasonal members, we are well into the winter season. Temperatures have been mild, however, we are running out of places to pile snow. With heavy snow cover, wells and septic systems should be safe from freezing this winter.

Our focus in 2020 on water quality will be a high priority. Prevention of AIS infestation in our lakes and streams remains of utmost importance. This spring we will be collecting water samples to be sent to a certified laboratory. We have a good deal of historic data, which will give us a baseline to evaluate any changes in our lakes.

Enjoy the rest of the winter season. Looking forward to seeing all of you at the Kickoff Social on June 13th.

Louie

Calendar of Events

2020

- May Water sampling begins - date TBD
- May 6 - Road Clean-up * - meet at Township Hall 9:00 am
- June 13 - Kick-off Social * - Bluewater Campfire camp
- June 20 - Downing's Summer Solstice Party
- July 4 - Boat Parade
- July 18 - Annual Picnic * - Township Pavilion
- August 15 - Annual Meeting and Program * - Township Hall
- September 23 - Road Clean-up * - meet at Township Hall 9:00 am

* = WCOLA Sponsored Event





**Wabana Chain of Lakes Treasurer's Report
January 31, 2020**

Balance – January 1, 2020	\$ 7,995.04
Receipts:	
Dues	\$ 2,010.00
Contributions	\$ 665.00
Contribution	\$ 30.00
In memory of Sherry Miner	
Total Receipts	\$ 2,705.00
Disbursements:	
Minnesota Secretary of State	\$ 35.00
Notice of Change form	
Postmaster	\$ 110.00
200 stamps for January letter	
Jean Melin	\$ 10.47
Envelopes for January letter	
Treasure Bay Printing	\$ 42.50
Printing of January letter	
Itasca Waters	\$ 100.00
2020 Membership	
Itasca SWCD	\$ 2,000.00
AIS Boat Inspections	
Total Disbursements	\$ 2,297.97
Checkbook Balance-January 31, 2020	\$ 8,402.07
Savings Account – Water Testing Balance	\$ 6,565.08
Interest	\$ 1.66
Balance	\$ 6,566.74
Savings Account – AIS Fund Balance	\$ 7,182.83
Interest	\$ 1.81
Balance	\$ 7,184.64

Total Paid Households: 72

Wabana Public Boat landings

Below is the email sent out to all WCOLA members in January 2020 concerning management of the two Lake Wabana boat landings.

The inputs we have received are greatly appreciated. If you still want to provide your input, please do. Email your response to Mark Conover, Environmental Chair at: markellenconover@gmail.com.

A Message from WCOLA Board or Directors

It is interesting to peruse old minutes of WCOLA meetings of both the general membership and the board of directors. Inevitably, a set of goals, objectives, and priorities are laid out, along with a plan of action. Some of the goals change from year to year. A few never seem to change. One that appears virtually every year is “maintain the quality of our water”.

The task of trying to control the quality of our lake water is more complex compared to 25 years ago. We continue to attempt to limit runoff from stormwater, septic leakage, and fertilizers. And we try to prevent degradation of forest, shoreland, and littoral ecosystems. But today we also pay attention to the presence of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

With the realization that a lake’s ecosystem will be dramatically changed by the presence of AIS, our goal is to keep our lakes free of them. Current research indicates that 99.9% of AIS transmittal is from stuff moved from lake to lake. Boat lifts, docks, boats, and trailers are the culprits.

As of this writing, the Wabana chain of lakes has yet to be declared “infested”. Credit must be given to boat owners who have conscientiously cleaned and dried their rigs. We also credit our dedicated team of inspectors who inspect *and* educate at our public boat landings.

More can be done. In recent years, the two public landings on Wabana have been staffed with inspectors from mid-May to mid-October. In 2018, the northwest landing averaged 30 inspector hours per week; the southeast landing averaged 37. Therefore *many* trailered watercraft launch at our public landings without being inspected. And with the ongoing shortage of trained AIS inspectors, the prospects for a significant increase in coverage are poor.

In order to ramp up the percentage of trailered watercraft that receive inspections, the board of directors is proposing a modification of usage of one of the two public boat landings on Wabana Lake during the open water season. The change would involve limiting launch and removal at one landing to canoes and kayaks only. The remaining boat landing would continue to function as usual. This variation would allow for the allocation of all available inspectors to a single boat landing. Our goal is to double the number of hours that AIS inspectors are on site, thereby greatly improving the chances of keeping AIS out of our chain of lakes.

The WCOLA Board welcomes your questions and comments about this proposed boat landing management on Wabana Lake.



Wabana Township Ordinance 101 Update

The Township shoreland overlay ordinance (Ord. 101) was revised with the Township's legal counsel's help to address variances, changed the side setback to 15 feet to match Itasca County's requirements, and eliminated the cell tower requirement. This revision was effective on or after the first day of publication in June 2019.

