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You are always welcome to join us at our monthly Board of Directors' meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. Contact [Info@GCOLA.org](mailto:Info@GCOLA.org) for meeting details.





Fall is my favorite time of year with the glow of brilliant leaves and great weather for golf and fishing. It's also a transitional time to reflect upon as we prepare for winter and removing boat lifts, boats and docks and begin thinking about the holidays to come and the quiet of winter.

On behalf of GCOLA, I was proud to have accepted the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Research Center (MAISRC) Partnership award in Saint Paul on Wednesday, September 25th at the University of Minnesota. This award is given annually to one lake association throughout the state of Minnesota and recognized GCOLA for going above and beyond to contribute to MAISRC's mission: advancing Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) knowledge, and inspiring action to protect and restore Minnesota's

cherished lakes and rivers. You can read more about this award in this newsmagazine edition. Also, you won't want to miss stories about our new GCOLA board member, Jim Woll, who is serving on our Government Relations committee. Robert Eliason discusses the end of dock survey which he has faithfully run for the past 10 years. Thank you Robert for your commitment and contributions to this program! Robert also has written a piece entitled Firefly Watch. In addition, there are articles on: the Fishing to End Hunger tournament, Lake Steward program, recent local elections, Loon Rescue, Helping Preserve Our Lakes by Cass County AIS coordinator, Steve Henry and Beauty of a Winter Sky by fellow Lake Margaret neighbor, Catherine Munsch.

Thank you for your continued support of GCOLA through your membership and contributions.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

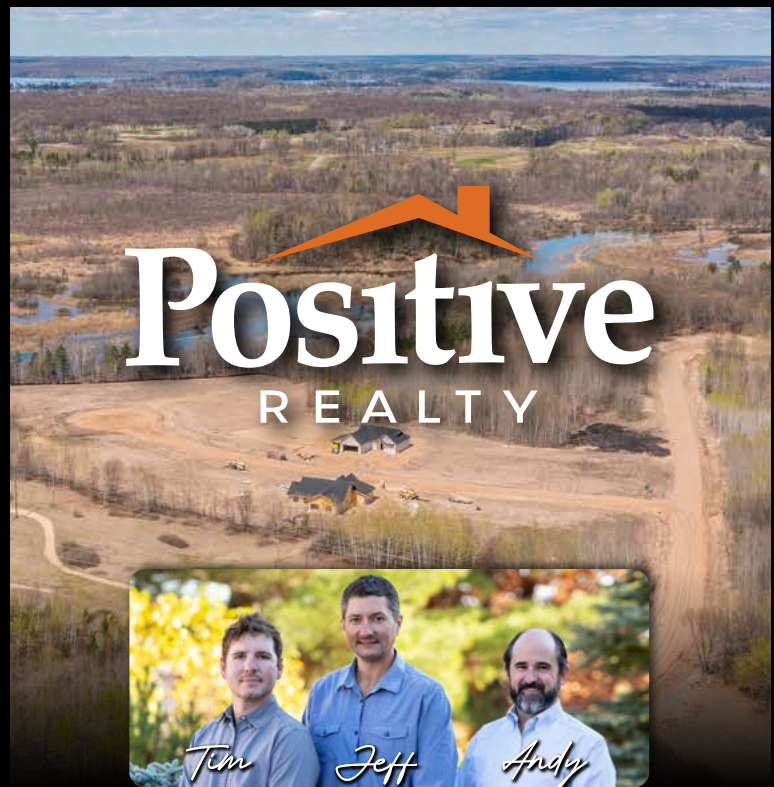
*Steve Frawley*





An aerial photograph of a large lake with a winding shoreline. The water is a deep blue, and the surrounding land is a mix of green trees and brownish-yellow grass. In the foreground, there's a dirt road and some construction equipment. A large, semi-transparent sign with a gold border and black tree silhouettes is overlaid on the center of the image.

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# MINNESOTA ORGANIZATIONS, INDIVIDUALS, HONORED FOR AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES RESEARCH SUPPORT



Steve Frawley, Chair of the GCOLA Board, awarded the 2024 Partnership Award at St. Paul event by Nick Phelps, MAISRC.

Four individuals/organizations have been announced as the recipients of the 2024 Research Partnership Awards, as presented by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC).

This award recognizes individuals, groups, and organizations who have gone above and beyond to contribute to MAISRC's mission: advancing aquatic invasive species (AIS) knowledge, and inspiring action to protect and restore Minnesota's cherished lakes, rivers, and wetlands. 2024 honorees include Kevin Zahler, the Gull Chain of Lakes Association, Wendy Crowell, and Tony Brough.

MAISRC launched the Research Partnership Awards to acknowledge the critical work that community partners have contributed to the field of AIS research and management. The recent advances using research to solve real-time threats to Minnesota lakes and rivers would not be possible without these champions:

- **GROUP/ORGANIZATION:** The Gull Chain of Lakes Association (GCOLA) is devoted to the restoration and continued preservation of the highest water quality and environmental standards achievable, promotion of the responsible use of land and water resources and recreational safety on the Gull chain of lakes. For a decade, GCOLA has been engaged with MAISRC's work - as a legislative advocate,

donors, a host for research activities and productive discussions, and so much more.

- **MANAGER/AGENCY:** Wendy Crowell, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, is an incredible asset to aquatic invasive species management in Minnesota. She consistently excels in her role as the state's Aquatic Invasive Species Management Consultant in the Department of Natural Resources Invasive Species Program, and has been a critical partner in multiple MAISRC projects. Wendy is an outspoken advocate at the DNR for AIS research, collaboration, and data management and sharing.
- **MANAGER/AGENCY:** Tony Brough has long been a valued research partner and advocate for MAISRC. His support of MAISRC's Extension programs, like the AIS Detectors Core Course and volunteer program, have led to hosting 3 workshops sponsored by Hennepin County where participants are able to join free of charge. He has given voice to the science and sought to ensure decisions are made with the best available information.
- **INDIVIDUAL:** Kevin Zahler's face and name has become a mainstay of MAISRC events, inboxes, and Extension programs. He has been a Certified AIS Detector since 2018 and over the years has reported over 480 hours of volunteer service aimed at addressing aquatic invasive species issues in Minnesota. Kevin is regularly first in line to figure out how he can help support MAISRC research and Extension programs.

Nominations for the award were solicited from MAISRC research teams, and partner program staff. Final selections were made by MAISRC staff and were announced at the Center's annual Research and Management Showcase event on September 25, 2024.



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## Jim Woll New GCOLA Board Member

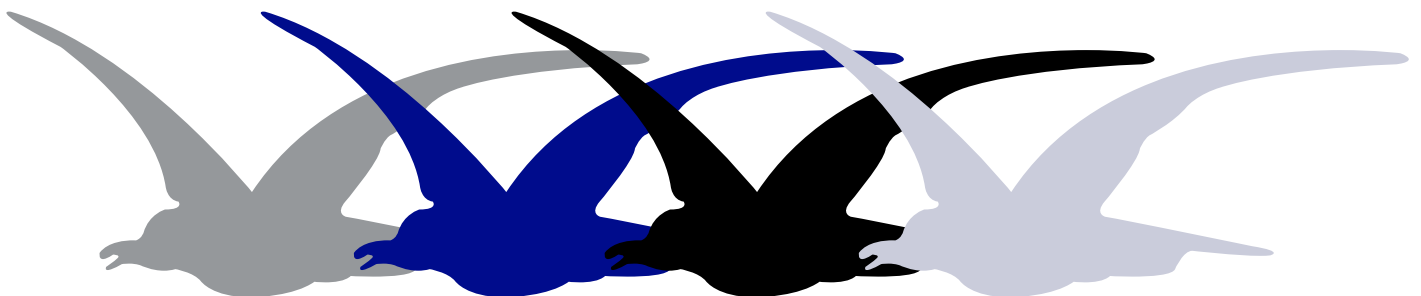


I grew up in the rolling hills and valleys of southeast Minnesota. Fishing on the Mississippi and its tributary streams was common. Occasional family vacations to Minnesota lake country introduced me to a totally new environment, one that I loved. After finishing my education and marriage to my wife Mary, we found ourselves moving to Iowa for

work. Our vow was to live in Iowa for two or three years and then move back home. Two or three years came and went, but we never lost our desire to move back to Minnesota. As our two daughters grew up and left the nest, annual vacations to north central Minnesota became common. During those vacations, dreams of owning a cabin on a lake often occupied our thoughts, and in 2014 we purchased our first property on Upper Gull. The eight plus hour commute from Iowa became burdensome so in 2016, after living in Iowa for 42 years, we moved back to Minnesota.

