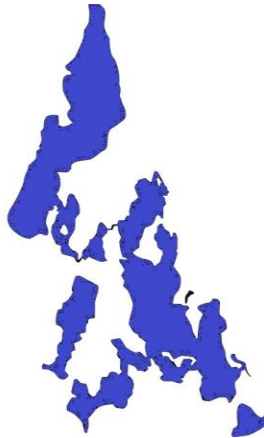


# The Chain Letter

of the

**WABANA  
CHAIN OF  
LAKES  
ASSOCIATION**



**February 2021**

Volume 24, Issue 1

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

## WCOLA OFFICERS

**President: Louis Gueltzow**  
999-9217 [lgueltzow@gmail.com](mailto:lgueltzow@gmail.com)

**Vice President: Steven Melin**  
[steven.melin@juno.com](mailto:steven.melin@juno.com) (email only)

**Treasurer: Jean Koewler**  
326-4302 [djkoewler@paulbunyan.net](mailto:djkoewler@paulbunyan.net)

**Secretary: Susan Lick**  
326-6837 [susanlick8183@gmail.com](mailto:susanlick8183@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Editors: Jean & Steve Melin**

## STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Open (Social)**

**Open (Government Liaison)**

**Mark Conover (Environmental)**

**Jean Melin (Communications)**

**Roger Linder (Historical Committee)**

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

Visit our web site [www.wcola.org](http://www.wcola.org).

# President's Corner February 2021



Good bye to 2020. I don't think anyone will have many fond memories of this past year. The pandemic has altered all of our lives. For full-time residents it meant a reduction of the number of visitors last summer. Seasonal residents it was a chance to get away to the lake and escape the city. If you were lucky enough to work remotely it was a nice change of pace.

The WCOLA board members continued to meet this past summer by zoom. Keeping watch on the quality of our natural resources remains our focus. A large group of volunteers took water samples monthly. They transported them to RMB laboratory in Hibbing for analysis. Thanks to all the volunteers that participated which represented a large cost saving for the association.

A group of WCOLA members also participated in developing a comprehensive plan for the future development of Wabana Township. The project is complete and is available on the Township's website. The plan is very detailed and took a great deal of manhours to complete. A big thank you goes out to the committee for their time and dedication to this important project.

Let's hope the roll out of the vaccine works to control the virus, so we can get back to socializing with each other this summer.

Louie Gueltzow

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## Calendar of Events

### 2021 Projected Calendar

- May 5 - Roadside Spring Clean-up
- June 12 - Kick-off Social
- June 19 - Downing's Summer Solstice Event on a Saturday
- July 4 - Boat Parade
- July 31 - Wabana Township 100-year Anniversary
- Aug. 14 - Annual WCOLA Meeting
- Sept. 22 - Roadside Fall Clean-up

**Covid-19 Impact** At this time of this newsletter's publication, we are planning our social activities and keeping our fingers crossed that we will be able to hold our social events. Please watch your emails from Jean Koewler to let you know each event's status one-way or the other as the dates approach.

# Wabana Chain of Lakes Treasurer's Report

January 31, 2021

**Balance – January 1, 2021** **\$ 31,157.68**

**Receipts:**

Dues \$ 4,155.00  
Contributions \$ 530.00  
Decontamination Unit Fundraiser \$ 2,230.00

**Total Receipts** **\$ 6,915.00**

**Disbursements:**

untapped LLC \$ 500.00  
    Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan  
Jim Olijnek \$ 62.00  
    Printing at Treasure Bay – 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Itasca Waters \$ 100.00  
    2021 Membership  
Itasca SWCD \$ 200.00  
    2021 AIS Summit Sponsorship

**Total Expenses** **\$ 862.00**

**Checkbook Balance-January 31, 2021** **\$ 37,210.68**

**Savings Account – Water Testing** **\$ 4,609.19**

Interest \$ .38

**Savings Account – Water Testing Balance** **\$ 4,609.57**

**Savings Account AIS Fund** **\$ 9,827.55**

Interest \$ .74

**Savings Account AIS Fund Balance** **\$ 9,828.29**

**Decontamination Unit Fundraiser Total** **\$ 24,765.00**

Total included in Checkbook Balance

**Total Paid Households: 118**



## **Seeking Wabana Chain of Lakes Board of Director members**

Yes, please consider being part of the organization that places our natural resources at the top of the list. WCOLA is a 501C3 non-profit organization and collaborates as advisors and partners with Wabana Township & Itasca County.

The board of directors is composed of willing organization members who will help advise the vision, goals, direction and actions of what we do. There are monthly meetings May through October and as called by the president.

Committees are formed to support the mission of the lake association and will focus on managing the business aspects of the association, promote a healthy environment, interface with other lake associations and government agencies, record items of historical interest, hold social events to promote a sense of community, and communicate events, actions, and other items of interest with the membership and the wider community.