The Township authorized the formation of a Citizen Advisory Committee to examine issues related to the ordinance. The Advisory Committee consists of a great group of seven volunteers: Deb Kee, Wayne Speedling, Bob Moore, Gary Oja (Secretary), Jim Corrigan, Jim Olijnek, Steve Melin (Chairperson), and Steve Bjerke (Township Supervisor). The committee started out meeting a couple times a month, but now meets weekly, and has defined its goals as:

- Review and assess Wabana Township Ordinance 101 and make recommendations to the Wabana Township Board in regard to that assessment.
- Develop shore land overlay rules and regulations that would best work with the mission of protecting the water quality both from a recreational and economic standpoint for all Wabana Township lakes.
- To develop and strengthen Wabana Township's working relationship with the Itasca County Board of Commissioners, Environmental Services Department, DNR, and Soil and Water organizations.
- To formalize the relationship with the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association (WCOLA).
- Develop a long-term comprehensive Land Use Plan. The plan would address and identify a multitude of local zoning concerns within the township moving forward.

The committee agrees that we want to protect the shoreland overlay areas in Wabana Township from back-lot development, campgrounds, RV-parks, and planned unit developments (PUDs).

Through various meetings and research, it became apparent that our first priority is to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the township. The plan provides Itasca County with a vision and information for what the township wants. Harris Township, south of Grand Rapids, has one and has talked to the committee on its benefits with the County.

A Comprehensive Plan is a tool and a reference that addresses many items throughout the Township:

- it would be a guide for discussions and investments and assist the township, both now and in the future to make decisions that affect the township,
- address how we want to develop & maintain the land within the township,
- discuss how we want to invest funds into community facilities,
- provide a guide to local community resources & services,
- discuss coordination with other public and private entities,
- map out the township and what its land uses are (residential, farm, public lands, etc.),
- provide population demographics,
- provide a history & township government background,
- list ideas for opportunities (recreation, infrastructure, community events) for the area,
- it is required for any grant applications the township may make.

Development of a Comprehensive Plan will include facilitator led community meetings with township citizens to get their inputs for what they would like to see addressed in the plan. Community meetings are being planned for late-Spring 2020.

The goal of the committee is to keep the plan's development costs minimal through volunteer efforts, research opportunities for grants, in-kind services, and other low cost support.

WCOLA will partner with Wabana Township and the Advisory Committee and asks that if any WCOLA members have time to volunteer with skills to support this effort (i.e. document prep, grant writing, printing, professional services, working with GIS maps, historical information, etc.) please contact Steve Melin (steven.melin@juno.com).



New Wabana Chain of Lakes Maps

WCOLA will be updating the Wabana Lake Chain maps. The current set of maps were published in 2014 and many changes have since occurred. The maps encompass Wabana, Bluewater, Trout, and Little Trout lakes and consist of a three map set that are 11" x 17" each. The maps indicate the names of your neighbors on the lakes, parcel boundaries, public boat accesses, public & private roads, and indicate other parcel "owners" (Chippewa National Forest, State of Minnesota, Itasca County). An added feature this time will be lake depth contours.

The maps will be provided for free to new members of WCOLA. Current members may purchase the set of three maps for \$15.00. The maps are produced on heavy grade paper with a color finish. If you would want to get your maps laminated on your own, Rapids Printing will laminate for \$2.00 per page (\$6.00 per set). If there is enough demand for lamination, WCOLA will have a quantity laminated with the cost for a laminated set then being \$21.00.

If you are interested, in either a paper copy of the maps or a laminated version, please contact wcolacommunicate@paulbunyan.net with your order request by April 1, 2020.

Water Quality Measurements Starting in May 2020

As identified in the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association Water Quality Plan (<https://wcola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Wabana-Chain-of-Lakes-Association2.pdf>), chemical sampling will be done starting this May on the lakes. Testing was last done in 2015 – 2016 by the MPCA.

Sampling protocol will be based upon MPCA guidelines for timing, water depth, sample handling, etc. WCOLA volunteers will be trained in the collection of the samples. They will sample the same 5 sites as previous MPCA sample sites and at least 2 additional sites; one on Little Wabana and one on Little Trout. The use of our volunteers for sampling will greatly reduce the overall costs of the testing. We will sample two years in a row (2020 and 2021), sample five times from ice out through September, use a certified lab for analysis, and ensure data is entered into the MPCA data base. While the MPCA samples for a series of chemicals, the most critical for lake quality have been judged to be Chlorophyll-a and total Phosphorus which is what WCOLA will sample for. Adjustments would be made, if warranted, to the sampling plan based upon data analysis including the MPCA data.

The data collected from these tests will be combined from previous years' readings and samplings. All the extensive data taken on the lakes has been assembled and delivered to RMB Labs to format for inclusion into the MPCA data base. The results will be compared to other similar lakes in the MPCA data base.