With the purchase of our first property, we became GCOLA members because of our belief in the organization's mission statement. We became loon observers and end of dock samplers. In 2022 I became an AIS detector, in part because of my past experience with zebra mussels. Prior to retirement I was involved with managing large industrial complexes, one of which was located on the Mississippi River. The facility relied heavily on river water for cooling and fire protection. Zebra mussels invaded the water systems and millions of dollars were required to modify and clean them. Obviously, I had firsthand knowledge of the damage invasive species can cause and I wanted to be involved with GCOLA's efforts to control them.

Our love of lake country now includes boating for pleasure, fishing and riding the many bike trails in the area. We are often visited by family who have come to enjoy the beauty of the Gull Chain of Lakes.








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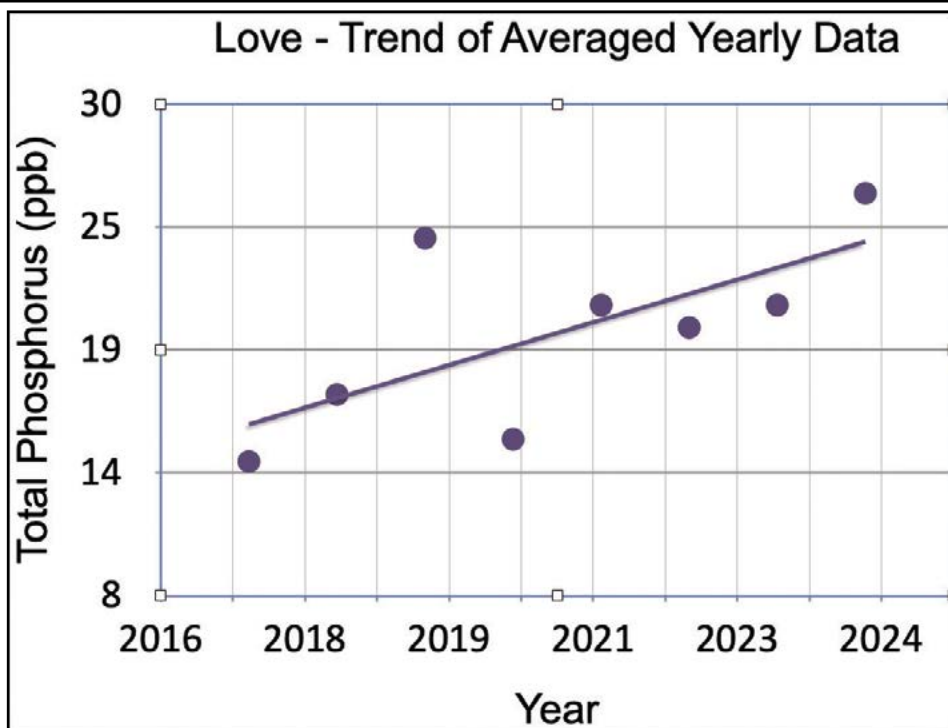
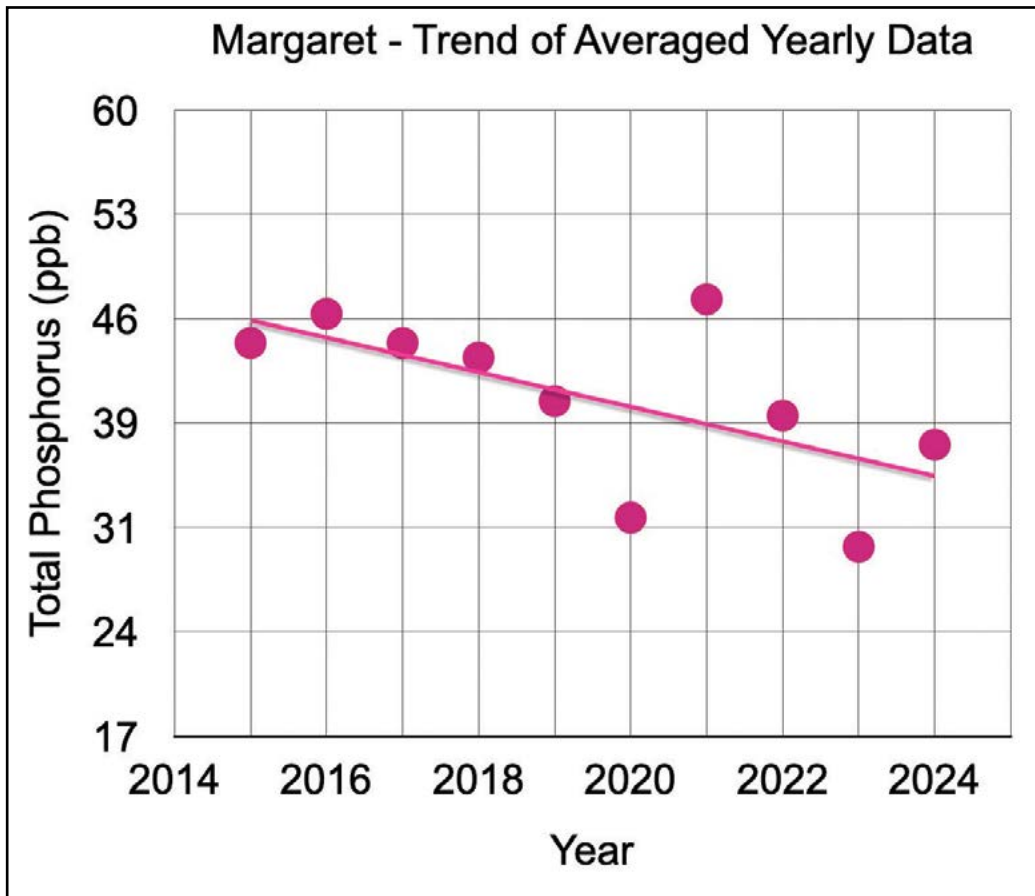
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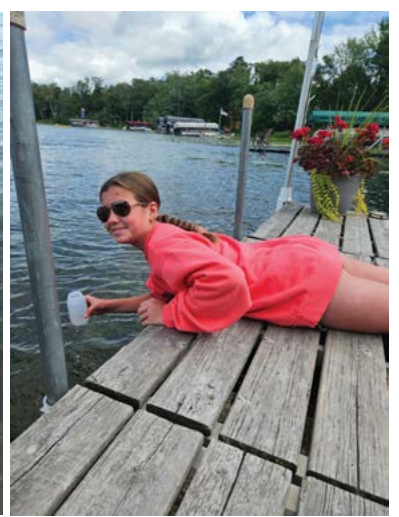


The End-of-Dock program completed its tenth and final year this summer. The graphs of total phosphorus trends for Bass, Love, Margaret, Nisswa, Gull, Roy, and Upper Gull lakes are posted on the GCOLA web site ([www.gcola.org](http://www.gcola.org)).

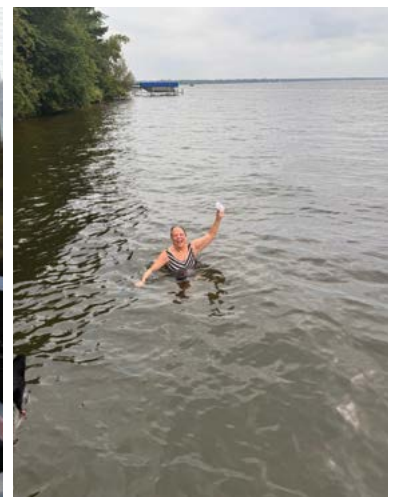
Shown below are graphs of data for Lake Margaret and for Love Lake.







Thank you to our many volunteers who have collected water samples in June and August. Pictured are some of those volunteers from 2024.





