

WCOLA Newsletter

Wabana Chain of Lakes Association



WCOLA Meetings:

July 14th @ 4pm

Aug. 16th @ 9am-

Annual Meeting

Sept. 8th @ 4pm

Oct. 13th @ 4pm

WCOLA Calendar:

July 4th-

Boat Parade

Meet in Wabana's Wakeman Bay at 1:45pm on July 4th to line up for the 2pm boat parade.

August 2nd-

WCOLA Picnic

Meet at 3pm @ the Wabana Town Hall. Bring a dish to share.

August 16th-

Annual Meeting

Meet at 9am @ the Town Hall. Speaker will talk prior to the meeting.

September 29th-

Roadside Cleanup

Volunteers needed! Meet at 10am @ the Town Hall.

Roadside Cleanup

Several WCOLA members helped clean up our roadsides on May 31st. We thank the Zimmers, Koewlers, Speedlings, Gowlings, Hutters, Hagens, Nelsons, Pernsteiners, Kirk Carlson & Chris Friedlieb for volunteering to keep our community looking great! We could use more help on **September 29th** when we head out to clean up our roadways again.



WCOLA Spring Social

There was a good turn out for the WCOLA Spring Social at Camp Bluewater on May 17th. Our guest speaker, John Latimer, spoke on everything from Fiddle Head Ferns to Loons. He's an interesting speaker and personalized his talk to include things that were happening in our community, where he used to deliver the mail.



WCOLA Gear is Here

WCOLA shirts were mailed on June 18th. This WCOLA Fundraiser brought in close to \$500 for WCOLA. We appreciate all who continue to support a great organization! If you have questions about your order, contact Tom Horton at tom.horton00@gmail.com

Membership:

If you'd like to be a WCOLA member dues are \$35 for an email newsletter, and \$45 for a printed copy. Send your payment to Jean Koewler, 32040 Wakeman Bay Trail, Grand Rapids, MN 55744

President's Message

by Scott Hutter

Greetings to all our WCOLA members!

We've been busy this spring with a couple of fun events. Our Spring Social on May 17th at Camp Bluewater was attended by almost 40 people. We were able to catch up with friends, while enjoying brats & hot dogs prepared by our very own Tom Horton. This year we invited John Latimer, our former rural mail carrier, and now phenologist and talk show host, to speak and share his experiences. He was both educational & entertaining.

We had 17 volunteers at our Roadside cleanup on Saturday, May 31st. We moved this event to a Saturday morning in hopes of allowing more working members of our community to attend. Our next Roadside Cleanup will be **Saturday, September 27th at 9 am.** We'd love to have more volunteers!

The AIS inspectors are busy at both of our landings checking boats & trailers for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Please remember **NOT** to park your truck and/or trailer along the side of North Wabana Forest Road (the dirt road heading to the South Landing off of County Road 49), as this could limit the access for emergency vehicles at our South Boat Landing. WCOLA partially funds the AIS certified inspectors at both the north & south boat landings 40 hours a week, Mondays through Fridays. All inspectors are Level 1 certified to look for Aquatic Invasive Species and do a great job.



AIS Inspector, Mark, keeping our lakes safe!

Our annual Loon count is scheduled for Tuesday, July 22nd. We will share the results in the next newsletter. Thanks in advance to all our respective loon counters.

Our annual **WCOLA picnic is on Saturday, August 2nd** at the Town hall, starting at 3 pm. And, our **Annual Meeting is August 16th**, starting at 9 am at the Town Hall. We will begin our meeting with a speaker discussing several important issues we are facing in our lake association.

Your WCOLA board has been discussing new & innovative ways to continue to grow our membership, which is very important to our lake association. As you know, the funding for the many things we support is primarily through membership. We charge \$35 annually to become a member, which is very reasonable given the many things we do. Besides educating & informing our members, WCOLA helps pay for boat washing stations, our AIS Inspectors at two locations, and work with several organizations to help us keep our lakes beautiful. If you have friends or family members who would like to join our efforts we have created a "**Family & Friends of WCOLA**" membership and accept donations from those who may use our lakes, but don't live on them. Think about your friends & family that have visited and enjoyed our beautiful lakes, whether it be boating, fishing, kayaking or just relaxing on your porch, maybe they'd like to join WCOLA and help our lakes. WCOLA is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit and all donations are tax deductible. Friends & Family of WCOLA members will receive a WCOLA Koozie with their new membership.

Finally, we are looking for more volunteers. Please consider becoming more involved in your lake association. Reach out to learn how you can be part of a great organization. If you have any thoughts, questions or concerns, you can reach out to me at Scottandmary1981@gmail.com

Thanks and have a safe and enjoyable summer!

NEW MINNESOTA BOATING REGULATIONS BEGIN JULY 1ST, 2025

Starting July 1st, 2025 new boating regulations take effect in Minnesota, requiring boaters to have an official watercraft operator's permit to operate a watercraft. The new law mandates that anyone born on or after July 1st, 2004 complete a boater education course and obtain a permit before operating a motorboat, including personal watercraft like jet skis. This regulation will expand over the next three years to include older age groups. The DNR hopes education and regulation will help keep our waterways safe. To obtain, a permit individuals need to take a boater education course and pass an exam. The online course can be found on the Minnesota DNR website. The boater safety course and exam have a one-time fee of \$34.95.



