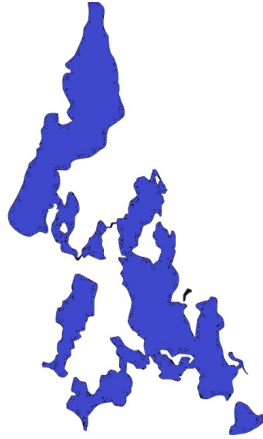


# The Chain Letter

of the

**WABANA  
CHAIN OF  
LAKES  
ASSOCIATION**



**Fall  
2023**

**Volume 26, Issue 3**

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

## WCOLA OFFICERS

**President: Steven Melin**

[steven.melin@juno.com](mailto:steven.melin@juno.com)

(email only)

**Vice President: Mark Conover**

[markellenconover@gmail.com](mailto:markellenconover@gmail.com)

(email only)

**Treasurer: Jean Koewler**

326-4302

[djkoewler@paulbunyan.net](mailto:djkoewler@paulbunyan.net)

**Secretary: Chris Friedlieb**

[chrisfriedlieb@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisfriedlieb@yahoo.com)

(e-mail only)

## STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Tom Horton (Social)**

**Carl Nordgren (Government Liaison)**

**Louis Gueltzow (Firewise and  
Roadside Clean-up)**

**Lori Moore (Communications)**

**Carol Speedling (Historical Committee)**

**Jack Hartung (Secchi Disk Coordinator)**

**Mark Conover (Environmental)**

**Susan Lick (Shoreland Advisor)**

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

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

Follow current weather on Wabana Lake [wabanalake.org](http://wabanalake.org)

# President's Reveries For

## Fall 2023

October is the time for boats and docks to get pulled out (if not already), the leaves have started falling, and we are all getting ready for winter. WCOLA is also shutting down for the winter with this newsletter and our last monthly board meeting for 2023. This last newsletter for the year has photos of all the member activities in and around the lakes. It is great to see all the good times that were had.

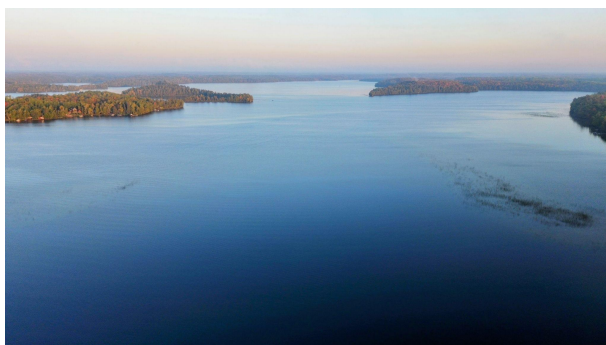
There is a lot going on regarding aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention. The WCOLA sponsored boat wash that has been located at Wabana Township Hall is being moved to the NW boat landing for next year. The DNR will be expanding the parking area at the landing to accommodate the boat wash and add space for extra parking.

WCOLA needs your help! My term as president ended at the annual meeting back in August. Though there were emails sent out and articles in the newsletter asking if anyone was interested in the position of president, nobody has volunteered. I will finish this calendar year as president, but WCOLA needs an individual to assume the position of president starting January 2024.

Being president of this organization has been an honor. We have a great group of board and committee members who dedicate their time, skills, and ideas to make WCOLA happen. All the events / goings-on that are sponsored by WCOLA have someone that organizes and leads them. If you need an answer, one of them will help you out. Financially WCOLA is in a solid position. We budget for AIS inspections, picnics, newsletters, and other activities. Our membership dues cover all of that. The position of president only takes a few hours a month during the summer to set-up and run the monthly meetings (May – October) and answer a few emails in the winter. We have a good emergency fund savings account set aside if an aquatic invasive species event should occur and funds for future water testing. A lake association is the first line of defense for such an AIS event. Please consider volunteering for president to keep WCOLA a great association.

Have a great fall and winter, and please consider being on the WCOLA Board next year, too.

*Steve*



### **2023 Calendar of Events:**

- Nov 4th Deer Hunter's Supper - 5-7:30
- December 2nd Craft Fair at Wabana Hall (snow date Dec 9th)

### **2024 Projected Calendar of Events:**

- Spring Roadside clean-up- Wednesday, May 15h
- Spring gathering Girl Scout Camp on Bluewater- Saturday, June 8th
- Solstice Celebration- Friday, June 21st
- July 4th Boat Parade- Thursday, July 4th- 1 p.m.
- Annual WCOLA Picnic- Saturday, August 10th- 4-7 p.m. Wabana Town Hall Pavillion
- Annual WCOLA Meeting- Saturday, Aug 17th- 9 a.m. Wabana Town Hall
- Fall Roadside clean-up- Wednesday, September 18th

# Wabana Chain of Lakes Treasurer's Report

## September 30, 2023

**Balance – September 1, 2023** **\$ 19,011.04**

### Receipts

Dues	\$ 35.00
Playing Cards	\$ 30.00
Donation – AIS Inspections	\$ 10.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$ 75.00</b>