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Dave Burggraff Family, Gull Lake, July 2024

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# MINNESOTA LOON RESCUE NETWORK LAUNCHED



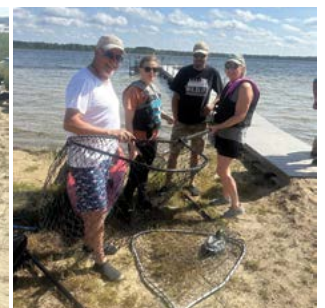
© Sheila Farrell Johnston



When you save a sick or injured loon, you save future generations of loons. With few loon rescue volunteers on the Gull Chain of Lakes and in out-state Minnesota, the chances of loons surviving the human-caused dangers of lead poisoning, hooking, fishing line entanglement, and other injuries were slim. But that is changing!

On September 15, the Minnesota Loon Rescue Network was launched as 30 new loon rescue volunteers from 7 counties gathered on the shore of Merrifield's Bass Lake to participate in loon rescue training. GCOLA's Loon Conservancy Committee Chair, Sheila Johnston, coordinated the training event, and several GCOLA members were in the group. Wildlife rescue experts from Twin Cities based Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release provided training. Gail Buhl, an independent wildlife rehabilitator who also works for the Raptor Center's Partners for Wildlife, led the day-long training session.

The morning started out with lectures, demonstrations, and discussion on the beautiful shore of Bass Lake. It was an action-packed day as participants learned about equipment, safety measures and protocols, strategies to safely and correctly rescue loons on the shore and in the water, and how to ready loons for transport. Participants rotated through three stations. A beached loon is a sick or injured loon, and volunteers had plenty of practice netting stuffed (toy) loon-sized birds on shore. Volunteers paired up and headed out in the fishing boat to practice night rescues. One volunteer netted the remote-controlled loon while their partner handled the spotlight. Removing the loon from the net and transferring it to the transport bin is a two-person job that requires precise communication, and these skills were practiced at the third station. Participants were provided with resources and a framework of support to enable them to be successful loon rescuers.





## The First Rescue



*After rehab, Ditty wing stretching*



*Ditty in rescue bin with rescue team Darcy Swanson, Richard Rammer, Teri Rammer*

The morning after the training session, Johnston and GCOLA loon watcher, Darcy Swanson, were paddling around Upper Gull Lake to check on "their loons", but one juvenile was missing... Little Ditty. After an extended search, Darcy spotted Little Ditty

hiding next to a dock, hooked and badly entangled in fishing line. Because the loon could dive, a night rescue was required and a second search for the

injured loon was necessary later in the day. It often takes a village to rescue a loon, and that was the case with Little Ditty. It took six boats of concerned Upper Gull loon lovers and hours on the water to locate the loon. As darkness descended, he was finally spotted hiding beneath a tree overhanging the water. Minnesota Loon Rescue Network partners, Terri and Richard Rammer who also volunteer for the Loon Project, came from Cross Lake. The Loon Project boat was used for the rescue of the banded juvenile loon. As a cloud covered the full moon, Ditty emerged from underneath the branches. Terri was ready with the net as Richard slowly moved in and Darcy spotlighted the loon. With one scoop, Terri safely captured the injured loon. Little Ditty was transported to Wild and Free for rehabilitation. The young loon was given only a 10% chance of survival, but thanks to the excellent care of the veterinarians at Wild and Free, Little Ditty survived. He was released in his chick rearing area on Upper Gull as many of the people in his "village" cheered.

In October, the GCOLA loon rescuers teamed up with the Rammers to rescue two more hooked loons. More loon rescue volunteers are needed on the Gull Chain of Lakes, and volunteers are also needed to transport loons to Wild and Free in Garrison, and to provide phone support for the Minnesota Loon Rescue Network. Another loon rescue training class will be offered in the spring or summer of 2025. If you are interested in the loon rescue training class, volunteering to transport loons, or providing phone support, please email [sheilafjohnston@me.com](mailto:sheilafjohnston@me.com).



*Little Ditty hooked and entangled in fishing line*



*Rescue team securing Ditty*

# FIREFLY WATCHER REPORT

By Robert Eliason, Chair Environmental Committee



Ten people, including me, volunteered to be a Firefly Watcher. Unfortunately, only three of us reported seeing fireflies. I live on the Lost Lake Road peninsula on the west shore of Bass Lake. Maryann and I saw fireflies the first week in June and again the first week in July. In June, we were surprised to see them 10 to 15 feet above the ground. We have never seen them that high before. A neighbor down

the shore who signed up, also reported seeing them that high in June. The fireflies that we saw in July were about 6 feet above the ground, which is what we have been used to. The only other report was from a Watcher on the west shore of Lake Margaret. Fireflies were observed there two times in mid-June.

I was disappointed because I thought there would be many reports from around the chain. The lack of habitat along the lake shore might be a part of the problem. For example, the east and west sides of the Lost Lake Road peninsula have had different degrees of development along the shoreline. The east side has essentially been left wild whereas there has been considerable habitat disturbance on the west side. A person, who lives on that west side, signed up to be a Watcher. No report of fireflies was received from that person possibly due to a lack of firefly habitat on that side.

# SWIMMER'S ITCH SURVEY REPORT

By Robert Eliason,  
Chair, Environmental Committee



The only reports of swimmer's itch came from Gull Lake - east side, west side, Wilson Bay. I don't know if the other lakes are devoid of the problem or if it was not bad enough to report. I do have one experience with Roy Lake. About ten years ago, we rented a boat and went swimming with our family on the Roy Lake sand bar. We never thought of swimmer's itch and didn't have a problem. But that was then, and this is now.

I wonder if swimmer's itch is a "new" problem for Gull Lake. In 1970, we had two aunts who bought and retired to a place just north of Rocky Point. When we visited them during the summer, Maryann and I and our kids went swimming all through the 1970s and 1980s and never had a problem. In fact, we never even heard about swimmer's itch. Things have obviously changed. I received two reports of

swimmer's itch that bracket where our aunts used to live - one north of their place and one just south of Sandy Point. I discussed these reports with Maryann, and we tried to think about what the lake was like thirty some years ago. The lake bottom was weedy, but not excessively. We don't remember seeing aquatic snails. If there were ducks and geese around the shore, we couldn't recall seeing them. In any event, swimmer's itch appears to be a problem now.

Since snails are a host to the swimmer's itch parasite, people think that removing snails will cure the problem. I received inquiries about using copper sulfate to kill the snails. It works, but it also kills a lot of beneficial aquatic life. One person reported trying to use a mechanical method to eliminate snails. They used a skimming net to capture snails, which were disposed of on land. The person reported that all their work had no effect on the problem. Unfortunately, neither mechanical nor chemical methods for removing snails are an effective long-term solution for individual parts of the shoreline. Both methods are doomed to failure because the snails simply return from neighboring properties.



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# FISHING TO END HUNGER WALLEYE DAN TOURNAMENT

By Rhoda Drake, Communications Committee



L-R: Steve Ward, Mark Schutz, WalleyeDan (Dan Eigen), Tony Ward. Dan Eigen and Shawn Hansen are Tournament Directors; Steve, Mark and Tony are from Full Throttle Fishing and are the professional weigh masters for the tournament.

You've probably driven past the Outreach Program of Brainerd Lakes and didn't even notice it. Almost half of the food they distribute comes from the proceeds from the Fishing to End Hunger annual fishing tournament. You probably see people every day that are food insecure without you even realizing it. Our neighbors may be hungry, either because they don't have enough food, or the food they can afford does not have enough nutrition. Anyone could have a change in circumstances to cause their hunger.

The Outreach Program of Brainerd Lakes (formerly known as Kids Against Hunger) started in 2012 under the leadership of John Poston. Their mission is to feed families in need within an 80-mile radius of Brainerd and to encourage community service and volunteerism. High school students come once a month to help with the food packing, along with other youth groups, churches and businesses which also volunteer. About 80-90 % of the food goes to local food shelves, schools, shelters and community meal programs. The remaining 10-20% goes to national disaster relief or international aid. All money goes for buying food and no money is used for marketing, which is why we may not know about the organization. Shawn Hansen, the executive director said that last year they packed 552,000 meals and this year, because there is more need, they will pack over 600,000 meals.



Brainerd High School students packing Spanish Rice meals at Outreach

In 2013, when the organization was still Kids Against Hunger, John Poston and Dan Eigen (Walleye Dan) started the Fishing Tournament to End Hunger. They have permits from the DNR and the Cass County Sheriff's department for a 140-boat walleye tournament. In order to be good stewards of the lake only 120 2-person boats are used, and the limit is five walleyes per boat, which are taken to be weighed and released. The water is cold in October, so they are able to release about 97% of the fish to the lake still alive. Bar Harbor Supper Club is the host venue, where fishermen and women can enjoy a dinner and registration the night before the tournament. Next year, the tournament will be October 4th and early registration is open now on their website. The entry fee is \$500, and the first prize is \$16,000. Participants can fish the entire Gull Lake Chain for walleyes.

