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Opinions or recommendations contained in advertising in the newsmagazine are not necessarily opinions or recommendations of GCOLA, GCOLA's Board or Advisory members.

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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.





It's been a great summer with plenty of moisture versus last year's severe drought conditions. In recent days, cooler weather has replaced hot weather temp in the 80s and 90s. It's hard to believe that Fall is nearly upon us!

Please take the time to review articles in this newsmagazine including; the Dorothy Whitmer profile, the Minnesota Loon Project, completion of the End of Dock survey program, GCOLA mid-year Financial Highlights, Boat Safety Training, "Dim the Lights for Birds", and Starry Stonewort outbreak in nearby Middle Cullen lake.

As always, GCOLA offers opportunities to volunteer in areas that GCOLA serves including Lake Steward, Communications, Loon Conservancy, Recreation and Safety, Finance, New Members, Government Relations and Fisheries. Contact a board or advisory member listed in the newsmagazine for further information.

We are coming off a very successful 12th annual Gala fundraiser event at Grandview Lodge on August 4th. I especially want to thank all Gala Committee members for their involvement starting in January of this year. I also appreciate the many contributions in terms of either time or money that folks have made supporting the Gala event. You can read more about the Gala event and see the photos on pages 11-12.

*Steve Frawley*

## Lake Steward of the Gull Chain of Lakes

### Featured in Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) Series on Shorelines



August 15, 2024 4:00 AM

#### 'Quit mowing': Turning Minnesota lake homeowners into shoreline stewards, one lawn at a time

A program born in the Brainerd Lakes Area to protect natural shorelines and curb pollution also wants to reset Minnesota's lake culture. It's led by property owners, including some who helped create the current environmental problems.

by Kirsti Marohn

Save

Three-Part Series "Trouble By the Water", by Kirsti Marohn, Featuring GCOLA Lake Steward with Kris Driessen and Dorothy Whitmer in Part 2, "Quit Mowing" (Search MPR.org, Environment, then Trouble by the Water)

MPR News with Angela Davis

Angela Davis and Cari Dwyer · August 14, 2024 1:16 AM

UPDATED: AUGUST 14, 2024 1:18 AM

#### Protecting Minnesota's vanishing natural shorelines



Plants grow on the Gull Lake shoreline on Dorothy Whitmer's property in East Gull Lake on June 3. Ben Hovland | MPR News

Kick-off for the series:

#### One Hour Live Call-in Show

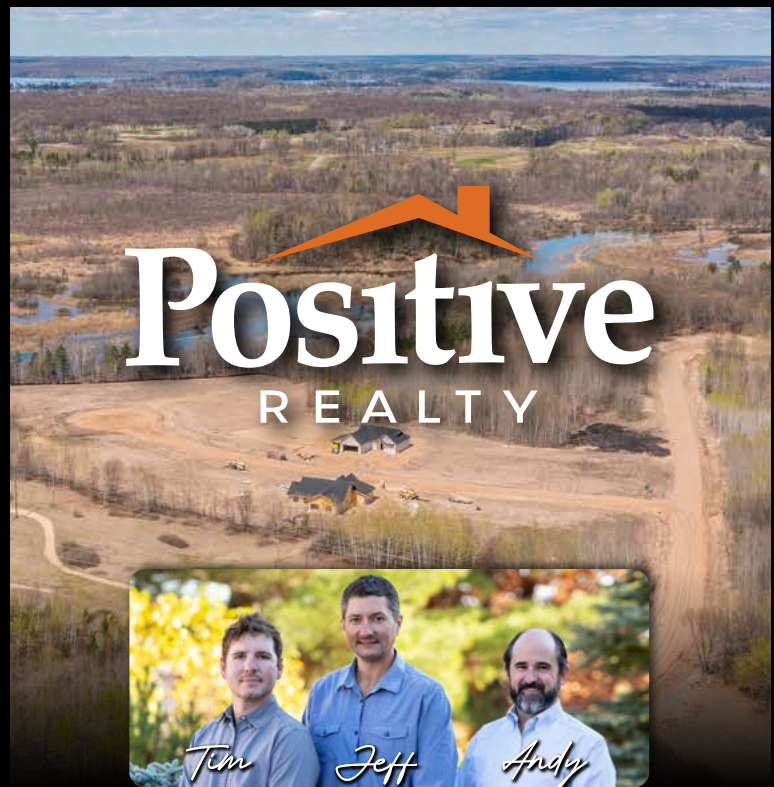
with Angela Davis, featuring Jeff Forester of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers and Dorothy Whitmer of GCOLA, August 14, 2024.

(Search MPR.org for "Protecting Minnesota's Vanishing Natural Shorelines")



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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## DOROTHY WHITMER, LAKE STEWARD CO-CHAIR



I was the middle child in a big family, and my older sisters did everything first. But when my grandmother offered to take one of us to Lake Michigan for three weeks and they turned it down, I had the opportunity of a lifetime, and my life changed. I walked to a little day camp there every day, and swam in the clear, cold waters of Lake Michigan. I was hooked.

My adult life became a quest to get back to the water. I met a guy in Boston whose family had a boat on the Mississippi in Red Wing, my future husband Randy Johnson. One day in 1973, we were walking

through Harvard Square when he grabbed Time magazine off the newsstand. The cover was “The Good Life in Minnesota”, and inside was the photo of my future lake home. He promised me that if we went back to Minnesota, we would get a coat for me rated to 20 degrees below zero, and a lake home. Seventeen years later, the dream came true with a home on Gull Lake. One of the first things I did was join GCOLA because the newsmagazine delighted me, and I vowed to volunteer when I retired.

I had a busy medical practice in the Twin Cities in gastroenterology and raised two daughters who are now physicians themselves. Regan is a head and neck surgeon in Boston and Kara is a liver transplant specialist at Duke in North Carolina. I spent all my free time in and on the waters of Gull Lake, sailing, kayaking and always learning new things like windsurfing.

Then in retirement my curiosity got the better of me when I took a quiz about managing my lakeshore to protect Gull Lake, and I flunked it. That led me to found Lake Steward of GCOLA, and to become part of this lakeshore community of leaders who will be first to make healthier habitat and cleaner water a reality.

## SUCCESSFUL 2024 BOAT SAFETY TRAINING CLASSES

*Jay Chaney, Chair Safety and Rec Committee*

All three of the GCOLA sponsored boat safety training classes were full again this year. It is a great way for young boaters to learn the rules from the experts, plus they each received a life jacket, compliments of GCOLA and had a free pizza lunch, compliments of Zorbaz on Gull. Thanks to the sheriffs' departments of Cass and Crow Wing Counties for teaching the attendees, and to the Gull Lake Sailing School for the use of their facilities to hold the course. A special thank you to Mary Kay Larson and Rosemary Goff for helping with registration and on the day of courses.