Shoreline Management

Three of the most significant contributors to reduction in water quality are: 1) watershed land use, 2) on-site waste disposal (septic systems), and 3) shoreland management. All three of these are critical because good water quality is the essential underpinning for things we all care about—a good diverse fish population, good water clarity for swimming, and aesthetic enjoyment.

For septic system improvements, WCOLA in conjunction with Wabana Township undertook a major effort 15+ years ago. When this was completed, there was a significant increase in water clarity in the years that followed. Itasca County is now offering a program for septic upgrades in 2020. This initiative will be reported in more detail in the May 2020 WCOLA newsletter.

Good shoreland management is also a practice that lakeshore owners can embrace. Shoreline vegetation can provide screening of structures from the lake, but more importantly it reduces run-off of chemicals & nutrients that can reduce water quality. To assist one in shoreline management, Itasca Waters has started a Shoreline Advisory program, described below:

Itasca Waters Shoreland Advisor Program began several years ago when the organization sent a survey out to lakeshore property owners to learn about what concerns they had regarding the quality of their lakes as well as interest they might have in learning about restoring and preserving shore land. It was from this survey that Itasca Waters learned that lakeshore owners wanted information about their property from ordinary citizens.

After considering the results of the survey, Itasca Waters decided to pioneer and pilot the Shoreland Advisors program. The goal of this program would be to have a neighbor-to-neighbor focus on restoring and preserving shore land using helpful practices that can positively impact lake water quality.

With assistance from the University of Minnesota Extension, the advisors completed an educational workshop and an onsite training session involving a series of local lakeshore properties in various states of quality. Advisors make personal onsite visits with lakeshore owners who want information about managing shore land property in an ecologically friendly way that helps water quality. These visits can be scheduled by visiting Itasca Waters' webpage at www.itascawaters.org/shoreland-advisors, or by contacting Itasca Waters Coordinator, Zack Simpson, at (218) 256-5998 or zacksimp@itascawaters.org.

They are always looking for additional volunteers. If you think you might be interested in becoming a shore land advisor, please feel free to contact Itasca Waters. They would love to hear from you!

Think root systems and a more biodiverse, healthy watershed.

Note: Shoreland Alterations of existing vegetation and topography changes are regulated by Itasca County and require a permit. This is to minimize and prevent erosion into public waters, fix nutrients, preserve shoreland aesthetics, preserve historic values (including historic sites and archaeological sites), prevent bank slumping and protect fish and wildlife habitat. Please visit Itasca County's website (<https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/567/Shoreland-Alterations>), to help determine if a permit is required. The Itasca Waters Shoreland Advisor will also inform you of this requirement during their visit.



Wabana Township – turns 100 years old in 2021

Wabana Township will be 100 years old in 2021. The historical committee is starting preliminary thinking about what to do for a celebration for the 100-year anniversary . If you have any ideas, historical photos, written materials, stories, or want to volunteer to help with this effort please contact Roger Linder, Historical Chairman at rlinder@msn.com. Below are the words that appeared in the May 11, 1921 Grand Rapids Herald Review announcing the township's formation:

WABANA TOWNSHIP ELECTS OFFICERS

Newly Created Unit Is Now Ready for Active Business

The election for the newly created town of Wabana north of Grand Rapids was held last Saturday. At that time J. C. Hamblin, H. C., Heaton and Herman Piper were elected supervisors, T. E. Dudley, town clerk and justice of the peace, Frank Wakeman, treasurer, K. T. Kells, constable, and Mrs. H. C. Heaton, township superintendent of schools.

The new town of Wabana was formerly part of Balsam township. Division of the funds and indebtedness were made and the supervisors for the new town announce that on account of a \$4,000 debt, that economy will be necessary. However, as soon as possible, considerable road work will be done.

The meeting of supervisors was interrupted by the forest and brush fires which came into Wabana township on Saturday and officers and voters spent much of the afternoon in turning back flames which threatened homes in that section. The township plans to take advantage of laws which permit it to erect a telephone line for fire protection in the near future.

Grand Rapids Herald Review

11 May, 1921

Last Page Photo Contest



We had a winner! Ron Roalstad correctly identified the Oct. 2019 photo as Zims Lane. Thank you for all your entries. For the correct guess, Ron won \$10.00 in Grand Rapids Chamber bucks. His prize was double what had been announced because the judge learned later that \$10 was the smallest denomination available. For the above photo, which is along a trail, provide details (lake, trail, location, direction) where the photo was taken. Mail your entry, with your address, to: steven.melin@juno.com . Earliest correct entry will receive \$10.00 in Grand Rapids Chamber Bucks. Winner to be identified in the next newsletter.

Fine Print Rules: Winners must be a WCOLA member. WCOLA Board members / spouses not eligible. Decision of the judge is final.

Good Luck piling the Snow up, see you in the Spring.

THE CHAIN LETTER OF THE
WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION
Jean Koewler, Treasurer
32040 Wakeman Bay Trail
Grand Rapids, MN 55744