If you would like to volunteer to pack food or help with the fishing tournament or donate to The Outreach Program, please call 218-961-0055 or [www.outreachprogramBLA.org](http://www.outreachprogramBLA.org).







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# THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to everyone who contributes their time and talents to make our programs a success! We apologize if we have inadvertently missed you. Please contact us at [info@gcola.org](mailto:info@gcola.org) and we will get you added in the next issue.

## LEGEND

A – AIS  
 C – Communications  
 EOD – End-of-dock Water Survey  
 F – Fisheries

FA – Finance & Audit  
 G – Gala  
 GR – Government Relations  
 LC – Loon Conservancy

LS – Lake Steward  
 SR – Safety & Recreation



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 Chuk Batko.....LC  
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 Tim Bergin..... FA  
 Steve Bergan..... EOD  
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 Uldis Birznieks..... EOD, FA, G  
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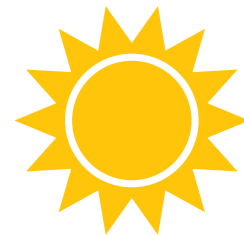
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 Laura Kessler.....C  
 Jayme Klecker.....EOD, SR  
 Michelle Klecker.....EOD  
 Mike Knapp.....C  
 Darrell & Jane Kolden.....EOD  
 Molly Krakowski.....EOD, LC  
 Lake Fun Rentals.....LC  
 Mary Kay Larson.....SR  
 Judy & Bill LaTour.....EOD  
 David Levine.....EOD  
 Barb Lindenmayer.....EOD  
 Kathy Lundberg.....C, EOD, G, LC  
 Susan and Terry Lutz.....LC  
 Beverly Marx.....EOD  
 Kyle McClintick.....EOD  
 Shelley McDonald.....EOD  
 Marv Meyer.....G  
 Lynne Miller.....EOD  
 Dave Misukanis.....EOD  
 Judy Morgan.....LS  
 Heather Mullane.....C,EOD  
 Catherine Munsch.....C,EOD  
 William & Kathryn Murtha.....EOD  
 Cindy and John Nelson.....LC  
 Greg Neumeyer.....LC  
 Jill Noack.....G  
 Phyllis Nyberg.....LC  
 Steve & Sue Peterson.....EOD  
 Jane Plagge.....FA  
 Jack & Katherine Plummer.....EOD  
 Joan Roberts.....LC  
 Gloria & Jerry Rose.....EOD  
 Gene Roth.....EOD  
 Mary Rugloski.....G  
 Pat Rugloski.....G  
 Rex Rundquist.....LC  
 Gerald & Carol Rupp.....EOD  
 Phil Saari.....EOD  
 Kip and Cindy Sandoz.....EOD  
 Jeff & Karen Sell.....EOD  
 Dan Simons.....F  
 Vicki Smith.....EOD, G  
 Lynn & Mike Smith.....G  
 Kevin Smith.....EOD  
 Maris Speckmann.....G  
 Tom Steiger.....EOD, LC

Patty Steiger.....EOD  
 Erin Strachan.....LC  
 Darcy Swanson.....LC  
 Mark Swenson.....LC  
 Ann Swenson.....G  
 George & Julie Tetreault.....EOD  
 Patricia Thoele.....G, LC  
 Tim Thoele.....A, G  
 Deb & Brian Thuringer.....EOD  
 Bob Toberg.....EOD  
 Rosemary Goff and Bob Tobrg.....LC  
 Phyllis Trcka.....G  
 Barbara Zapffe Vielma.....EOD  
 Jon Villella.....FA  
 Jane and Jim Werler.....LC  
 Dorothy Whitmer.....LS  
 Alex and Michelle Wilson.....LC  
 Jane Witmer.....EOC, LC  
 John & Jane Witmer.....EOD  
 Jeremy Wizcek.....G  
 Jim Woll.....EOD, GR, LC  
 Mary Woll.....EOD, LC  
 Your Boat Club.....LC



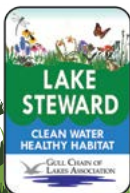


# OUR PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE



## LAKE STEWARD

- 185+ lakeshore owners working to protect our lakes
- 100+ Lake Steward awards
- Fund shoreline restoration
- Annual tree giveaway

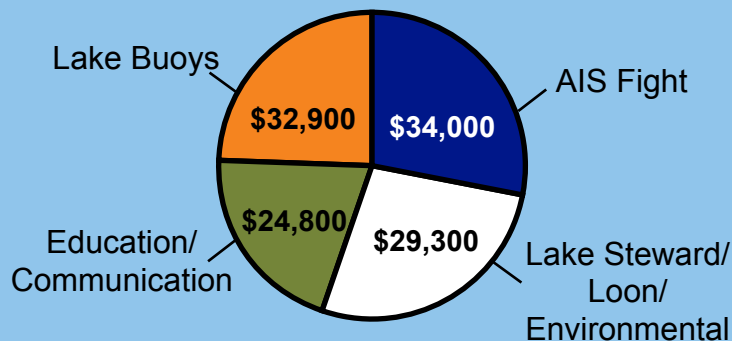


## SAFETY & RECREATION

- 125 navigational buoys across the Gull Lake Chain
- Boat Safety classes 75+ kids per year
- Partner with local sheriff departments



## 2024 BUDGETED PRIORITIES



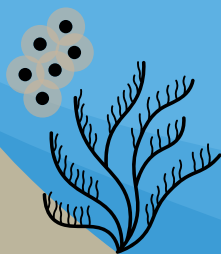
## LOON CONSERVANCY

- Loon population surveys
- Loon-safe boating program
- Get the Lead Out (GTLO) loon-safe fishing



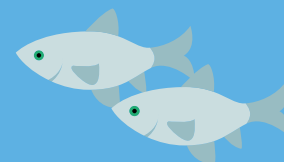
## ENVIRONMENTAL

- Water quality monitoring
- Light pollution education
- Education on improving lake water quality



## AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)

- Inspect 24 boat launches for AIS
- Fund 3,300+ boat inspections annually
- Financially support the U of M AIS Research Center



## GET INVOLVED

- 1050+ family & business members strong
- Exciting volunteer opportunities
- FUN! Annual Summer Gala Event

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- Advocate for lake issues with state legislators
- Interface with county and local governments
- Share with neighboring lake associations