Here is a break down if when you'll need to get a watercraft operator's permit:

- *Anyone born after July 1st, 2004 needs to obtain an permit this year to operate a boat.
- *On July 1st, 2026, the permit extends to anyone born after July 1st, 2000.
- *On July 1st, 2027, anyone born after July 1st, 1996 is required to have a permit.
- *Finally, on July 1st, 2028, EVERYONE in Minnesota will need a permit to operate a watercraft.

For more information on boating regulations go to the DNR website at—
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/boater-education-law.html>

Water Testing

By Mark Conover

The WCOLA board has approved a plan to test the water from eight different sites on the Wabana Chain of Lakes over a five month period in 2026. Data compiled will then be analyzed and compared with testing data from prior years. RMB labs out of Detroit Lakes will be processing the samples and providing trend analysis. We have worked with this lab for over 25 years. Lake water will be tested for chlorophyll (an indicator of algae level in the water), and total phosphorus (an indicator of nutrient level). These are very important to lake water quality. We will also take Secchi readings for water clarity and recording water temperatures at the same testing sights.

More information on this project will be given as we receive the water quality information later this year.

Protecting What We Love: Wabana Chain Highlighted in Regional Watershed Plan

By Matt Gutzmann, Water Resources Specialist, Itasca SWCD

Great news for the Wabana Chain of Lakes!

The Upper Mississippi - Grand Rapids One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) is now complete, and the Wabana Chain has been officially identified as a priority waterbody within the watershed. This means your lakes are recognized not only for their high water quality and ecological value, but also as a key focus area for future conservation efforts.



Wabana Chain of Lakes

One Watershed, One Plan is funded by the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy amendment and is a locally driven planning process that brings together counties, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), Tribal governments, and other partners to coordinate actions that protect and improve water resources across entire watersheds. Thanks to the involvement of local leaders and landowners, we now have a shared plan that supports voluntary, community-led solutions to protect what makes this place special.

As part of this plan, cost share funding may be available for landowners to implement projects that help protect shoreline and water quality, especially through the use of native vegetation buffers. Planting native grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees along the shore not only prevents erosion but also filters out pollutants before they reach the lake. These buffers provide essential habitat for birds and pollinators while keeping our waters clean and our fish populations healthy.

And here's more good news: Itasca SWCD offers free site visits and expert technical guidance for shoreline projects, forest management, and general land stewardship. Whether you're thinking about adding native plants to your shoreline, want help identifying erosion concerns, or just have questions about your land and water, our staff is here to support you. Together, we can ensure the Wabana Chain stays clear, healthy, and vibrant for future generations. For more information or to schedule a visit, please contact Itasca SWCD, (218)-326-5573. Let's keep our waters beautiful- starting at the shore.



Fireworks environmental impacts

By Susan Lick

Fireworks displays, especially those discharged near water bodies, can pose a risk of water contamination due to the chemicals they contain. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), along with other organizations, expresses concerns about the environmental impact of fireworks, particularly regarding water quality. Here's why fireworks pose a potential threat to water:



Fireworks can impact our lakes & wildlife

- **Perchlorate:** This chemical is commonly used in fireworks as an oxidizer. When fireworks detonate, uncombusted perchlorate particles can settle on the ground or water surface, potentially contaminating both surface and groundwater. Studies have shown elevated perchlorate concentrations in water bodies located near fireworks display sites. Perchlorate can interfere with thyroid function at high exposure levels.
- **Heavy Metals:** Fireworks utilize heavy metals like copper and lead to create their vibrant colors. These metals can leach into the environment, and if they enter water bodies in concentrations above certain levels, they can be harmful to aquatic life and potentially humans.
- **Acid Rain:** Fireworks release pollutants like particulate matter (PM), sulfur dioxide, and nitric oxide into the atmosphere. These chemicals can be transported by wind and interact with oxygen and water to form acid rain, which can harm aquatic ecosystems.

The MPCA notes that while fireworks are typically set off only a few times a year, meaning they represent an intermittent source of contamination, the chemicals released can still have an impact. The agency has stated that it is likely perchlorate could be deposited into nearby water bodies, some of which might be used for drinking water. In 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated research to assess the impact of fireworks on drinking water sources, indicating a growing concern regarding this issue. While the MPCA does not specifically monitor for perchlorate in the air or have established "inhalation health benchmarks," it is evident that fireworks emissions, including perchlorate and other chemicals, have the potential to impact water quality.

Added are the impacts of fireworks on wildlife. Nesting birds such as loons, eagles and many other water birds are greatly impacted by the disruptions of percussive sound, light as well as, chemical pollutant into the water and air. Domestic pets are also greatly impacted in which the "run-away" dog is a yearly response to fireworks.