We are currently seeking Board Members for the Social and Government Liaison positions. We have held our meetings via Zoom, so they can be attended remotely.

More information can be found at [wcola.org](http://wcola.org) or contacting a member of the current board of directors via phone or email. Thank you.



## **Wabana Township 100-Year Anniversary Celebration July 31, 2021**

- Did you know that Wabana Township was previously part of Balsam Township?
- Do you know the name of the steamboat that was used on Wabana Lake?

Please come to the 100-year Anniversary Celebration, have fun, and learn about the history of Wabana Township!

Let the party begin on **Saturday July 31, 2021** at the Wabana Town Hall.

Learn about the history of Wabana Township with informative displays and artifacts

There will be free hot dogs, chips, lemonade and ice cream to enjoy!

Get your foursome organized for the bean bag toss tournament with a cash prize for the winning team!

Come join us and see what additional fun games there will be to play!

The Wabana Township 100-year anniversary committee is working hard to develop a historical display of people, places and events of life in Wabana Township. We need your help. If you have any photographs, stories, memorabilia or artifacts about the township that you would like to share with the community for the historical display on the day of the celebration (items will be returned), please submit by March 31, 2021 to:

**Wabana 100-year Anniversary Historical Committee**  
**c/o Carol Speedling**  
**35306 N Star Ln**  
**Grand Rapids, Mn 55744**

Email: [cjspeedling@yahoo.com](mailto:cjspeedling@yahoo.com)

**Itasca Area AIS Summit** – WCOLA is a sponsor of this annual event. The purpose of the Summit is to raise AIS awareness, partner with resorts, lake service providers, bait shops, area fishing guides, recruit FiveStar Initiative participants, and discuss AIS best practices. This year the Itasca AIS Program has decided to focus on both Resorts and Lake Service Providers. The idea is to be specific regarding what resorts and lake service providers can do to help prevent the spread of AIS within Itasca County. This year's Summit will be held from 9-10:00 am, Wed. Mar 24 online via Zoom. Zoom information will be posted on the WCOLA Facebook page when it is received.

## **AIS Decontamination Unit**

The fund-raising for the AIS Decontamination Station continues, to date we have raised over \$24,000 towards our goal for purchasing, operating, and staffing the unit. WCOLA is undertaking this effort in collaboration with Wabana Township and Itasca County Soil & Water AIS department.

The AIS decontamination unit will be housed at the township hall, which is centrally located between both Wabana landings, and could be used by anyone requesting or needing the service before or after visiting another body of water either in the Township or elsewhere.

An AIS Decontamination Station is another tool in preventing AIS from entering the Wabana township lakes and surrounding area lakes by allowing both lakeshore owners and the public to decontaminate a boat that is entering the lakes in the township. With the funds raised, we hope to purchase a unit, help fund assistance to staff the location, and also have WCOLA and the township actively requesting the public by newspaper or radio to stop by the unit to increase its usage.

Currently our committee is researching various options on available equipment, with a goal of full implementation by spring ice-out. We are also looking for volunteers and part-time workers to staff the unit during the week, training for operating the unit will be provided. If you are interested in being an operator, please contact Mark Conover.

Please consider a donation to WCOLA, which is a registered 501c3 non-profit organization. If your employer offers matching funds, please consider this funding source too. Make checks payable to WCOLA and write AIS Decon. Unit on the memo line, and mail to:

Jean Koewler, WCOLA Treasurer  
32040 Wakeman Bay Road  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744





# Light Pollution

## Please, not here! Our Disappearing night sky

Communication from Jeanne Burke – WCOLA member, reprinted with request and permission.

Melancholic personality types can be an odd lot. They are usually driven by some passion and appear to the phlegmatic type as overly emotional and involved. Let me introduce myself, Jeanne Burke, as the melancholic partner in my marriage to my phlegmatic husband, Dan.

What is my passion you ask? Having discovered this area three years ago, I am anxious to be a good steward to the small parcel of land we own and the lake it borders, Lake Wabana. However, my greatest passion is to preserve our night sky.

Several years ago, I joined a crusade across America to save the night sky. I read an article in the newspaper written by Dan Green, an amateur astronomer from the east coast, who became alarmed at America's rapidly advancing light pollution. To counter this advance, he founded The New England Light Pollution Advisory Group. I agreed with Dan Green and saved his article for reference.

I probably would have remained an armchair crusader if something had not happened soon afterward that made me actively join his crusade. The city planners of Chanhassen, where I live, informed me about their plans for my neighborhood. The city was going to put in new streetlights, the very ones Dan Green had warned cause light trespass, glare and pollute the night sky by radiating upwards and out rather than down.