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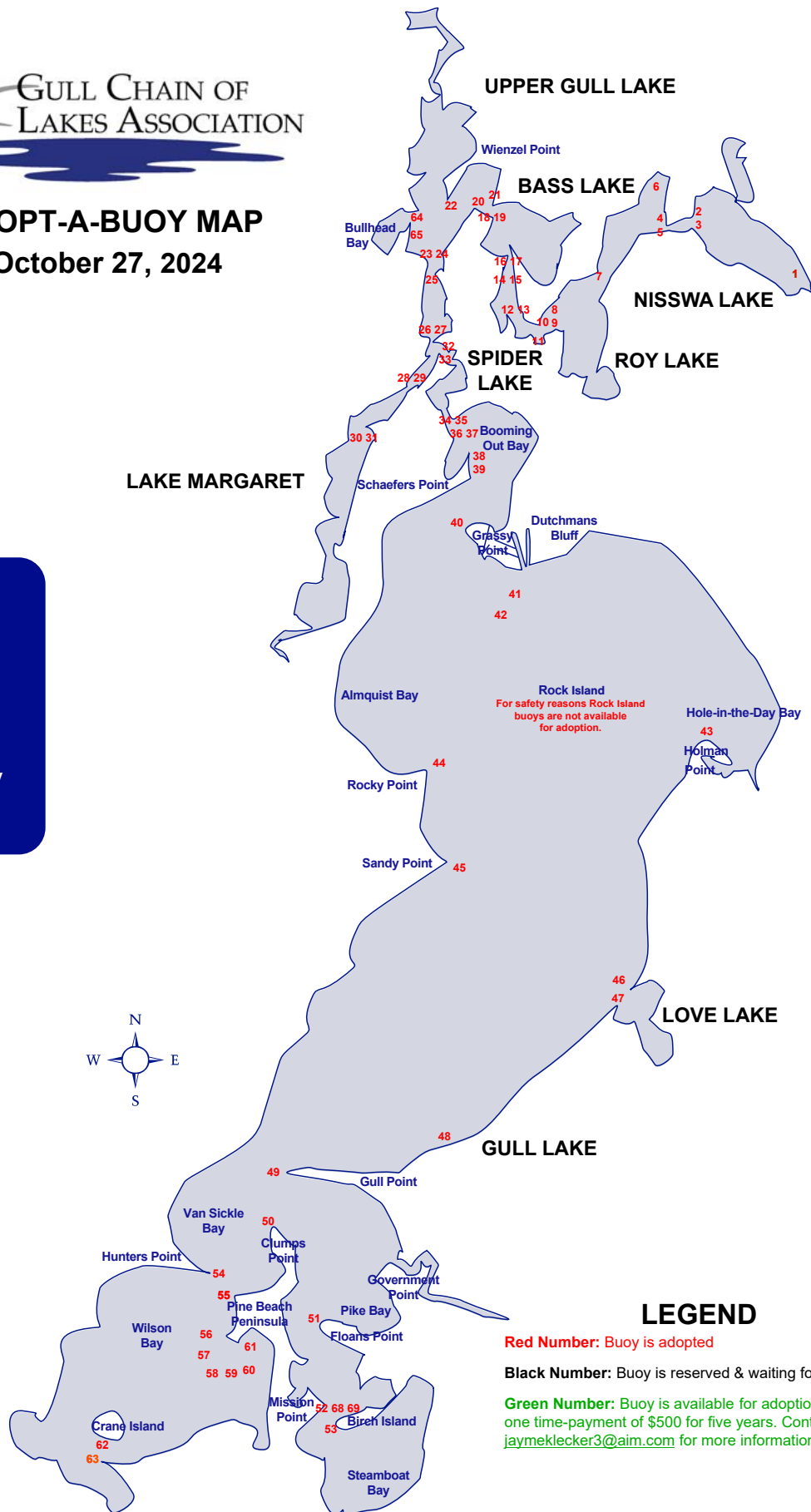
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## ADOPT-A-BUOY MAP October 27, 2024



As of December 1, all buoys have been adopted. We will let GCOLA members know in our Spring magazine if new adoptable buoys become available. Thank you for your support of this important safety feature on our lakes!





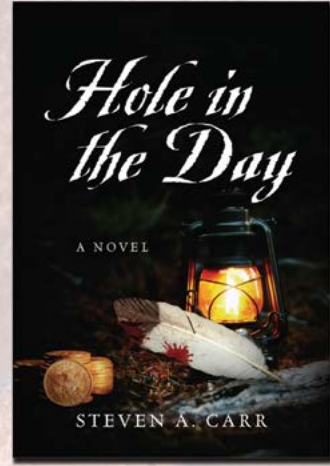
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# BACKYARD REFLECTIONS

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# THE BEAUTY OF THE WINTER SKY - NO OUTDOOR LIGHTS NEEDED

The cold is setting in, the leaves are all gone, the loons are gone, the snow may be starting to stick on the lake, and the winter sky is also reflecting a changing scenery. While some constellations, like the Big Dipper, are circumpolar (present in the sky all year round in the Northern Hemisphere) some constellations are only, or best, observed in the Northern Hemisphere from late December to late March (late June to late September in the Southern Hemisphere). Planets put on a show and two meteor showers provide some awe in the night sky. And a benefit of viewing celestial objects in the winter is that the sky is more clear. Why? Colder air cannot hold as much moisture which makes the skies less hazy than they often are in the summer. So – pick a clear night, bundle up, turn off your outdoor lights and go outside to view constellations, planets and meteor showers that you may not have paid attention to in the past. The following is a guide to highlights of the Northern Hemisphere’s winter night sky:

## Constellations:

images courtesy of [www.celestron.com](http://www.celestron.com)



Orion (the Hunter) – for many Orion is the most recognizable of the winter constellations. The body looks like a bow tie, with three stars in a row forming Orion’s “belt”. The four bright stars in the corners of the bow

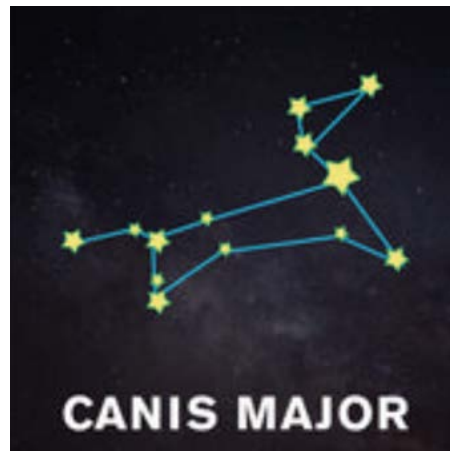
tie body are Betelgeuse (top left); Bellatrix (top right); Saiph (bottom left) and Rigel (bottom right). Fainter stars create patterns that are depicted as Orion’s shield and sword. The ability to see the shield and sword is often used as a measure of nearby light pollution.



Taurus (the Bull) – to the upper right of Orion is Taurus which takes the shape of a bull’s v-shaped horns. Mythological stories depict Taurus as charging Orion.



Gemini (the Twins) – Located to the upper left of Orion where the two brightest stars Pollux and Castor represent the heads of the twins.



Canis Major (the Big Dog, although it looks like a long dachshund to me) – considered Orion’s faithful companion. The three bright stars in Orion’s belt point (to the left and down) to the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, also known as

the dog star which makes up the dog’s head. (any Harry Potter fans see a pattern here?) Part of why Sirius appears so bright is its relative closeness to Earth – only 8.6 light years away. Sirius is a binary star, meaning it has a close companion, Sirius B also known as “the Pup”, which orbits Sirius.



### Planets:

In the latter half of January and most of February, there will be a “planet parade” with 6 planets above the horizon shortly after sunset, with four visible to the naked eye – Mars, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn. All but Mars will “set” below the horizon shortly after midnight. Jupiter will shine the brightest due to its great size and reflective clouds. If you are lucky to have a telescope you may be able to detect Saturn’s famed rings and the four moons of Jupiter.

### Meteor Showers:

The Geminids arrive in early December. This year they will peak on the nights of December 13 and 14, at up to 150 meteors per hour. Unfortunately, even in a dark sky location, their visibility this year will be

hampered by an almost-full moon. If you miss the Geminids, the Quadrantids on January 2 and 3 could be a fallback. While not as prolific, averaging only up to 40 meteors per hour with a very brief peak of up to 100 per hour, they are likely to be more visible this winter as the sky will be much darker given a waxing crescent moon at that time.

The nights may be long this time of year, but all the more time to enjoy the clarity and beauty of the winter sky. Who needs outdoor lights when the stars are shining so brightly?

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Shannon Ebertowski, Cottages at Roy Lake Owners Association, Roy  
Rod & Avis Converse, Gull  
Diane Auger, Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity  
Alicia Conlon, Gull  
Robert & Monica Petersen, Gull  
Annadell Christman, Gull  
Mark & Angela, Host, Margaret  
David & Kathy Thesing, Upper Gull  
Rick & Patricia Bagnall, Gull  
Brad & Dena Blough, Upper Gull  
John & Robin Carbone, Margaret  
Michael Cline  
Teresa & Kevin Close, Gull  
Jack Crosswell, Margaret  
Robert & Ruth Crowell, Nisswa  
Bradley & Tina Dehn, Gull

Brian & Julie Erickson, Gull  
Taylor & Colette Fitterer, Gull  
John Frederick, Gull Lake Villas Association  
Casey & Holli Hankinson, Gull  
Kermit & Lisa Iverson, Nisswa  
Curtis & Amy Janicke  
Joel & Ann Nelson, Upper Gull  
David & Sheryll Norback  
Dennis & Denise OBrien, Bass  
Richard & Judy Reynolds, Gull  
Troy & Wendy Rheaume  
Janet & Ronald Schutz, Gull  
Donald & Mary Spartz, Upper Gull  
Jane Von Bank  
Kaye & Tim Wahl, MN Lakehomes LLC, Roy  
Northstar Land Company LLC

## Always Clean, Drain, and Dry Your Gear and Boats

**CLEAN**

- Boats, trailers, and gear
- Remove all weeds, mud, and hitchhiking contaminants from axels, wheels, undercarriage, motor, prop, nets, and gear before leaving boat landing

**DRAIN**

- Water from boat, bilge, motor, and live well
- Remove drain plug and open all water draining devices
- Trash unused bait

**DRY**

- Everything at least five days before going to other waters
- (Or) Decontaminate with high pressure water (120 F or warmer)

**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES! LEARN MORE AT CLEANDRAINDRY.ORG**

Great Lakes RESTORATION | Minnesota DNR | CLEAN DRAIN DRY INITIATIVE | STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Stations where tools are available to assist boaters in removing plants, mud, and other attached debris. Before moving equipment from a lake, stream, or wetland, drain or remove all water from the live well, bilge, and any other location that retains water. Aquatic invasive species can be invisible in water and inadvertently moved to an un-infested waterbody if equipment is not drained before leaving the access. A large sponge is handy for removing the last few drops of water or removing water from an area without a suitable drain.