### Disbursements:

**Total Expenses** **\$ 000.00**

**Checkbook Balance – September 30, 2023** **\$ 19,086.04**

**Savings Account – Water Testing- Balance** **\$ 1,611.32**

**Savings Account – AIS Emergency Fund – Balance** **\$ 13,763.96**

**Decontamination Unit - Total** **\$ 10,856.48**

Total included in Checkbook Balance

**AIS Inspectors Fundraiser** **\$ 1,831.69**

Playing Cards and Donation \$ 40.00

**AIS Inspectors Fundraiser - Total** **\$ 1,871.69**

Total included in Checkbook Balance

**Total Paid Households: 151**



## Fall Roadside clean-up

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Wabana Township Roadside clean-up on September 20th.

Louie and Janeen Gueltzow, Ken Zimmer, Barb Zimmer, Dennis Koewler, Gary and Kim Oja, Steve Melin, Ellen Conover, Christal Rowe, Kirk Carlson, Mark Conover

We will be doing the Spring clean-up on Wednesday, May 10th. Mark your calendar. We would love to see new faces!



### January 2024 Membership letters sent out

Be watching your mail in January as 2024 membership letters will be sent out. Talk to your neighbors and see if we can get our membership total to increase. (currently 150 memberships)



## We Want you!

We are in need of volunteers to take the President and Vice President positions of the WCOLA Board. If interested or wanting more info, please contact a board member listed on the front page.



### WCOLA AIS INSPECTION SEASON ENDING STATISTICS:

- \* 1,437 Inspector man hours. All CAP Grant hours were met.
- 600 baseline hours (300 per landing) + 600 CAP grant hours = 1,200 hours.
- \* 639.5 Wabana SE
  - \* 797.5 Wabana NW
  - \* 2,348 inspections = 1.63 inspections per hour. This ranks the Wabana NW landing 8th, and Wabana SE 10th busiest landings out of 24 landings where we were stationed. Wabana SE had 1,011 inspections and Wabana NW had 1,337 inspections.
  - \* 2,348 inspections
  - \* 1,400 incoming inspections.
  - \* 100 incoming violations intercepted. All were corrected prior to launch.
  - \* 18 had come from an infested lake.
  - \* 1 last lake less than 24 hrs.
  - \* Swan Lake: Curly-leaf pondweed
  - \* 2 last lake 1-4 days.
  - \* Spider: Flowering rush
  - \* Upper Red Lake: zebra mussel, starry stonewort
  - \* 15 last lake 5 or more days.
  - \* 6 were plants.
  - \* 1 had come from an infested lake less than 24 hours ago.
  - \* Upper Red Lake: zebra mussel, starry stonewort



## **Firewise Update for 2024:**

Firewise Info from John Moore Itasca Co.

I spoke with Itasca County Land Commissioner Kory Cease and Assistant County Land Commissioner Michael Gibbons about Firewise going into the future. What they advised me to do is reach out to all of our communities and say at this time, the Itasca County Firewise program cannot commit to any future pickups. What we have been told from the State is that Itasca County is in a moderate risk for fire danger. There are other counties in the State that are a high risk fire danger, and this year the grant money was distributed to them. To me that means that the Itasca County Firewise program has accomplished its goal over the last 15 years.

Therefore, I am telling you all to not start any piles for next year. Please pass this on to all of your community members. Between now and next spring, I will keep you posted on any information regarding the future of Itasca County Firewise.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. I take it as a compliment as the fruits of our labor over the last 15 years to make our communities Firewise safe. Through the education and our labor efforts we have created an opportunity for our County to continue to be Firewise safe without this program. With the knowledge that we have all gained from the Firewise program, we can continue to keep this county safe from wildland fires.

Hopefully in the future this program will continue. If it doesn't, the education we all gained from this will benefit us all in the future.

Louie Gueltzow

Wabana Township Coordinator



## **The Boat Wash at Wabana Station: An Update**

After a successful launch of the self-serve boat wash in 2020, and the AIS Decontamination Unit in 2021, some changes are in store for 2024.

The plan right now is to move the Decontamination Unit to the northwest public access on Wabana Lake. This will allow the existing AIS inspector at that landing to also conduct watercraft decontaminations. This arrangement would eliminate the need to employ an inspector at Wabana Station, providing a substantial cost savings.

Since this public access is also scheduled to undergo an expansion by the DNR, the timing of this move is perfect. We are expecting to see some initial work accomplished yet this fall, with a goal of completion by Memorial Day 2024. AIS Decontaminations could then be conducted at this location for the remainder of the open water season.

The self-serve boat wash at the Wabana Town Hall will remain open 24/7 next year, unchanged from 2023.

We will plan to provide another update in the spring newsletter.