To minimize the environmental impact of fireworks: Avoid launching them over lakes, streams, or areas that drain directly into water bodies. Clean up all fireworks debris after a display to prevent it from entering waterways. Consider attending professional fireworks displays where safety and waste management practices are in place, or explore eco-friendly alternatives such as drone shows.

MURPHY LANDING TURNS 50

By Kathy Uradnik

This summer marks the 50th anniversary of John and Mary Uradnik's ownership of Murphy Landing Resort, located on the east side of Wabana Lake. The resort was built by hand in the late 1940s and early 1950s by Harold and Lucille Long. The Longs sold the resort to Ivan and Marie Shafer. John and Mary Uradnik purchased it from the Shafers in the fall of 1975. At that time, the resort had five small, basic cabins located on the lake. They featured bottle glass plates for cooking and new "Frigidaire's." None had hot water or showers; there were two central showers and three outhouses for the guests to use. The Uradniks' first project, naturally, was to add showers to each cabin, and to extend hot water to them. Five decades later, the projects continue—cabin maintenance, landscaping, upgrading amenities, fixing anything and everything that breaks. And plumbing—lots of plumbing. The work is continuous but rewarding, and it keeps the family very busy.



Over the years John and Mary added six new cabins to the resort. They remodeled an old gathering structure to provide living space for Mary's parents. One cabin was purchased from a relative of the Longs. The last four cabins were either brought in or constructed on site, bringing the total today to eleven cabins. Before cell phones, resort guests originally received all of their calls at the single resort landline telephone, which was located in the kitchen of the main house. The kitchen still serves as the resort office. Because the house was small, the Uradnik children (Kathy, Joe, and Mike) slept on the back porch for many years, right next to the fish freezer. They considered it quite an improvement when both the telephone and the fish freezer were moved out of the house to the game room. Today, the single remaining landline to the resort is rarely used. The resort has fiber optic cable and three separate routers to serve the guests' demand for Internet connectivity. It also has two generators that power the entire property, a necessity when living in the Chippewa National Forest. (The longest the resort was out of power was 5 days, after a monster mid-July storm in 1995.)

John and Mary worked with their friends and neighbors to improve the chain of lakes; for example, they were early and instrumental advocates for the stocking of walleyes. Murphy Landing participates in Itasca County's "Five Star Initiative" to educate the public about aquatic invasive species and enforce proper boating and fishing practices to guard against introduction of AIS into our lakes. Everyone at Murphy Landing encourages the catch and release of all trophy gamefish, and particularly smallmouth bass.

The resort remains fully booked over the season, which runs from the Saturday after Walleye Opener through October 1st. Almost 100% guests are regular customers, and some families are on their fifth generation at Murphy Landing. Some pre-date the Uradniks' ownership of the resort, and some guests' families date back to the Longs or even to the old Bluewater Camp from the 1930s. (Story continued on page 7)

~Murphy Landing story continued~

John and Mary never did retire, and are still active in resort chores. At 91 years young, John mows the grass, collects garbage, and assists on plumbing projects. At 86, Mary does some resort laundry and helps out with cleaning chores. They plan to retire, well, never.

John and Mary always wanted the independence of owning their own business, and the



ability to shape that business into something they could be proud of. The family has worked very hard over the decades to make Murphy Landing into the quintessential Minnesota “Mom and Pop” fishing resort, where regular folks from around the Midwest can enjoy a family-oriented vacation. The resort continues to be a gathering place for the entire Uradnik family as well, including their five grandchildren. Last summer, all of the kids and grandkids joined together in June to celebrate John’s 90th birthday.

The Uradniks credit their success to hard work and their loyal guests, noting that all of them embrace the Wabana ethic: that this chain of lakes is special, and that responsible stewardship of its natural resources is essential for residents and visitors alike. John and Mary insist that their guests treat the resort and the lakes with respect, so that they will continue to be enjoyed by future generations. Their guests return year after year, confirming that Murphy Landing is one big extended family whose members share a love for Wabana and all that it represents. John and Mary wouldn’t have it any other way.

Family and Friends of WCOLA

The Wabana Chain of Lakes Association is an organization of volunteers, neighbors and friends who are active, interested and involved in maintaining the quality of our chain of lakes. WCOLA is guided by an elected Board of Directors and a group of activity leader volunteers. WCOLA is a registered 501(c)(3) Non-profit.

Tell your family & friends they too can be a part of a great organization. Family and Friends members will receive a free WCOLA koozie with their new membership.

Please make checks payable to WCOLA. You can send your donations to our treasurer, Jean Koewler, 32040 Wakeman Bay Trail, Grand Rapids, Mn 55744

WCOLA Volunteers:

President- Scott Hutter, Steve Melin- Past President, Vice President- Open Position,
Secretary- Chris Freidlieb, Treasurer- Jean Koewler, Environmental/AIS- Mark Conover,
Social/Online Store- Tom Horton, Government Liaison- Sam Nelson,
Communications- Lynne Pernsteiner, Secchi Disc- Jack Hartung, Shoreland Advisor-
Susan Lick, Historical- Carol Speeding, Website- Mark Miner, Loon Count- Mary Hutter,
Roadside Cleanup- Open Position

Website: WCOLA.org