Dry your equipment for 5 days prior to using it at a different water body. Almost all AIS are killed by warm temps or drying out within five days. In a research project, Starry Stonewort did not survive more than two days out of the water. Looking at zebra mussels, researchers found that 95% of baby zebra mussel veligers in a live well or ballast tank died after three days. If you must launch your boat onto a new waterbody without adequate drying time, look online to find a free hot water decontamination site.

Our lakes are threatened by invasive plants, animals and diseases which can cause nuisance conditions in our water bodies and harm fish and wildlife populations. Any of us could unintentionally spread aquatic invasive species (AIS) while moving boats, gear, or equipment from one waterbody to another without following the Clean, Drain, Dry prevention steps. Fortunately only a small percentage of Minnesota lakes have been infested. In Cass County only 13 lakes are infested with zebra mussels out of the 106 lakes with public accesses and 513 lakes total in the County. If you enjoy Minnesota's outdoors, please do your part to prevent the spread of AIS.

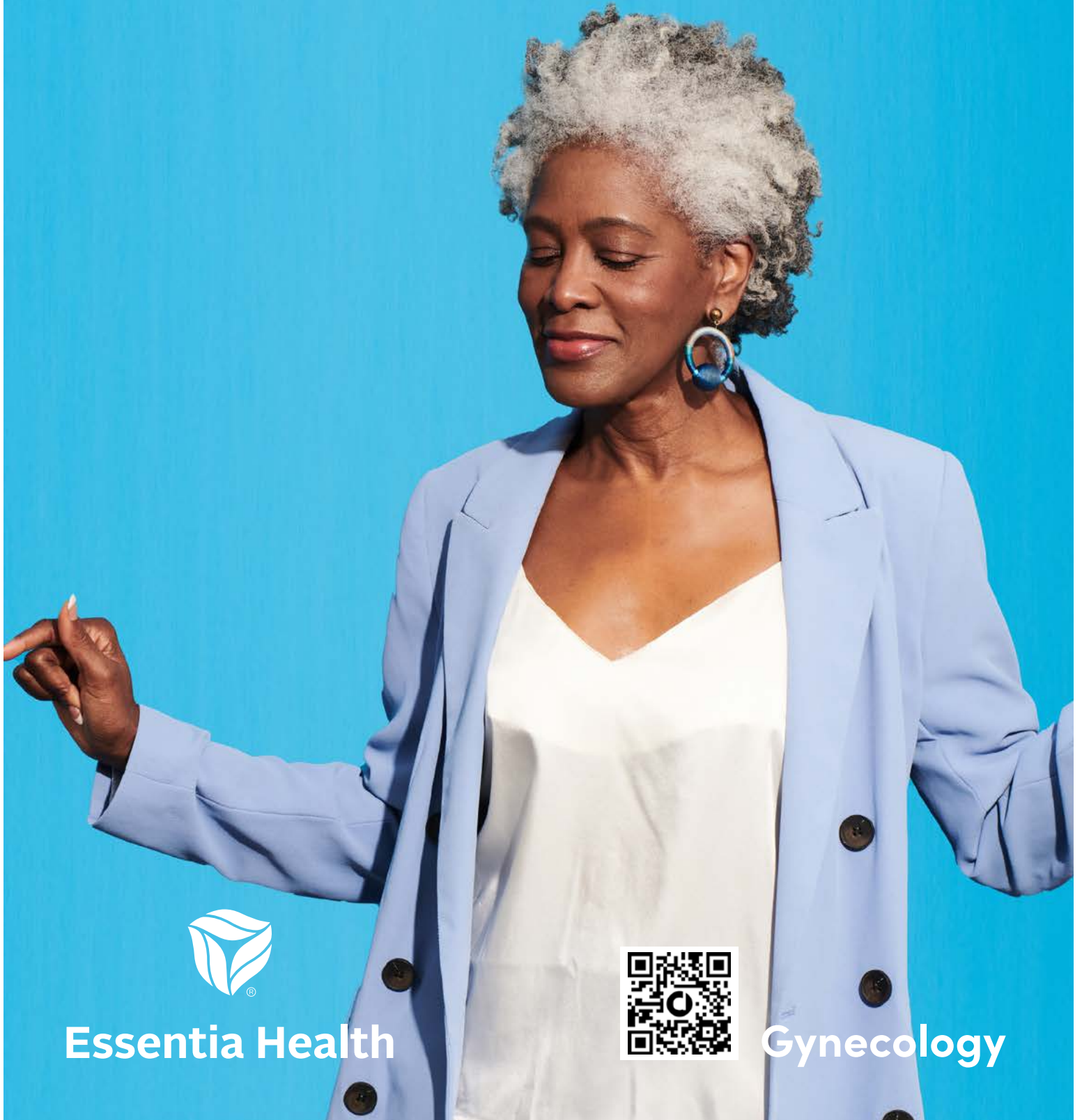
Before leaving the access, clean your gear and watercraft of all plants, mud, debris, or water. Invasive plants can be moved by fragments or seeds. Other invasives such as mussels, algae, and viruses can be hiding in plants or mud. Fish viruses and diseases are not visible to the naked eye but can be killed by drying, freezing, or heat. Even fishing rods, reels, and line can hold invasive species and should be checked for any suspicious materials. Many accesses now have AIS Cleaning





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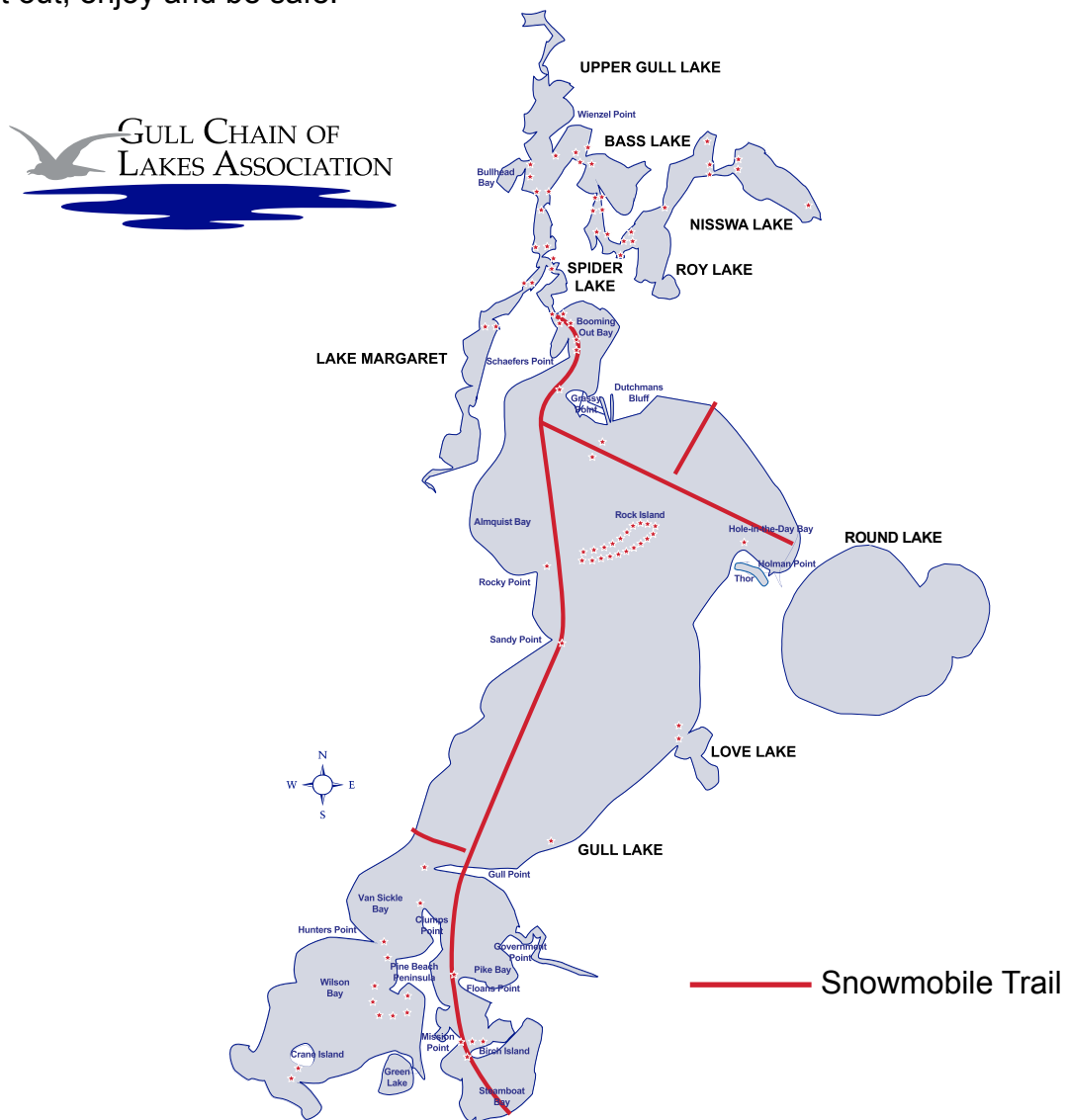
**Gynecology**

