

The Chain Letter

of the



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

October 2018

Volume 21, Issue 3

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Visit our web site www.wcola.org. Add your items to it by sending to Mark Miner mminer@minergroup.com

President's musings

WOW! The summer is gone already. I hope you all had a great one here on these wonderful lakes. We were in swimming on Memorial Day weekend and still on Labor Day weekend. That is really good for an old guy. Your association had another good year with near record high membership and four new board members and committee leads. We have already implemented several new ideas and really appreciate the fresh thinking that comes with new blood.

Lots going on again this year:

WCOLA again hosted a June Social event at the Bluewater Camp Fire Camp. This is a great venue and is always a good time. John and Marcia Downing again hosted their Summer Solstice Bill Downing Memorial party and this year we had great weather for it. Our July annual picnic also enjoyed great weather, great food, and great company.

The annual meeting in August dealt with elections, approval of new board members and updated every one on what your association has been doing (see the presentation at www.WCOLA.org). Our guest speaker was John Downing who gave a fascinating presentation on "what's up with our lakes". His presentation addressed the source of our lake water and some disturbing concerns over algae and oxygen levels (see this presentation also at www.WCOLA.org).

The second of our twice-annual road clean ups was completed in September. The annual loon count was completed in July and is presented later in this newsletter. A team of members continue to do weekly secchi disk readings throughout the summer and reports the findings to the MPCA, which can be viewed, on their web site. The trend of this water clarity measure appears to be in the wrong direction and will require watching. See the report later in this newsletter.

The Chain of Lakes AIS Rapid Response Plan has been completed and is viewable on the WCOLA web site. We have also prepared a resort/camp package for use with their guests to encourage responsible use of the lakes and discourage introduction of invasive species. Each of the four resorts and two camps on the chain have been visited and the package materials discussed. Slow/no wake signs have been purchased and installed at each end of the three channels connecting the lakes and other signs posted at the public boat launch sites. Welcome packages for new owners on the lakes have now been delivered to 11 households. The Itasca Waters Shoreland Guide has been mailed to all members.

We have received several complaints this summer over loon harassment, wake caused damage, and poor boating etiquette. I had hoped that on these essentially isolated lakes with such limited boat traffic that this would not be a problem, but unfortunately it was. There have also been several concerns expressed over the extensive use of the boat-in campsites and the resulting sanitation issues.

On that note, I wish you all well until we meet again. Jim Olijnek

**Wabana Chain of Lakes Treasurer's Report
September 30, 2018**

Balance – September 1, 2018	\$ 8,089.94
Receipts:	
Dues	\$ 30.00
Total Receipts	\$ 30.00
Disbursements:	
Itasca Co. Sheriff's Office	\$ 373.00
5 No Wake signs	
Total Disbursements	\$ 373.00
Checkbook Balance-September 30, 2018	\$ 7,746.94
Savings Account – Water Testing Balance	\$ 6,511.92
Savings Account – AIS Fund Balance	\$ 6,050.03

Total Paid Households: 160

Loon Count 2018

The 2018 loon count for the Wabana Chain of Lakes was held on July 18, 2018. Five counters surveyed Wabana, Bluewater, Big and Little Trout lakes. There were a total of 72 loons counted with 60 adult birds and 12 chicks. The number of loons counted on Wabana was the highest (43) in the last 15 years with the number on Bluewater (7) close to the 15-year mean of 6.3 birds and the number of birds (19) on Big Trout was below the 15 year mean of 28.6 birds. Little Trout had 3 birds (mean 2.3). The Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Program monitors the loons in six index areas and they have recorded an average of 2 loons per 100 acres of lake across all six-index areas. Our chain of lakes has recorded a mean of 66.3 birds over an area of 4372 acres for an average of 1.52 birds per 100 acres, which is slightly below the six index state average. This would indicate that we could support a greater number of loons on our chain of lakes.

Ken Zimmer

No Wake Signs

Many boaters enjoy the beauty of the Wabana Chain of Lakes in the spring, summer and fall seasons. The channels between the lakes are pristine waterways that support both nesting loons and young fish.

This summer six **SLOW NO WAKE** signs were placed the channels in our Wabana Chain of Lakes. This was a collaborative effort between the Wabana Chain of Lakes Association and Itasca County.

The **NO WAKE** zone is essential for the nesting, hatching and young chick survival of our state bird, the Common Loon.

The **NO WAKE** zone is very important to prevent stirring up the channel bottom. Stirring up the channel bottom and surrounding vegetation causes the release of nutrients and sediment, which decreases water quality, both in the channel and out into the lake.

One of the SLOW NO WAKE signs went missing after only two weeks of placement.

As a result of the missing sign, the Itasca County Sheriff department is recommending that any suspicious activity should be reported to the Itasca County Sheriff Department at 218-326-3477. The Itasca County Sheriff Department recommends the following: Keep in mind that a license plate, or registration is very helpful to report. Direction of travel and a personal description of clothing, height, weight, etc. is also very important to report.



