

WCCOLA News



March 2012

WCCOLA News

Welcome to the first edition of the WCCOLA newsletter. We have a couple events coming up you should know about and some interesting information to pass along.

Curt Forst has written a short informational article on Cormorants to lead into the meeting planned for April. Dale Gustafson has written a very thorough summary of what has been going on with AIS this winter. Mark your calendars for the Cedar Lake Earth Wings & Water open house scheduled for May 19. This is their second annual event and promises to be very interesting. Spring Days with the Wright County Master Gardeners is scheduled for March 10. Plan to attend and listen to some interesting speakers, get your questions answered and visit with vendors.

Do you have an event coming up that neighboring Wright County Lakes would be interested in? If so, send me the details and we will get the word out. Send your information to don@sugarlake.org.

We will be looking for more volunteer help as the 2012 summer lake season gets underway. A current need for help is with member communication. If you are interested helping with our web site, developing newsletter content, volunteer coordination, membership development please contact me, Don Peterson at don@sugarlake.org.

WCCOLA Officers

Meet your WCCOLA officers: From left to right—Gary Schmidt, Don Peterson, Bradley Longtin, Brian Hall, Dale Gustafson, and Curt Forst.



Upcoming events

Cormorant Meeting

Where: Community Room

Wright County Government Center
10 2nd St NW, Buffalo, MN

When: April 5, 2012, 7:00 To 9:00 pm

Who: All Wright County COLA members, area Lake Associations, anyone interested

Agenda: Speakers will include Paul Diedrich with MN DNR Fisheries, Rick Fernstrom with the Meeker County COLA. We also plan to have a DNR person from non-game wildlife. There will be a Q & A period and time for discussion about this issue.

See the article on page 2 for more information on Cormorants. Plan to attend the meeting to hear more about Cormorants and their impact on fisheries.

Lake and Stream Monitoring Luncheon and COLA Meeting

Where: Annandale Middle School

125 Cherry Ave South
Annandale, MN 55302

When: May 5, 2012, 9:30 am—12:00 noon

Along with the sampling training, the WCCOLA will do a short presentation on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Speakers will include Chip Welling and our new Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist, Christine Jurek.

Wright County Master Gardener Spring Days

Join the University of Minnesota Master Gardeners of Wright County.

Saturday, March 10th

St. Michael-Albertville Middle School West

www.springdays.org

Cedar Lake Earth Wings & Water open house

Join the Cedar Lake Conservation Club for their second annual event.

Saturday, May 10, 2012

Camp Courage on Cedar Lake

<http://cedarlakeecc.org/>

Invasive Species Forum October 5, 2011

An educational meeting was held Oct 5 at the Robert Ney Memorial Park Reserve. Four Wright County lakes presented information on their AIS programs. Each presentation generated many questions, comments, and comparisons. The following lakes presented information on their programs:

Clearwater presented by Tom Bacon
Granite presented by Peter Peshek
Cedar presented by Orv Jonsrud and Dave Wagner
Sugar by Dale Gustafson

Lake Associations present included:

Bebee, Camp, Cedar, Charlotte, Clearwater, Fish, Fountain, Francis, Granite, Howard, Ida, John, Maple, Mink/Somers, Lake Mary, Pleasant, Sugar.



501c3 Status

The application for the Wright County Coalition of Lake Associations 501c3 status has been submitted. We hope to have confirmation back early this year.

Treasurers Report

Our treasurer, Curt Forst, reports \$625 in the bank.

Membership

Membership stands at 18 paid Lake Associations. The membership renewal for 2012 should be in your email within the next two weeks. Dues remain at \$25, however any extra donations are appreciated.

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Grants

The COLA has applied to the DNR to participate in this grant program. These grants are intended to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. The intent is to fund public awareness projects. The grants require a 1:1 match from the grantee.

Cormorants

By Curt Forst



The double-crested Cormorant (DCC) is the most numerous and widespread North American Cormorant. It's also the only one that occurs in large numbers inland as well as on the coast. Growing in numbers throughout its range, this cormorant is increasingly being blamed for declines in sport fisheries. There

can also be negative impacts on native wildlife and vegetation in areas where there are large numbers in a concentrated nesting site. Most of the information is anecdotal as there are few studies which look at the correlation between cormorant populations and impact on fisheries.

In 2011, a group from Meeker County Minnesota investigated the question of cormorant population impact on local fisheries, wildlife and vegetation. The focus of this study was an area 5.5 miles in radius from Pigeon Lake. They looked at DCC population numbers collected by the University of Minnesota from 2004-2010. These population numbers were compared to Minnesota DNR fish net surveys for Lake Washington from 2001 to 2008. Summary of the data demonstrated a 43% increase in the DCC population from 2004 to 2010. Fish net counts remained stable for those fish greater than 15 inches on Lake Washington. Fish less than 15 inches decreased in population. The impact on Pigeon Lake wildlife and vegetation suggested that other water bird species have been displaced; while vegetation from an island on Pigeon Lake has been devastated, removing habitat for other birds and animals.

AIS 2012 update By Dale Gustafson

I have had the opportunity to serve on a new committee this year. It was called the Stakeholders Engagement project – management of Invasive aquatic plants. I have chosen to call it the AIS rules committee.

This group was made up of 9 DNR officials, 9 Lake Association representatives from around the State, and related industry professionals as well as other user groups like anglers. Included were Steve Hirsch (Director of the Division of Ecological and Water Resources) and Ed Gogges, (Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife) This was a group of about 30 individuals and was the follow on committee from the early 2011 area input meetings about the DNR rules for AIS control. The original plan called for three phase meetings in 2011 resulting in a recommendation for rule change.