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# Do You Need a Victory Lap?



# 100<sup>th</sup>

## Lake Steward Award!

Sarah and Aaron Stritesky  
Upper Gull Lake  
July 3, 2024

Over 200 properties visited  
as of July 9, 2024

When You Are a Lake Steward,  
Every Day is a Victory!  
For Our Lakes,  
Clean Water and Great Fishing

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- 2 Keep music at reasonable levels
- 3 Minimize repetitive passes



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# GCOLA DONATION TO MN LOON PROJECT



*GCOLA Board chair Steve Frawley presenting donation agreement to Richard and Terri Rammer.*



*Jerry Taragos, Power Lodge, Richard and Terri Rammer, Loon Research Project and GCOLA team Sheila Johnston, Steve Frawley, Uldis Birznieks, Kathy Lundberg*

When there is a will, there is a way. That is a good way to describe the ebb and flow of events that eventually culminated in the MN Loon Project getting a new Mercury 60HP outboard motor and a good used Smokercraft 16 ft boat donated by GCOLA. The story starts off with Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Chair, reaching out to the GCOLA Executive Committee regarding an urgent need by the MN Loon Project. The MN Loon Project studies loons and population dynamics of loons in Cass and Crow Wing Counties including the Gull Chain of Lakes. The project people discovered the boat

motor they used in the studies was beyond repair and they did not have the funds to replace it. Sheila reached out to GCOLA for any suggestions.

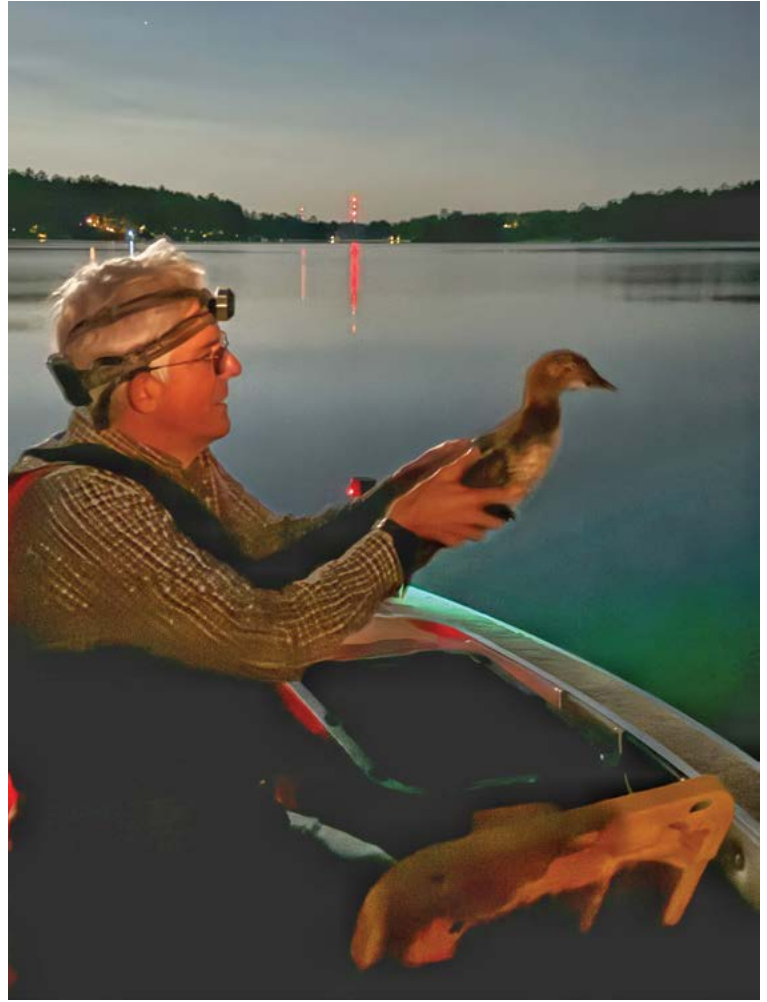
The GCOLA Executive Committee took the bull by the horns and ran with it. Through associations with the Power Lodge, a perennial major sponsor for the GCOLA Gala, the Power Lodge sales representative, Jerry Taragos, offered an excellent price on a new Mercury 60 HP outboard motor. The purchase was approved by the GCOLA Board. Richard and Terri Rammer, key MN Loon Project volunteers, delivered the boat to the Power Lodge for installation of the new motor.

End of a good news story? Unfortunately, no, because when the Power Lodge personnel checked out the boat prior to installation of the new motor, they discovered major cracks in the weld joints in the stern of the boat. The new motor is heavier and more powerful than the old motor and Power Lodge personnel determined it would be a safety issue if they installed the new motor. Well, back to the drawing board.

After discussions with Jerry at the Power Lodge on various options, Jerry said that Power Lodge would be receiving a trade-in of a good used boat. Uldis Birznieks checked out the boat and after some negotiations, received a firm quote from the Power Lodge for the new motor and used boat, which is a 16 ft Smokercraft. Uldis presented the offer to the GCOLA Executive Committee who approved the purchase.

Steve Frawley, GCOLA Chair, had recently spoken to John Simons about a potential donation to GCOLA. John then decided to make a \$10,000 unrestricted grant to GCOLA. John has been a supporter of loons in the past, and the timing of John's donation helped GCOLA arrange funding for the new Mercury 60 HP outboard motor. Thus, with the unrestricted donation by John Simons and additional funds provided by GCOLA, the MN Loon Project received its new motor and gently used boat in a donation ceremony on July 11, 2024 as shown in the two photos.





The Loon Project is a scientific investigation of population dynamics, reproductive success, and territorial behavior of common loons. The project began researching loons in Wisconsin in 1993 and breeding pairs on Minnesota study lakes in Cass and Crow Wing counties were added to the investigation in 2021. Loons on Lake Margaret, Upper Gull, Bass, Roy, and Nisswa Lakes are all part of The Loon Project's research. Historically, the work has focused on territorial and nesting behavior, but recent findings have turned attention to conservation.

The initial use of the boat and motor was for banding on the Gull Chain of Lakes on July 18. After the initial loon bandings, Terri Rammer stated that the boat and new motor were "a gift from heaven." The other half of the dynamic volunteer duo, Richard Rammer stated, "It is a miracle in the difference between the two motors. The new motor is so quiet. We used 2.5 gallons of gas for an entire day with the new motor, where we used 6 gallons of gas for ¾ of

a day with the old motor. Now four team members can move around in the boat with no problem and previously we could not do that. This makes the loon banding so much more efficient."

Dr. Walter Piper, head of the MN Loon Project, thanked GCOLA for the donation of the boat and motor at a thank you event at the Gull Lake Sailing School on July 24 attended by about 50 GCOLA members and guests. He subsequently posted a comment: "Without GCOLA, our loon banding work – crucial for calculating annual adult survival rate – would have been impossible. Cannot say enough about their generosity."