As the winter season is upon us, it's also time for some of our favorite winter activities. Ice fishing, ice skating, cross-country and downhill skiing are enjoyed by many.

One of my favorites, however, is snowmobiling. We are blessed to have hundreds of miles of groomed snowmobile trails throughout the Brainerd lakes area and greater Minnesota. The trails are maintained by dozens of local clubs, which are financially supported by membership dues and fundraisers. If you like to ride, please consider donating or volunteering to your local club.

Another unique aspect of snowmobile trails in our area is the lighted trail system on Gull Lake. As you know, Gull Lake is a large body of water and can be difficult to navigate on a snowmobile, particularly at night or windy days with blowing snow. The lighted trail starts at the public access across from Zorbaz and runs south into Booming Out Bay, past Grassy Point, past Sandy Point and all the way to the south end of the lake. There are also two lighted fingers that run east and west off of the main trail. This trail greatly enhances a rider's confidence for both navigation and ice thickness. The trail is financially supported by local restaurants and resorts on Gull Lake. GCOLA has also recently begun to donate to this very worthy, safety-enhancing trail system.

So, if you are an outdoor enthusiast, Gull Lake and the Brainerd Lakes area is a great place to be in the winter months. Get out, enjoy and be safe!





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National and local elections have dominated the airwaves in recent months. Locally, there are several returning political appointees and some new faces. Here are the results of several of our local election successful candidates:

Email	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	House or Senate District	County
Paul.Koering@crowwing.gov	Paul	Koering	County	Commissioner	1	CW*
jamielcecwc@gmail.com	Jamie	Lee	County	Commissioner	5	CW
bob.kangas@casscountymn.gov	Robert	Kangas	County	Commissioner	2	Cass
info@karen4cass.com	Karen	Goodenough	County	Commissioner	3	Cass
bryan.welk@casscountymn.gov	Bryan	Welk	County	Sheriff		Cass
rep.josh.heintzeman@house.mn.gov	Josh	Heintzeman	MN House	Representative	6B	CW
rep.ron.kresha@house.mn.gov	Ron	Kresha	MN Senator	Senator	10A	
rep.krista.knudsen@house.mn.gov	Krista	Knudsen	MN House	Representative	5A	Cass
rep.mike.wiener@house.mn.gov	Mike	Weiner	MN House	Representative	5B	

\*CW-Crow Wing County

It's important that we reach out to our elected officials to support GCOLA's focus on protecting and preserving our land and water resources.



*Photo by Andrew Rugloski*



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# PHOTOS WANTED

Do you have photos taken around the Gull Lake Chain that you'd like to share? We always need pictures for the newsmagazine, website and social media. **We especially have a shortage of winter, autumn and other fun activities on the lakes!** You will be given credit for any photographs appearing in the newsmagazine and a description of the picture is helpful. Your snapshots can be sent at full size (*minimum 300DPI*) to Sue Friedrichs at [info@gcola.org](mailto:info@gcola.org). **THANK YOU!**



*Ernie's at Night, Suzetter Olson*



*Snowshoeing, Jill Kinsley*



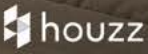


*Joey Halvorson*





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# BECOME A MEMBER

The Gull Chain of Lakes Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, Federal Tax ID #41-1272492. Dues are \$90 per year and any donations above the annual membership dues are greatly appreciated and recognized in the spring newsmagazine. No goods or services were provided in exchange for your membership and donation.

Please use this form and mail your dues to GCOLA, PO Box 102, Nisswa, MN 56468 -or- log in to our website at <https://www.gcola.org/shop> to pay with your credit or debit card.

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## THANK YOU

New Member  Existing Member (New members receive 2024 free)

2025 Gull Chain of Lakes Association Dues (January 1 to December 31) \$90.00

Additional Donation (Optional)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Aquatic Invasive Species Contingency Fund    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Buoy Expenses    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Board Discretion

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Please contact me via email regarding the following volunteer opportunities:

AIS Committee     Communications     Gala     Government Relations

Lake Steward     Loon Programs     Membership Committee

Existing Member     New Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Second or Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 2 \_\_\_\_\_

We use email to keep you informed and request your input on issues impacting the Gull Lake Chain.

Email 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Email 2 \_\_\_\_\_

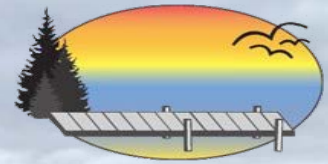
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City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Lake Name \_\_\_\_\_ Location on Lake (side, bay, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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## YOUR LAKE ASSOCIATION IS WORKING FOR YOU

### Aquatic Invasive Species Committee (AIS)

- Coordinates with the City of Lake Shore Police Department to provide watercraft inspections for invasive species.
- Conducts two inspections at 24 locations to look for AIS.
- Donates annually to the University of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) for zebra mussel research.
- Fulfills AIS prevention needs including establishing a boat power wash station at the USACE public access ramp.

### Communications Committee

- Maintains a website, a member group email service and social media to provide timely communication.
- Issues four newsmagazines per year to keep members informed about association programs and important issues affecting the Gull Lake Chain.

### Environmental Committee

- Monitors water quality of our lakes and stream inlets through quantitative chemical analysis. Samples are collected by GCOLA volunteers and analysis completed by a licensed environmental laboratory.
- Measures water quality during the summer by secchi disk readings taken by GCOLA volunteers.
- Promotes star gazing and northern lights viewing through educational initiatives on light pollution.

### Finance/Audit Committee

- Oversees the GCOLA AIS Fund with BLACF, the Gull Chain Preservation Endowment Fund with Initiative Foundation and the AIS Contingency Fund which provide long term funding for fighting and eradicating AIS.
- Manages and provides oversight of finances and audit process.

### Fisheries Committee

- Attends annual Avid Angler discussion led by DNR and local fishing guides and outdoor media.
- Stays informed on fishery-related research from the University of Minnesota AIS Research Center.

### Gala Committee

- Plans and executes annual fundraising Gala, including silent auction, trip raffle, and event sponsorship.

### Government Relations Committee

- Works with state legislators, the DNR, state agencies, and local government units on lake issues and concerns.
- Works with other lake associations, county COLAs, and state-wide lake-related organizations on common legislative priorities.

### Lake Steward Committee

- More than 185 lakeshore owners working to protect our lakes with 107 Lake Steward awards to date.
- Provides funding for approved shoreland naturalization projects.
- Conducts a Tree Giveaway each spring to promote naturalization of shoreland to protect water quality.