Secchi Readings

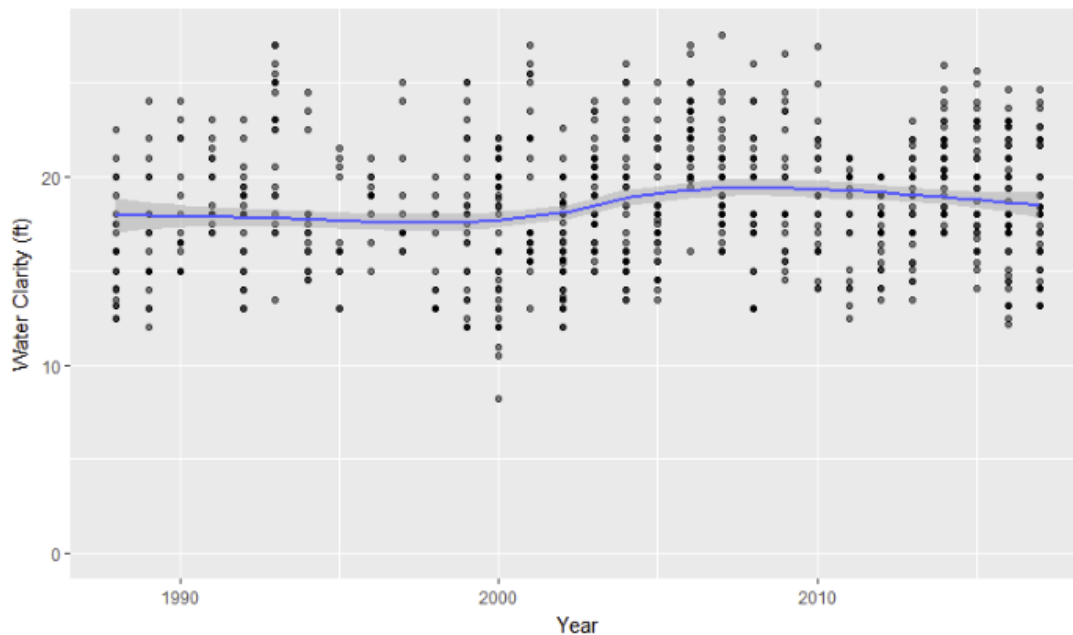
On August 18th, at the annual WCOLA meeting, the summary for Secchi disk readings was presented. Secchi readings measure water clarity and are one indication of the quality of the water. These readings and charts presented were for data collected through the end of 2017. The readings are done by a group of volunteers on a biweekly basis at pre-defined locations on the lakes:

- Wabana - 6 locations
- Little Wabana - 1 location
- Bluewater - 2 locations
- Trout - 2 locations
- Little Trout - 1 location

The summary table below is a summary of readings over the last 12 years.

Lake	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	Average	Std.Dev.
Bluewater	18.90	19.73	19.22	18.56	17.91	18.86	0.69
Wabana (Wakeman Bay)	15.71	19.18	17.71	18.29	18.18	17.81	1.29
Wabana	17.32	19.89	21.75	20.19	19.33	19.7	1.60
Little Trout	19.97	22.19	20.39	19.70	19.63	20.38	1.06
Little Wabana	16.19	20.37	21.79	21.00	20.44	19.96	2.18
Trout	16.43	17.97	17.22	-----	15.80	16.86	0.94

While the water clarity in the lakes is still above average when compared to other lakes in the same watershed, they do indicate a slight downward trend over the last few years. Below is a chart, for Bluewater Lake, from the State of Minnesota DNR Lake Finder site that indicates this trend from a high in 2007 – 2008 through 2016.



Information for all the lakes can be found at:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/index.html>

Enter the lake name and county, click the “Water Quality” tab on the left, and then click the “Transparency Trend” tab. For Trout Lake in Itasca County, you need to choose the correct one, and for Big Trout, there is a gap in the recent data that is charted.

WCOLA has implemented a water quality plan with testing, informational seminars, communications, and other activities to insure the uniqueness, pristine beauty, and quiet of our chain of lakes for all current and future users. It is up to all the users and residents of the lakes to do their best to help out.

Steve Melin

Shoreline Management

What is better than swimming and boating in our crystal clear lakes?

Helping to keep the lakes crystal clear!

Good shoreline management has a POSITIVE influence on water quality and its clarity.

Here are a couple simple ways to help keep our Wabana Chain of Lakes pristine:

- Do not fertilize your lawn,
- Don't mow to the waters edge, leave a buffer strip to help capture nutrients that may enter the lake

Nutrients / fertilizer cause algae and weeds to grow quickly.

The *Itasca County Shoreland Guide to Lake Stewardship*, which was mailed to you this summer, is an excellent reference to help maintain and improve the quality of our lakes.

In addition to good shoreline practices for maintaining water quality, another area of concern is the shoreland zone and watershed region.

A resource from the University of Minnesota provides information for landowners.

Family forest owners control about 40% of Minnesota timberlands. The decisions made by Minnesota's 150,000 private woodland owners have important impacts beyond their properties. Private woodlands provide habitat for native wildlife as well as **clean** water for aquatic ecosystems.