Thus, as shown by the cooperation and quick response by GCOLA and the generosity of John Simons, the MN Loon Project was able to have a boat and motor for the start of 2024 loon banding season. Truly, if there is a will, there is a way.

# HOW TO TEAM UP WITH OWLS TO CONTROL MICE

Sheila Johnston, Loon Conservancy Committee Chair

In one year, we eat over 1000 rodents each, please stop poisoning our food!



**A single owl can consume 1000s of rodents each year!** If you are using rodenticide bait boxes inside your home or around the perimeter of your home, you are inadvertently killing the predators that control the rodent population and making the problem worse. A deadly chain reaction can be created when using rodenticide.

- Non-target wildlife species such as chipmunks and squirrels may consume the rodenticide.
- Bald eagles and other scavengers consume the toxic carcasses of poisoned animals and become poisoned too.
- Predators such as owls, foxes, fishers, are poisoned when they feed on live rodents that have ingested the poison. They may also feed the poisoned rodents to their young. It is a slow, painful death.

## There are Safe, Environmentally Friendly Ways to Control Rodents!

- Seal entry points to your home with steel wool. These could be around foundations, cabinets, attics, basements, crawl spaces etc.
- Cover entry points around pipes under the sink or back of cupboards with duct tape. (Pest control companies offer entry point service, and do not require the addition of rodenticide bait boxes.)
- Secure food sources such as bird seed and pet food, trash, and compost piles.
- Attract raptors to your yard by leaving up dead trees and planting trees. A single owl can consume 1000s of mice and rodents every year.
- Place botanical rodent repellents such as Fresh Cab in areas where you think rodents might be residing. These plant-based products can effectively repel mice without causing harm to non-target wildlife.
- Use humane traps or snap traps in attached garages and indoors. Never use glue traps. They are indiscriminate and inhumane.

## Rodenticides kill more than just rodents.

Poison is not species-specific. Though you may target mice and rats when using rodenticides, a chain reaction is created.

The diagram illustrates a chain reaction starting from a pile of blue rodenticide. Lines connect this pile to various wildlife species, showing how the poison spreads. The species shown are: Muskrat, Eastern Chipmunk, Eastern Gray Squirrel, Barred Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Red Fox, Virginia Opossum, Turkey Vulture, and Bald Eagle.

Non-target wildlife species like muskrats, chipmunks, and squirrels can be attracted to rodenticide.

Larger animals like owls, hawks, and foxes may prey on rodents that have ingested rodenticides, thus becoming poisoned themselves.

Scavengers such as opossums, vultures, and eagles can become poisoned when they consume the carcasses of animals killed by rodenticides.

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# GALA 2024

Lake lovers from all across the Gull Lake chain gathered to celebrate the 12th annual Gull Chain of Lakes (GCOLA) Gala. This year's Gala included a competitive live auction, an exciting trip raffle drawing, and an educational guest speaker. The 2024 Gala was truly a night to remember, and raised over \$27,000 to support the mission and goals of our association.

The silent auction and cocktail social hour were the first things on the evening's agenda. Competition was high during the silent auction, as more than 80 items caught many eyes. All 100 trip raffle tickets were sold by the outset of the evening! Thanks to the Willett Family for a spirits tasting which drew a crowd.

Old friends reunited and met many of new GCOLA members attending their first gala as the pre-event activities were enjoyed. The dining room offered open seating to encourage guests to sit with others they may not know and to forge new friendships. After a brief welcome by Steve Frawley, GCOLA Board Chair, dinner was served. As dinner was concluding, Steve introduced Jay Chaney, the evening's host. Jeremy Wiczek, a local personality, was the live auctioneer who got the crowd fired up as he used his auctioneering skills to encourage bidding on four exciting live auction items. Items included a

Kamado Egg charcoal grill, donated by the Maxson family, \$1500 Dive Guys service certificates, a monster package of pull toys, surfboard and boat bumpers from Marine Max Nisswa, and a golf package from GrandView containing a Scottie Scheffler signed golf bag, golf for four at a GrandView course with cart and golf balls. Thank you to the four generous winners.

The trip raffle prize winner was announced with all proceeds from the raffle going directly to support GCOLA's programs.

The evening's guest speaker Dr. Bruce Carlson, MD PhD, was introduced and his presentation was titled "A Lake Through the Seasons". He shared slides and underwater video describing the lake strata and the lake life which inhabit them during the seasons of the year in our part of Minnesota. He signed copies of his books and answered questions after the dinner.

The event concluded with the drawing for the Gala's annual door prize, the announcement of the many silent auction winners, and a big thank you for all in attendance. The Gala is GCOLA's only annual fundraiser and without it many of the important programs GCOLA spearheads for the sake of preserving our beautiful lakes would not be possible.









# THANK YOU GALA COMMITTEE

The Gala planning reflected the efforts of a great group of people. Jane Edwards, Ann Swenson and Sue Friedrichs chaired the committee, which began meeting in January to set up another successful event. This volunteer committee unselfishly gave their time, talents, and treasure to making sure that GCOLA's only annual fundraiser was a success." A heartfelt thank you to the people involved with planning each part of the Gala night: Steve Frawley, Linda Harrier, Phyllis Trcka, Kacee Barrett, Mary Beth Jones, Vicki Smith, Ann Swenson, Mary Rugloski, Uldis Birznieks, Kathy Lundberg, Jill Nowak. A special thank you to our day-of-event volunteers: Rosemary Goff, Lise Herren, Lynn and Mike Smith, Tim & Patricia Thoele, Pat Birznieks, Vicki Frawley, Maris Speckmann, Pat Rugloski, Larry Friedrichs, Tina Hatch, guest auctioneer Jeremy Wizcek. Special recognition goes to: Marv Meyer, former board member, for selling the most dinner and raffle tickets! Thank you to our featured

speaker, Dr. Bruce Carlson, who presented some very interesting information about lake ecology and aquatic invasive species which threaten our beautiful Gull Lake Chain. Lastly, our wonderful photographer Joey Halvorson, pictured here, has documented the gala in the photos you see in this issue – we appreciate her time and many talents!



We would love to have additional volunteers for next year's Gala committee. It is a rewarding and fun experience and with the dollars raised during this event, GCOLA will be able to develop and fund more programs consistent with our mission of keeping the Gull Chain of Lakes water and shoreland healthy for the future. Please contact any board member or email [info@gcola.org](mailto:info@gcola.org) for more information or to volunteer.