With Dan Green's newspaper article and recommendations from the internet [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org) and [www.nelpag.org](http://www.nelpag.org), I was not only able to stop the city from replacing our neighborhood streetlights, but I was able to direct the city planners to establish a light ordinance for Chanhassen.

I wish I could tell you it was a great victory but the ordinance came too late. Chanhassen had already installed numerous offending streetlights, towering athletic field lights, glaring advertising lights, and approved even more polluting lights on its newer buildings. It's a sorry sight! Don't bother to look up at the stars because they are barely visible. You will never be able to show the Milky Way to your children or grandchildren from Chanhassen.

Here, up North, however, the night sky still reflects the majestic masterpiece of God's creation. The stars are so bright against the dark sky, and the Milky Way is clearly seen. How can we be good stewards of this night sky?

First, evaluate your property in terms of light pollution. Keep outside lights, if any, to a minimum. If you desire an outside light, install a fixture where the light is recessed and deflects light downward. These same guidelines also apply to lights installed on a house, garage or pole barn. If you presently have lights that pollute, make changes or consider infrequent use of these lights.

Somehow, we have learned to associate darkness with crime. You may be surprised to learn that studies have shown that most burglaries occur not under the cover of darkness, but during the day when people are away at work.

Anyone can help keep the night dark. You don't need to be an astronomer or even like stargazing. You can just be nice, like my husband Dan, and want to pass on to future generations something rapidly disappearing, the dark night sky.

Dan, knowing my passion for darkness, made some welcome changes on our property. He dug out the tall light pole near our dock, disconnected the floodlight on our pole barn, and put environmentally friendly fixtures on the house. Small changes can make great improvements in the degree of darkness.

As association members, I am hoping we can support one another on this environmental concern. I remember what one Chanhassen planner said to me, "Honestly Jeanne, I never thought about light pollution, but you are absolutely right. As city planners, we've never asked questions about lighting."

I am aware of the light pollution that is rapidly encroaching on Grand Rapids. In the past three years, I have notice Grand Rapids emitting more and more light pollution. If we do not take steps to protect our darkness, the scourge of light pollution will overtake us.

The Dark Sky Association is always looking for new members. Their goal is to educate the public and guide communities in implementing correct lighting.

Last year, while camping on Burntside Lake, which is north of Ely, I saw the night sky polluted with artificial lights. Above the horizon, I could see the pink haze of light pollution from Ely and higher in the sky a searchlight from a distant casino arced every tenth second.

My sense of wonder gave way to agitation as the timed searchlight intruded on what would have been a still peaceful panorama. I felt a sense of loss for something that was once so magnificent, our window to the universe of a billion trillion stars.

Sincerely,  
Jeanne Burke

**Editor's note:** Listed below are two organizations in Minnesota that are working hard to preserve the night sky. Please visit their websites also!

[www.starryskiesls.org](http://www.starryskiesls.org) Starry Skies Lake Superior

[www.starryskiesotc.org](http://www.starryskiesotc.org) Otter Tail County, Minnesota

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) is now an INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY SANCTUARY. The BWCAW was awarded this distinction in 2020 by the International Dark-sky Association (IDA).

**Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan is complete**



The Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan has been approved by the Township Board at the January 6, 2021 meeting, can be found at the Wabana Township website (<http://wabanatownship.com/>) or the direct link (<https://wabanatownship.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Wabana-Comp-Plan-final.pdf>).

The plan is the result of an 18-month effort by the volunteer Advisory Committee (Deb Kee, Jim Olijnek, Gary Oja, Bob Moore, Wayne Speedling, Steve Melin, and Steve Bjerke) and was developed with Wabana Township citizen inputs.

The plan's intent is ***to preserve and improve the character and quality of life in the Township***. To achieve the intent, Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan has identified 4 goals and 13 strategies with action plans.

The volunteer Township Planning Commission is tasked with initiating and monitoring the strategies and action plan activities, and will be soliciting your help in achieving our goals. Please consider helping with your time & talents with Volunteer requests that will be published in future editions of this newsletter, the Warbler, and postings on the Township's website, or you may contact Steve Melin via email if you are interested.

Many of the meetings for these efforts will be held via Zoom, so you do not have to be in-person to be part of the group.

### **Editor's Corner:**

As we put together and write the three WCOLA newsletters each year, we are always looking for photos, articles, and ideas of what you would like to see included. Photos of our picturesque area are always welcome, the higher the resolution, the better. Articles you would like included will be considered if we have room (we are limited to 5 pages total for mailing size), and we do reserve the right to edit for clarity and size. Your inputs will help us deliver a good newsletter for all the membership. You may contact us using my email listed on the front page -- Thank you, enjoy the rest of your winter, and here's looking to next summer. Jean & Steve Melin, Newsletter Editors



**THE CHAIN LETTER OF THE  
WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION**

Jean Koewler, Treasurer  
32040 Wakeman Bay Trail  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744