Mark Conover

Environmental Committee



## Guest Letter

### Annual WCOLA Loon Survey 2023

In 1994, the Nongame Wildlife division of the MN DNR began surveying loon populations as part of the Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program (MLMP.) There are 600 Minnesota lakes surveyed each year across six key index areas. Lakes must be at least 10 acres in size and deep enough to overwinter fish.

This is a long-term project that is made possible by the assistance of hundreds of volunteers across the state. Within a period of 10 days each summer, volunteers visit their designated lake(s) one morning to conduct the survey. Almost 30 years of data has helped estimate that Minnesota has a population of roughly 12,000 loons—more than any of the lower 48 states!

Historically, WCOLA member Bill Berg surveyed both Trout and Little Trout lakes for many years. We took over the Wabana survey from DNR employee Sarah Verke in 2014, and in 2022 we added both Trout and Little Trout. Blue Water is also part of the survey area, so please give us all a shout if you are the volunteer who conducts the survey! There is also an additional count that has been done later in the summer by a different group of volunteers as part of the Loon Watcher program.



Here are the results of the 2023 survey for the three lakes we were assigned:

Lake	Adults	Juveniles
Wabana	21	2
Little Trout	2	0
Trout	22	0

We were able to relocate the twins in Wabana's Birch Bay multiple times, and it is always a joy to watch them grow up before migration.

The Nongame Wildlife Program is funded only through donations and does not receive any financial support from other sources (license plate sales, fishing/hunting licenses, etc.) The continuation of programs such as MLMP require both volunteer support and financial donations. You can donate directly via the MN DNR website, or you can "look for the loon" line item on your MN tax forms.

Each year the MLMP team issues an annual report discussing the health of our state's loon populations, and it can be found by visiting the MLMP section of the DNR's website. You can also reach out to me if you would like a copy of the report.

The loons are preparing to head south for winter, but we will again be waiting to count them next summer as they come home to nest.

Jess and Jon Gunderson

Wabana Lake

[jsgunderson@gmail.com](mailto:jsgunderson@gmail.com)

# At the Lake in 2023



*Margarittaville parties, fishing and flowers.....does it get any better than that?*



Fishing off the floating raft.  
(Grandpa Camp)



The Gang- Grandpa Camp.  
Loving Lake Wabana!

Grandpa camp 2023. Water quality presentations by the Itasca Lake Shore Educational Program.



*Ducks on the water*



Walleye on Wabana



Bluewater Joy!



Vivi and Hailey playing on the pontoon



*Bluewater Sunset*



Busy Beavers!

Thanks to Ken Zimmer for these 2023 loon counts

Wabana: 16 adults, 2 chicks

Big Trout: 32 adults 0 chicks

Doan: 2 adults, 1 chick

Little Trout 1 adult 0 chicks

Little Wabana: 4 adults, 2 chicks

Bluewater: 5 adults, 0 chicks



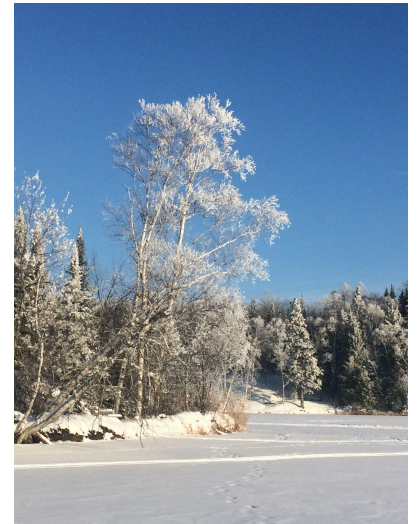
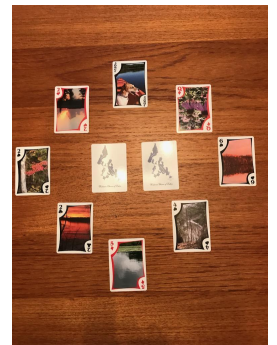
## 4th of July Boat Parade



### Continue to help support AIS Inspectors at WCOLA

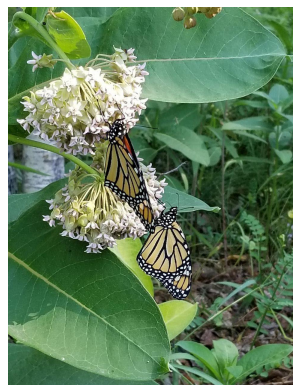
WCOLA Playing Cards are available for purchase at \$10 per deck or 3 for \$25. They make great stocking stuffers or gifts to your guests as they are leaving to remember their time on the Chain of Lakes.

The playing cards can be purchased immediately by picking them up from Jean Koewler or Steve Melin. Just send us an email ([djkoewler@paulbunyan.net](mailto:djkoewler@paulbunyan.net) or [steven.melin@juno.com](mailto:steven.melin@juno.com)) to set up a time to pick-up your purchase.



### Watch for a Winter on-line store offering WCOLA clothing and other misc items!

Proceeds from the WCOLA store will be used to support our AIS initiative.



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

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