*Vicki Smith, Kacee Barrett,  
Mary Beth Jones*



*Cindy & John Carnahan*



*Ron & Claire Faust,  
Kathy Lundberg, Chuk Batko*



*Uldis & Pat Birznieks*



*Jeremy Wizcek*



*Jay Chaney*



*Jill Noack*



*Steve Frawley, Dorothy Whitmer*



*Mary Rugloski*



*Linda Harrier*



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 Scott & Brenda Schuler  
 Gary & Leslie Severson  
 Lindsay Sorem  
 Maris Speckmann  
 Spirits of Nisswa  
 SPR Motorsports & Marine  
 Sunshine's Summerhouse  
 Ann & Jeff Swanson  
 Ann & Jim Swenson  
 The Animal House  
 The Smokestack BBQ Supply Store  
 Michelle Toft  
 Turtle Town Books  
 Sharon & Mike Wagner  
 Jennie & Jim Ward  
 Dean & Beth Williamson  
 Ye Old Pickle Factory



Lakeside Living



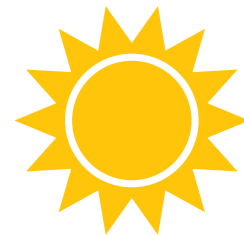
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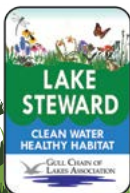


# OUR PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE



## LAKE STEWARD

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

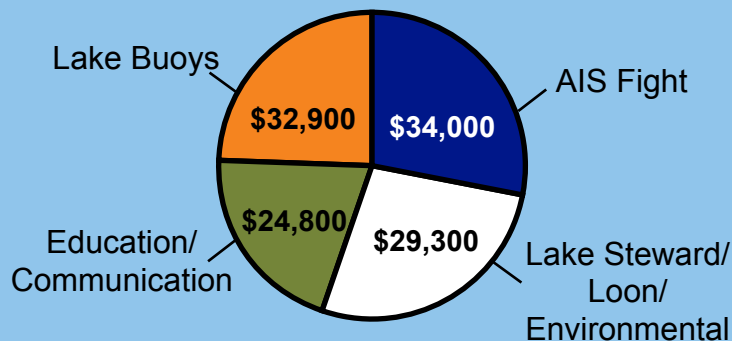


## SAFETY & RECREATION

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



## 2024 BUDGETED PRIORITIES



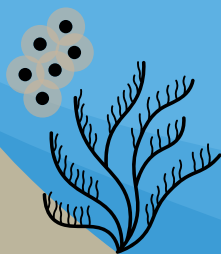
## LOON CONSERVANCY

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



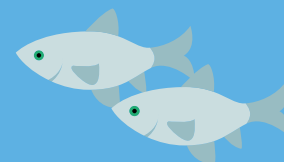
## ENVIRONMENTAL

- 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

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- Exciting volunteer opportunities
- FUN! Annual Summer Gala Event

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

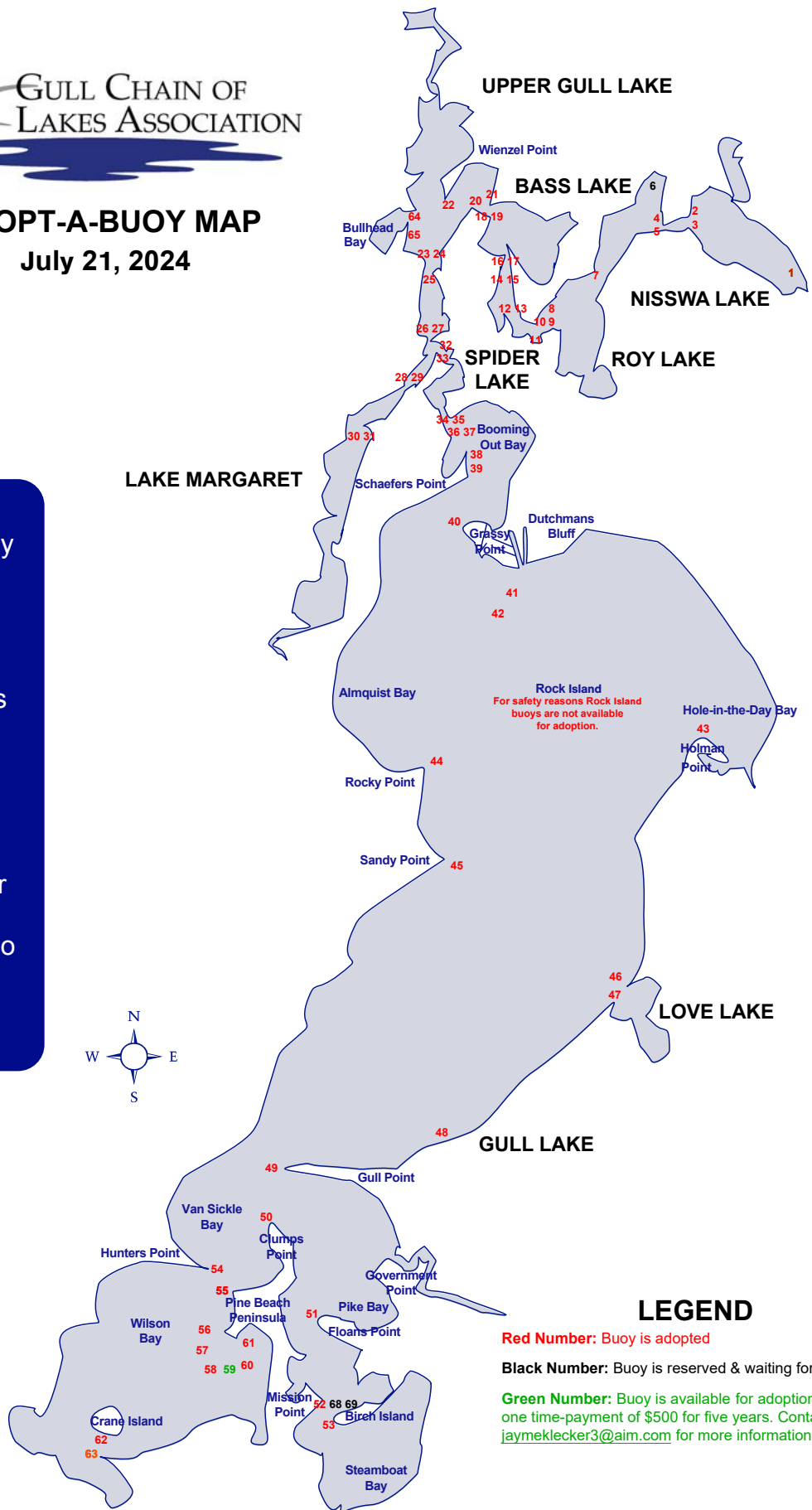
- Advocate for lake issues with state legislators
- Interface with county and local governments
- Share with neighboring lake associations

# BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

# BUOY MAP



## ADOPT-A-BUOY MAP July 21, 2024



A message from an Adopt-a-Buoy member: "Our family buoy out in front of Holman's Point got loose and was replaced with a temporary buoy. When the new buoy was replaced, it had the spelling of my mother's name wrong.