### Loon Conservancy Committee

- Conducts a yearly loon count in the spring and late summer.
- Educates boaters on loon-safe boating practices.
- Promotes the Get the Lead Out loon safe-fishing program.
- Supports loon reproduction activities including loon nesting platforms.

### Membership Committee

- Conducts membership development programs to recruit and retain individual, family, and business memberships.

### Safety & Recreation Committee

- Purchases, installs, and maintains one of the premier navigational buoy systems (100 buoys) in the State of Minnesota. We also install more than 20 no wake enforcement buoys for the sheriff's department.
- Provides free maps, with boating rules and regulation, at three public landings.
- Partners with Cass and Crow Wing County sheriffs to provide free boat safety training for approximately 75 youth per year.
- Works with county sheriffs on safety and enforcement issues including donations for night vision equipment, a range finder, and life jackets.

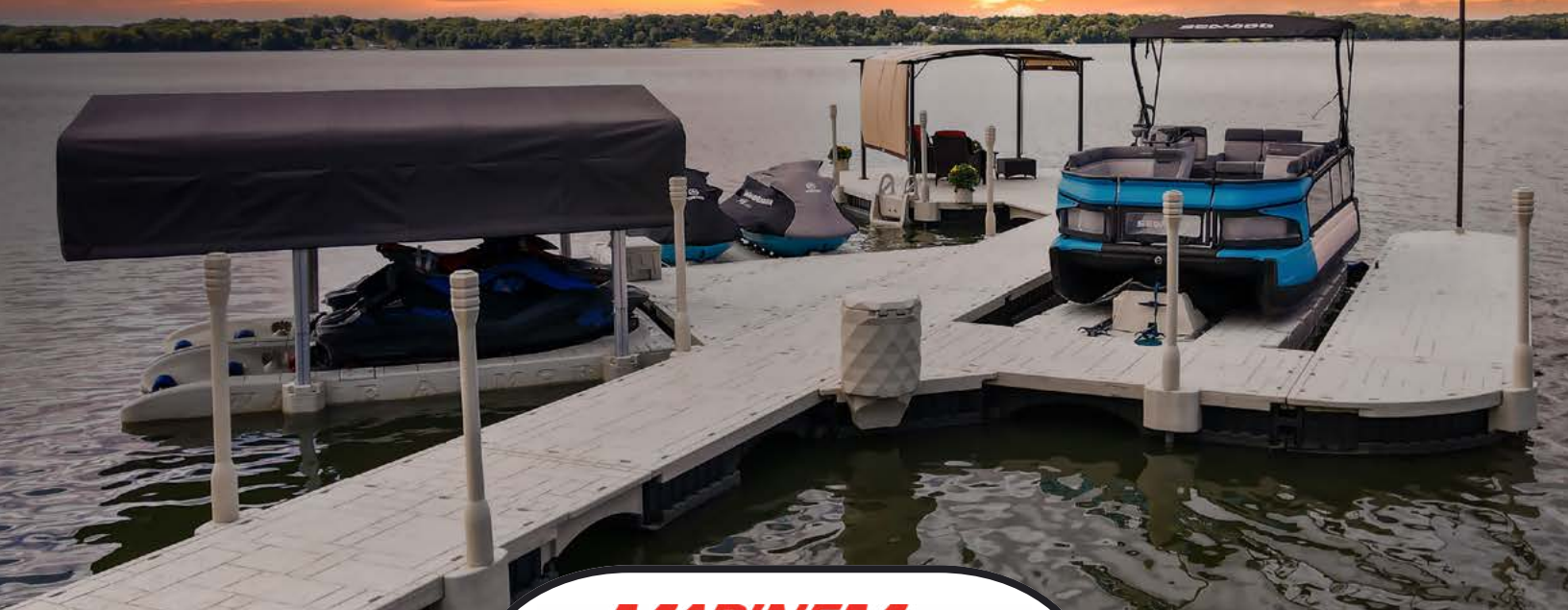


*Ice-Fishing, Molly Krakowski*



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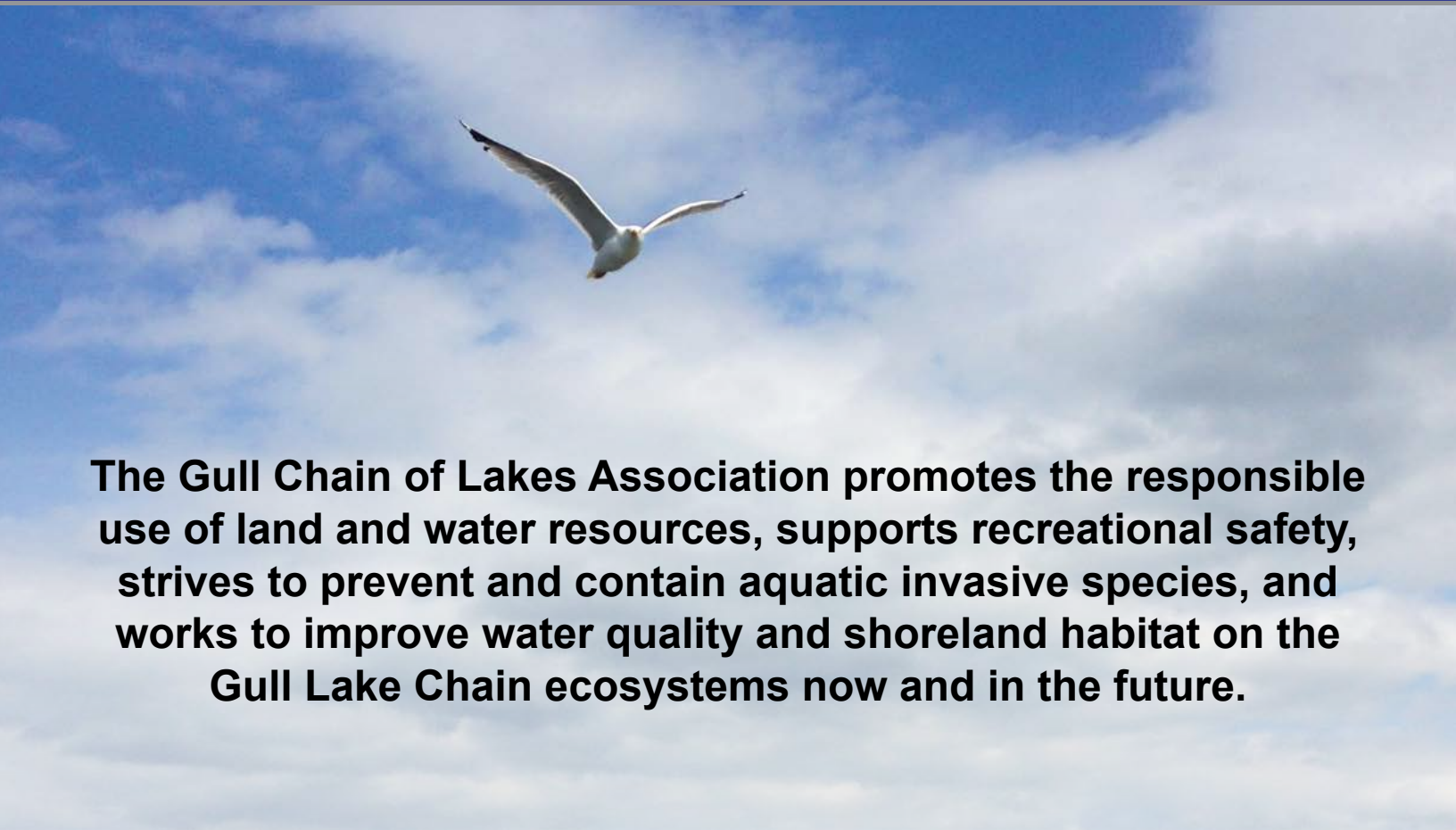
GULL CHAIN OF  
LAKES ASSOCIATION

PO Box 102  
Nisswa, Minnesota 56468

[www.gcola.org](http://www.gcola.org) | [info@gcola.org](mailto:info@gcola.org) |  

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Photo by Joey Halvorson*



**The Gull Chain of Lakes Association promotes the responsible use of land and water resources, supports recreational safety, strives to prevent and contain aquatic invasive species, and works to improve water quality and shoreland habitat on the Gull Lake Chain ecosystems now and in the future.**