As the first meeting progressed it was clear that there was a polarization between the DNR staff and the Lake Association about how much and what needed to be changed. As the process went on, the DNR demonstrated a real willingness to make some significant changes. The second meeting was about the changes and how well they fit with the desires of the group. Not all things got changed, and not all is decided as of yet, but many are being incorporated into the new rules for 2012. These were very intense meetings, and I came away with a good feeling of accomplishment. I am sure there will be new issues that arrive, but they can be addressed as needed.

Below is a summary of what is proposed for this coming year:

Steve Hirsch reported several items.

Recognized that in certain areas it appears that the Division of Ecological and Water resources and the Division of Fish and Wildlife have not been on the “same page.” Both the directors stated that they would continue to bring their departments together on these issues.

The permit process for AIS will be moved from Fisheries to the Department of Ecological and Water Resources; however, the two will work together in the transition. For this year the AIS permits for organizations (like lake associations) will be granted by Ecological Resources, and individual lake shore owner permits will continue to be handled by the Fisheries representatives. (In Wright County Audrey Kuchinski will continue to handle property owners permits, and a new addition to the Invasive Species staff, Christine Jurek, will begin working with the group permits for AIS).

Many other issues were discussed and resolved and they will be apparent as new documentation is posted early this spring:

The summary from Chip Welling was sent in a November 2 letter to the committee and published on the DNR website. (http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/invasives/aquatic_plants.html)

AIS 2012 update continued-

1. Permitting

a. Organizational and Operational Change

Assign permitting authority for Invasive Aquatic Plants to Ecological and Water Resources staff. This will include issuance of Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Permits [M.S. 103G.615, Subd. 3a.].

Projects affected include:

- Rapid response to new Invasive Aquatic Plant infestations,
- Off-shore treatments of Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed, and
- Large bay-wide or lake-wide control of Invasive Aquatic Plants.

Fish and Wildlife staff will retain permitting authority for near-shore APM permits to provide access to open water or provide for recreational use of shoreline while protecting habitat.

b. Provide guidance for decisions about permitting by development of a decision tree

c. Delineation of areas for treatment

Develop guidance for delineations, including potential conflicts of interest.

Build capacity for accurately delineating and treating infestations in a timely way. This will be accomplished, at least in part, by addition of two Invasive Species Specialists to the Program.

Explore the possibilities of certification of delineators.

d. Electronic permitting - Under development.

2. Lake Vegetation Management Plans

a. Improve the efficiency of management of Invasive Aquatic Plants by use of a standardized, short-form LVMP, which will be subject to revision to allow responses to changing conditions and new learning;

b. Ecological and Water Resources staff will take the lead in development and timely completion of LVMPs for Invasive Aquatic Plants.

c. Develop transition plans for lakes that have completed five years as pilot projects.

3. AIS grant programs

a. Simplify process of application.

b. Provide guidance for decisions about grants by development of a decision tree.

c. Expand eligibility of projects to receive grants to include most control of Eurasian watermilfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and flowering rush. At the same time, control in near-shore areas for access that would ordinarily be initiated by the owner of the adjacent shore-land will not be eligible for grants.

d. Increase funding for grants and other expenses related to management of invasive aquatic plants during 2012 to \$1.1 million as compared to \$730,000 in 2011.

e. Continue to pursue long-term funding for AIS management.

AIS 2012 update continued-

4. Research on AIS management

- a. Continue to conduct and support research on AIS management.
- b. Work with partners to assemble, summarize and analyze data from current lake-wide projects.
- c. Communicate results, including posting information on the DNR web site.

5. Improving communications and public education around AIS management.

- a. Post guidance on management of invasive aquatic plants on the DNR web site to include a manual on Best Management Practices.
- b. Make information from various lake treatments available to others managing different lakes. This might include a forum on a web site. This will include lists of references or source materials on management of invasive aquatic plants to be posted on the DNR web site. This information will include two types: concise introductory material that should be easily understood and extensive material that may include detailed information.
- c. Organize a meeting[s] of people doing lake-wide control at which they can exchange ideas and hear from DNR staff, researchers, consultants, commercial applicators, and others.

In short, I feel that we should be much better off in the world of AIS this year and the promise to work through new problems is encouraging.

Also we hope to have Chip Welling and/or Christine Jurek at our May 5th meeting to relay more of the new information. Plan to attend that Saturday morning meeting at the Junior High school in Annandale.

Dale A. Gustafson
WCCOLA Board
Sugar Lake Association

Wright County Master Gardener Spring Days

March 10, 2012, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Visit the website for registration information

Join the University of Minnesota Master Gardeners of Wright County on Saturday, March 10th, at the St. Michael-Albertville Middle School West for a day of informational sessions on stormwater management, prairie style gardens, landscaping with native plants, cottage gardens, garden photography, growing trees and shrubs. Attend talks, ask questions and visit vendors at the WCMG Spring Days Gardening Workshop. For more information, contact Wright County Extension at 763-682-7394 or visit www.springdays.org

Earth Wings & Water Open House

Saturday, May 19, 2012

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Camp Courage on Cedar Lake

Sponsored by the Cedar Lake Conservation Club

Featured speakers include:

Stan Tekiela – Well known author, naturalist, and photographer.

Darby Nelson – Author of “For Love of Lakes”

Kieth Radel – Bluebird Society

Mike North – MN DNR on Purple martins

Paul Diedrich – MN DNR on fisheries

Rob Langer – Natural Shore Technologies on shoreline restoration and native plants

Brian Mies – MN DNR Conservation Officer

Cole Loewen – Clearwater Watershed District

There will also be two children’s events including a bird house assembly forum. See more about the children’s events at [Link to Earth Wings & Water Kids Programs](#)

For more information visit the Cedar Lake Conservation Club website <http://cedarlakecc.org/>