I notified Jay Chaney immediately and within a day (over the 4th of July week!) he had it corrected! It warmed our family to the core as we drove by and noticed the correction so quickly! Big kudos to Jay and his team for such a great rapid response!"

**LEGEND**

**Red Number:** Buoy is adopted

**Black Number:** Buoy is reserved & waiting for payment

**Green Number:** Buoy is available for adoption with a one time-payment of \$500 for five years. Contact [jaymeklecker3@aim.com](mailto:jaymeklecker3@aim.com) for more information.



## What If You Had Started a Project To Beautify Your Shoreline This Year?

Prairie Restorations, Princeton, MN  
Former Beach Planted June 2024

Prairie Restorations, Princeton, MN  
Shoreline Planted July 2023

<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$7,353 + tax</b>
Cass County Paid	\$3,676
GCOLA paid (Max Allowable)	\$2,000
<b>Homeowner Cost</b>	<b>\$1,677 + tax</b>

<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$7,792 + tax</b>
Cass County Paid	\$3,896
GCOLA Paid (Max Allowable)	\$2,000
<b>Homeowner Cost</b>	<b>\$1,896 + tax</b>



“BEFORE” Photo

Plans:

Move firepit back to protect Gull Lake.  
Expand buffer zone with native plants  
to earn the Lake Steward Award.



“BEFORE” Photo

Plans:

Plant a colorful and protective buffer zone  
to create habitat and protect Gull Lake.

Stay Tuned for “AFTER” Photos!

Contact Us Year Round.  
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# ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

The annual meeting was held via Zoom again this year. The agenda included reports from each of the committee chairs. There was very interesting information about the recognition of the Lake Steward program on other Minnesota lakes and the publicity it has attracted. The loon conservancy programs have been very active with more volunteers involved and more programs underway including the addition of Gull Lake Chain loons to the Minnesota Loon Project. The association's financial summary was reviewed, and Uldis Birznieks, Jay Chaney, and Sue Friedrichs were ratified as board members for an additional three year term. The meeting concluded with a Q & A session.

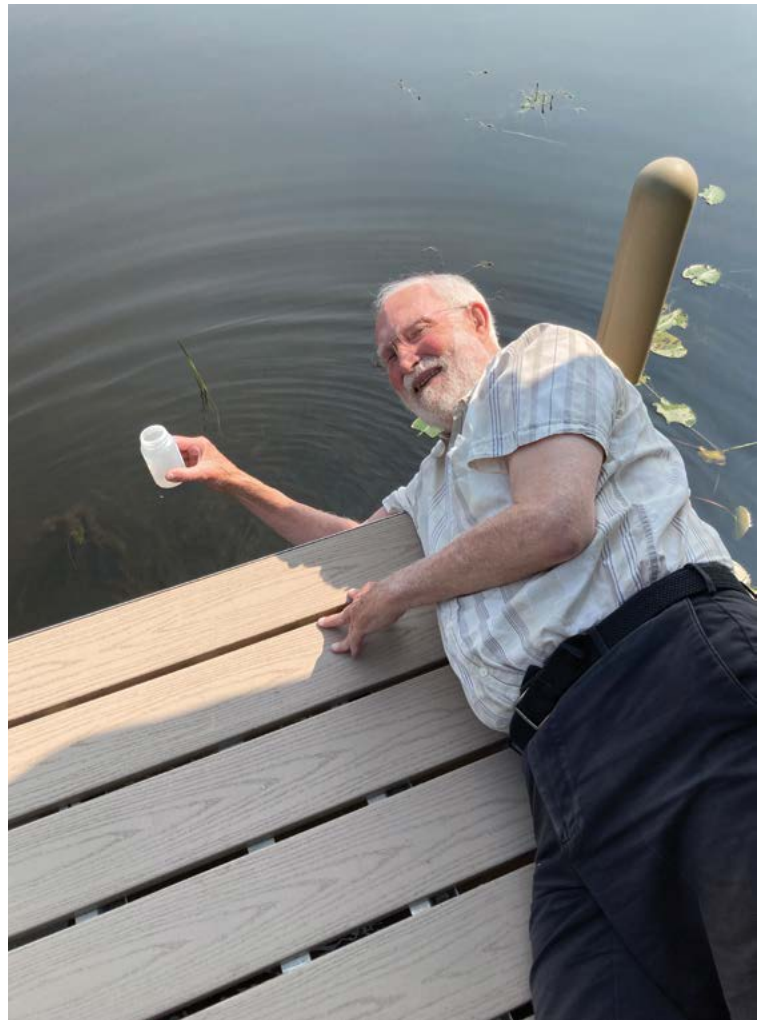


## END-OF-DOCK

*Robert Eliason, Environmental Committee Chair*

September marks the end of the tenth year for the End-of-Dock program. When I started EoD program, my ultimate goal was to gather ten years' worth of data because that is the minimum number of years required to discern any environmental trends. I didn't know how it would work to have untrained volunteers collect samples; so, I set an initial goal of five years and then to evaluate the program. Well, when I looked at the five-year data, my evaluation was that the program was very successful, the volunteers were doing a great job of collecting samples. There were no outlier results, which would indicate improper sampling techniques. So, I decided to run EoD for another five years.

The data from this year's late summer sampling will be gathered during August and the graphs will be updated for the Winter magazine issue and posted on the [gcola.org](http://gcola.org) website. My ten year goal has been reached, and I have crossed the finish line. Now, ten years is a long time to volunteer. I wish to acknowledge the following volunteers who have also crossed the ten-year finish line: Steve Bergan, Uldis and Pat Birznieks, Rosemary Goff and Bob Toborg, Lise Herren, Kurt Hunstiger, Arla and Charlie Johnson, Tom McClintick, Shelley McDonald, Lynne Miller, Kevin and Vicki Smith. Congratulations!!!







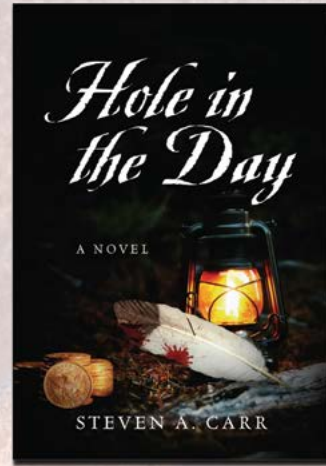
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## From local author Steven A. Carr

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the Ojibwa treasure

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# GCOLA 2024 MID-YEAR FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS AND SUMMARY

First, I would like to announce the addition of two GCOLA members to the Finance/Audit Committee. They are Jane Plagge and Jon Villela. Jane is a relative newcomer to Gull Lake (Wilson Bay), being here for two years and retiring from 33 years at 3M with supply chain and data analysis experience, also with auditing, CPA and Six Sigma experience. Jon's family has been on Gull Lake (Pike Bay) since the 70's. Jon is a Technology VP with Ameriprise Financial. Over his 18 years there, he has led teams & initiatives across many IT development & operations disciplines. We welcome them to the Finance/Audit Committee team. We thank Tim Thoele for his valuable contributions and advice to our committee as Tim will now concentrate on his AIS Committee Chair position. We will continue to seek Tim's advice on key financial matters for GCOLA, even though he is no longer on the Committee.