Topics on the website include: invasive species, tree care, woodland care, and non-forest timber products.

In September 2018 the Itasca County private woodlands committee offered Fall Forestry Field Day at the Itasca Community College.

The website developed by the University of Minnesota was created to help private woodland owners make sound, well informed woodland stewardship decisions. Woodland owners can learn how their forests work, and how they can achieve their forest stewardship goals.

The website is: www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu.

Jean Melin

DNR News Release

“This is a key time of year to check for zebra mussels and other invasive species, especially when removing docks and boat lifts that have been stationary in the water all season,” said Heidi Wolf invasive species unit supervisor. “It helps a lot when property owners, lake associations and lake service provider businesses contact the DNR if they think they’ve found an invasive species.”

Minnesota law requires keeping docks and lifts out of the water for at least 21 days before putting them into another body of water.

The DNR recommends these steps for lake property owners:

Look on the posts, wheels and underwater support bars of docks and lifts, as well as any parts of boats, pontoons and rafts that may have been submerged in water for any extended period,

Hire DNR-permitted lake service provider businesses to install or remove boats, docks, lifts and other water-related equipment. These businesses have received training on Minnesota’s aquatic invasive species laws and may have experience identifying and removing invasive species.

People should contact an [area DNR aquatic invasive species specialist](#) if they think they have discovered an invasive species that has not already been confirmed in the lake. Take a photo of any newly discovered invasive species before removing it from equipment. Save specimens or leave them in place until the DNR can investigate.

If you go boating or fishing, always remove aquatic plants from your boat, trailer, and any other equipment, pull the drain plugs from your watercraft and drain water from bait buckets and dispose of bait properly.

You can find more information on the DNR’s website about ways you can prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

More information is available at www.mndnr.gov/AIS.

Boat Inspections at Wabana Public Launch Ramps, Summer 2018

This summer 2,156 AIS inspections were performed by AIS inspectors at the public launch ramps on Wabana Lake. 1,296 boats were inspected upon entering the lake and 860 boats were inspected leaving the lake. The AIS inspectors keep a record of all boats inspected and while 1,910 of these boats were licensed in Minnesota, the rest of the inspected boats were licensed in 24 other states.

The AIS Inspectors discovered a total of 77 violations during inspections.

24 Drain plugs not removed

42 Plants, either in boats (anchor ropes or on deck) or on trailers.

10 Water not drained from live wells or bait tanks.

1 Mud in boat or on trailer.

These inspections were paid for with funds from the following.

Wabana Chain of Lakes Association

Wabana Township

Minnesota State Grants

Itasca County AIS prevention funds

Last year the AIS inspectors made a total of 1692 inspections on Wabana Lake and found 93 Violations. As you can see from the information listed above, there were more inspections performed this year and fewer violations were found. This would seem to indicate that boaters are learning what needs to be done to stop AIS infestations.

Thank you for your support as a member of WCOLA. It is only with your membership and dues that we are able to continue with AIS prevention activities.

Douglas D. Griffin

Environmental Committee News

I recently watched a video produced by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota. The video focuses on research being conducted to help determine the impact of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) on walleye populations in some of the largest walleye-supporting lakes in Minnesota. At least one of the following AIS are now found in these lakes: Zebra mussels and/or spiny water flea.

Research on this project is not yet complete. What is clear to date is that both zebra mussels and spiny water flea have a profound impact on the food web. Walleye populations will likely need to adapt to reduced levels of zooplankton and baitfish in order to survive.

We are fortunate as WCOLA members in that we have not had to deal with an AIS infestation in our lakes. Our time and effort (and dollars) spent to prevent an AIS infection has been successful. Your WCOLA Board of Directors will continue to emphasize prevention of AIS infestation by monitoring the launching of watercraft at our boat landings. DNR-trained inspectors are doing an exemplary job of protecting our lakes and educating the public. Another potential source of AIS can be docks and lifts transported here from an infested lake. This shoreline hardware needs to dry completely (21 days) before being redeployed.

Your board is also prepared for the discovery of AIS in our lakes. A Rapid Response Plan has been developed in order to quickly verify and assess the extent of an AIS infestation. AIS found in a confined area with limited invasion can lead to successful treatment and complete eradication. Research continues in the development of biologic and chemical agents used to combat AIS, but effective widespread "whole lake" treatment is still likely years away.

The video referenced here along with other interesting stuff can be found on the website www.maisrc.umn.edu.

Mark Conover

Mark Your Calendars

2019 Season Events

May 8 2019	*Road Clean-up
June 8 Saturday 2019	*Social Gathering- Camp Fire Camp
July 20 Saturday 2019	*Picnic-Wabana Town Hall Pavilion
August 10	* Ballots due for elections
August 9 2019	Ice Cream Social-Wabana Town Hall
August 17 Saturday 2019	*Annual Meeting and Program-Wabana Town Hall
September 25 2019	*Road Clean-up
November 9 2019 * WCOLA sponsored	Hunters Supper

THE CHAIN LETTER OF THE
WABANA CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION
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