Some key financial highlights from the first half of 2024 are the following:

- Received approval from the Initiative Foundation for the emergency distribution of \$47,422 for the purchase of two I-LIDS (Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor) systems to be installed at the Gull Narrows and Nisswa Lake public accesses in early 2025.
- Purchased a new 60 HP Mercury outboard motor and used 16 ft Smokercraft boat with trailer and donated it to the MN Loon Project. (See article in this newsmagazine)
- Received approval from the GCOLA Board for the Investment Policy Statement for the Operating, AIS Contingency and GCOLA AIS funds. This policy formalizes the governance of the investment policy, objectives and constraints for these three funds.

The 2024 GCOLA mid-year financial summary was presented to GCOLA members at the Annual Meeting on August 21. The actuals for the first half of 2024, the 2024 budget and the 2023 actuals were presented as shown in the figure below. The budget for 2024, as passed by the GCOLA Board of Directors, had total income budgeted at \$171.5K,

total expense budgeted at \$181.5K, and a 2024 budgeted net negative income of (\$10.0K). The analysis of the 2024 Budget with the 2023 Actuals was provided in the Spring 2024 edition of the GCOLA newsmagazine.

The income for the first half of 2024 shows we have received 57% of our year-end budgeted income, which is about \$3K lower than last year. Dues income is at 84% of budget which is ahead of last year and the historical average. Donations are 75% of the 2024 budget and should meet or exceed the budget at year-end. We truly thank all the members who have contributed to help GCOLA meet our mission to protect our Gull Chain of Lakes! On the expense side through the first half of 2024, total expenses are at 19% of budget, and are about \$7K less than 2023 mid-year expenses. This is the first year GCOLA is making all donations to other organizations in 4Q and has a separate expense category. Previously, they were distributed throughout the year and donation expenses were included with the individual areas. This change in donation distribution accounts for most of the shortfall for 2024 mid-year expenses. Known outstanding expenses beyond budget for the second half, include increased expense for new website development (\$3K) and the boat/motor expense for the MN Loon Project (\$15K).

Year-to-date, our net income is +\$63.6K, which is about \$15K higher than historical averages and about \$4K higher than 2023 mid-year data. In 2023, with a record-breaking GALA net income, we finished out the year with a net income of \$59.8K. Thus, with projected 2024 second half income and exclusive of any major unknown expenses, we should finish the year with a positive net income versus the budgeted net negative income of (\$10.0K).

The Preservation Endowment Fund, held with the Initiative Foundation (IF), totals \$339.7K through June (excluding the \$50K match from Initiative Foundation, which is not accessible by GCOLA). The IF annual spending amount transfer and the emergency distribution to GCOLA in 2024 have totaled \$68.5K. The AIS Contingency Fund, which is in both CDs and a savings account stands at \$97.4K.

The BLACF AIS Fund totals \$350.3K which includes \$87.9K in funds transferred from IF (\$21.1K annual spending amount) and the AIS Contingency Fund (\$66.8K).

With our AIS Contingency Fund reserve of \$97.4K, our Endowment Fund total at \$339.7K and our BLACF AIS Fund at \$350.3K, we have potentially up to \$787.4K available, if needed, for any new aquatic invasive species that might get introduced into our beloved Gull Chain of Lakes. All of us should be

diligent to make sure that does not happen, as stary stonewort is only 45 miles away in Leech Lake and less than 5 miles away in Middle Cullen Lake.

In summary, GCOLA is in a sound financial position through the first half of 2024. Your Board will work hard to ensure sound 2024 financial performance while performing critical projects that align with our mission. Thank you for your support of GCOLA in our vital mission.

	2024 ACTUALS		2024 BUDGET		2023 ACTUALS	
	THRU	JUNE				
	\$ (K)	% of Budget	\$ (K)	% of Total	\$ (K)	% of Total
<b>INCOME</b>						
DUES	44.3	84%	53.0	31%	53.6	22%
DONATIONS* (See Note 1)	45.5	75%	60.5	35%	135.0	54%
GALA	0.8	2%	48.0	28%	49.8	20%
GRANTS**/INTEREST/OTHER (See Note 2)	7.6	76%	10.0	6%	10.1	4%
<b>INCOME TOTALS</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>171.5</b>		<b>248.5</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
AIS/ENVIRON/LOON/LAKE STEWARD	5.6	12%	47.3	26%	58.7	31%
BUOY SYSTEM/SAFETY	8.5	26%	32.4	18%	40.8	22%
GALA	3.2	13%	25.5	14%	16.5	9%
ADMINISTRATION	13.5	48%	28.1	15%	21.8	12%
DONATIONS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	0.0	0%	20.0	11%	30.8	16%
COMMUNICATION/GOVT RELATIONS/MEMBERSHIP/FISHERIES/MISC	3.8	13%	28.3	16%	20.1	11%
<b>EXPENSES TOTALS</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>181.5</b>		<b>188.7</b>	
<b>NET INCOME (LOSS) - (See Note 3)</b>	<b>63.6</b>		<b>(10.0)</b>		<b>59.8</b>	
PRESERVATION ENDOWMENT FUND - TOTAL****	339.7				366.9	
AIS CONTINGENCY FUND - IN					57.7	
AIS CONTINGENCY FUND - TOTAL	97.4				81.0	
BLACF AIS FUND - IN					241.2	
BLACF AIS FUND - TOTAL	354.2				241.2	
*Note 1 - Does not include Initiative Foundation Annual Spending Amount Transfers or Emergency Distributions (Total \$68.5K)						
**Note 2 - Does not include cost of Watercraft Inspections directly paid by counties to inspectors						
*** Note 3 - Does not include gains/losses for Preservation Endowment Fund or BLACF AIS Fund						
**** Note 4 - Only includes funds in Preservation Endowment Fund accessible to GCOLA in AIS emergency (\$50K match not included)						



By the time you receive and read this newsletter, the annual fall migration of birds from the Lakes region has likely begun. Adult loons should mostly be gone, along with many of the songbirds. Larger raptors, juvenile loons and sandhill cranes are preparing for their flight south. Ducks should still be around, waiting eagerly for the start of hunting season. (smile)

A safe migration period is critical for the survival of many of the bird species we have come to know and love in our Lakes region. Threats abound given habitat loss for suitable stopover locations; climate change; and artificial light at night altering bird species' traditional migratory flight patterns. Awareness of the threats to migratory birds is growing. The second Saturday in May and October are designated as bi-annual World Migratory Bird Day. This year, the fall celebration is observed on October 12th. In 2022, the theme for World Migratory Bird Day was "Dim the Lights for Birds at Night!" to focus on the threat that artificial light at night poses to migratory birds.

Approximately 80% of migratory birds fly at night between their stopover locations, including the majority of songbirds and waterfowl\*. Birds evolved to make their journey with light from natural sources such as the stars and the moon. Artificial light at night interferes with the timing of their departure and can cause birds to fly off course toward brightly lit urban areas.

Birds' attraction to bright light sources is well known, while all the reasons are not as well understood. This attraction is magnified during migratory periods as skyglow is one of the main predictors of migratory stopover bird density. An estimated one billion birds are killed in the United States each year through collision with buildings, primarily on glass surfaces. Light emitted from inside of buildings is a larger factor in collisions than ambient light on the outside of buildings. Long term studies done at the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago and at over twenty buildings in Minneapolis provide data supporting that time of year (i.e. during spring and fall migratory periods); square feet of glass surface; and interior brightness of light are the strongest predictors of bird mortality rate due to collisions with buildings.

There is the added risk of attracting birds to urban areas with suboptimal habitats for stopover locations. Stopover locations are invaluable to migratory birds, providing needed rest, food sources for refueling energy stores and protection from inclement weather. Skyglow from brightly lit urban areas bend natural migratory paths to urban areas where the tired, hungry birds then search for the limited locations suitable for resting and refueling; ideally those with tree cover and wetland environments. The higher density of birds at these locations increases competition for already limited sources of food and increases the risk of disease transmission.

What can we do to reduce the risk of artificial light at night to migratory birds? Obviously, the greatest benefit is provided via civic measures in urban areas with improved lighting ordinances and increased green areas. The same study done in Chicago estimated that bird mortality could be reduced up to 60% at the McCormick Place Convention Center by decreasing lighted window area to minimal required levels. But we can all do a small part by reducing our interior lighting at night and using window coverings to shield necessary lighting.

\*For reassurance to our loon lovers, thankfully loons migrate during daytime hours.



Photo by Joey Halvorson

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# STARRY STONEWORT FOUND IN MIDDLE CULLEN LAKE

Tim Thoele, AIS Chair



An aquatic invasive species, starry stonewort, has been identified in Middle Cullen Lake recently. Water from Middle Cullen flows into Lower Cullen and eventually into Nisswa Lake. Crow Wing County has moved Lower Cullen from low risk to high risk. They, along with the DNR, are planning for heavy monitoring of the Lower Cullen ramp including the presence of

a boat decontamination unit. Crow Wing County, the DNR and the Cullen Lake Association are in the initial stages of evaluating treatment options, and GCOLA is offering the support of our association in an effort to keep starry stonewort from spreading into the Gull Lake Chain.

Starry stonewort is a bushy, bright green macro-algae that produces a star shaped bulbil, as shown in the photo. It is a prohibited invasive species in Minnesota that can form dense mats and out-compete native plants. The thick mats of starry stonewort hinder, and sometimes prohibit, many of the desired recreational uses of our beautiful lakes.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

People spread starry stonewort primarily through the movement of water-related equipment. Fragments can get tangled in trailers, motors, anchors and inside watercrafts (boats, canoes, and kayaks). Small bulbils, which may be hidden in mud and debris, can stick to trailer bunks, anchors, ropes, fabric, footwear, as well as scuba, fishing, and hunting gear. A small fragment or bulbil can start a new population.

Whether or not a lake is listed as infested, Minnesota law requires water recreationists to:

- Clean watercraft of all aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species.
- Drain all water by removing drain plugs and keeping them out during transport.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.
- Dry docks, lifts, swim rafts and other equipment for at least 21 days before placing equipment into another water body.

Report new occurrences of starry stonewort to the DNR immediately by contacting your DNR Invasive Species Specialist or log in and submit a report through EDDMapS.

## 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!**



Photo by Sheila Farrell Johnston



Photo by Your Boat Club



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The Gull Chain of Lakes Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, Federal Tax ID #41-1272492. Dues are \$50 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

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Please keep my additional donation(s) anonymous

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Since my last update there has been a successful petition approved by the DNR which may create a domino effect for other lakes around the state requiring enhanced wake restrictions. Absent statewide regulations, the DNR petition process offers individual lakes another option to control problems associated with enhanced wakes. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has approved the following ordinance received from Cook County pertaining to Caribou Lake near Lutsen. The request included the following:

1. Prohibiting wake surfing in any area that meets one or more of the following:
  - a. Any area that is less than 500 feet from the shoreline or another watercraft.
  - b. Any area in which the water depth is less than 20 feet.
2. Also, no person may operate a boat on Caribou Lake in an artificially bow-high manner, to increase or enhance the boat's wake.

In other developments, phase two of the Saint Anthony Falls Laboratory (SAFL) research project looking at the impact of wake boat prop wash on lake bottoms is continuing. At the same time a third phase proposed by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) will look at boat and wind wave interactions with shorelines.

Finally, as a reminder, here are GCOLA's 2024 Legislative Priority Items:



Photo by Steven Wall

1. Consider legislation (distance from shore, depth, etc) for watercraft creating enhanced wakes that are a safety issue, cause shoreline erosion and sub-surface ecological damage
2. Provide sustained funding to the Minnesota Aquatic Research Center (MAISRC) for finding solutions to eradicate zebra mussels, starry stonewort and other aquatic invasive species (AIS)
3. Maintain/increase funding level to counties to prevent the spread of new or existing aquatic invasive species
4. Support efforts to limit encroachment by land developers on marginal lakeshore property
5. Increase boater AIS compliance with fines for violations that are in parity with Minnesota game and fish fines with authority to impound

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Patricia Pinckney  
 Barb Lindenmayer .....Gull  
 Bruce & Rene Mackissock.....Gull  
 Susan & William Buesing .....Roy

Andrea Rusk  
 Jody & Patrick Carey .....Gull  
 Shannon Ebertowski.....Roy  
 Terry & Ron Ferriss.....Roy

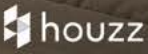


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## YOUR LAKE ASSOCIATION IS WORKING FOR YOU

### 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

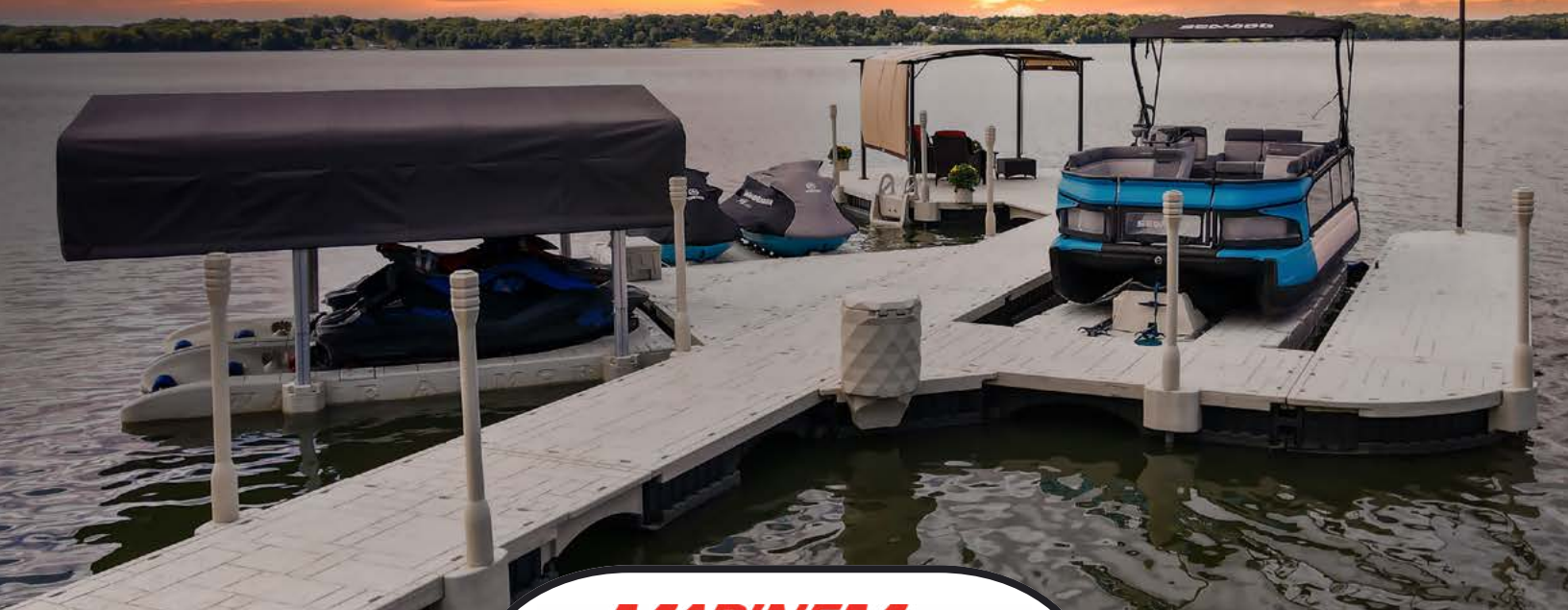
- Purchases, installs, and maintains one of the premier navigational buoy systems (100 buoys) in the State of Minnesota. We also install more than 20 no wake enforcement buoys for the sheriff's department.
- Provides free maps, with boating rules and regulation, at three public landings.
- Partners with 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.





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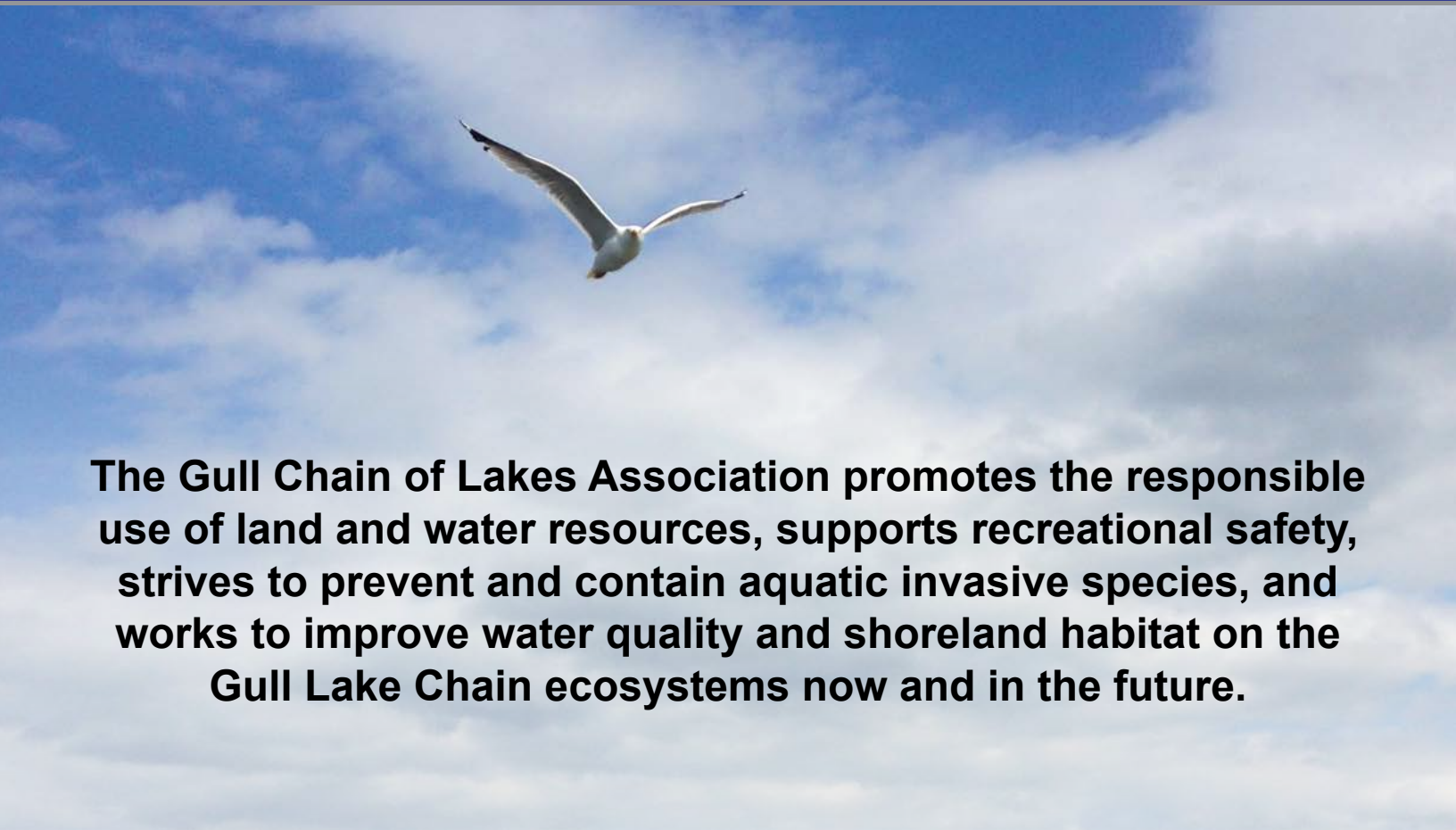
GULL CHAIN OF  
LAKES ASSOCIATION

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Nisswa, Minnesota 56468

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## 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.**