

# WICOLA NEWS

White Iron Chain of  
Lakes Association, Inc.

Volume XVIII Book I  
SPRING 2011

## From the president:

Starting in 1995 my involvement with WICOLA consisted of paying my dues and reading the newsletter – just like many of you. Last spring that changed radically when I anticipated having more time to devote to community affairs (wrong) and the WICOLA Board needed someone to take over the presidency. First off the anticipated ‘more time’ didn’t happen and second – following Char Mason as president – well all I can say is what a powerhouse! I started attending board meetings in June to come “up to speed” – I’m not at all sure that I am up to speed even now.

To say your WICOLA Board is active is an understatement. They are incredible and I’ll be telling you about their work in later issues. In Jan we reviewed 14 resumes and interviewed 4 candidates for the coordinator of the **Kawishiwi Clean Watershed Protection Project**. **Derrick Passe** started in February and has been moving steadily thru the long task list since. All of us who live in the Kawishiwi Watershed are incredibly lucky to have Derrick at the helm of our unique water purity preservation project.

The project reports to an Oversight board whose WICOLA members are myself, Teresa Sagan, Roger Powell and (come summer) Char Mason.

**Working with Oversight is Lake**

**County’s Wayne Seidel**, a masterful organizer and effective mediator who passes out chocolates at meeting stress points.

**Our MPCA project manager is Joel Peterson** who brings knowledge both broad and deep about all the things a homeowner can do to live cooperatively with our environment. Together with Derrick their calm enthusiasm and deep commitment are making the Clean Watershed Protections Project a reality that will positively impact our lives and those of future generations.

**A major focus of the board’s work in the coming year will be acquiring the nearly \$80,000 in matching cash and in-kind services necessitated by the 2nd MPCA grant.**

Basically MPCA matches their money to what we raise. This is a significant challenge for our small organization where so many of the members are glad to be out in a boat taking water samples but fundraising is a completely different story. Board members are applying for grants and seeking companies and organizations that support projects such as this. **If you have ideas or contacts please let us know.**

Oh yes, plan on attending the June 11 membership meeting and get involved. The board needs new representatives from White Iron

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**If you thought that this issue seems to focus heavily on Aquatic Invasive Species, YOU’RE RIGHT!**

**Once in the lake, you can’t get rid of them, and control is not only extremely expensive, it isn’t very effective. Lets do all we can to keep them out of our Chain**



and Farm Lakes but you do not need to be on the board to be active on a committee if clean water in our lakes is important to you, your life-style, your business, your grandchildren.

**Please make a contribution. Your \$\$'s now will have a long term impact. I personally believe this project is possibly the single most important thing I may do in my life time. We have a unique opportunity to insure that one of the most beautiful places on earth stays that way.**

Jo Kovach, President

## Welcome to Severe Weather Season!

(Have you been watching all the horrible weather disasters this spring?)

Between March and September last year, Minnesota had a record 113 tornadoes, (the most in the US) with a total of 48 on a single day in June. While Lake County has averaged only one tornado every 10 years, all indications are that severe weather is increasing around the state, our country and the world.

The key to being prepared for these events is to have a plan and a kit ready in advance, and know how to receive warnings. Find lifesaving information at

**[www.severeweather.state.mn.us](http://www.severeweather.state.mn.us)**. Links there provide information on weather watches and warnings, thunderstorms, hail, lightning, flash floods, tornadoes and heat waves, along with instructions on how to make a survival kit, develop a plan to shelter or escape, and stay informed of weather conditions. You can also sign up to receive free emergency email notifications or contact them with questions.

It's a good idea to purchase (or give) a NOAA weather radio that automatically alerts you to emergency announcements if your radio is set to "Alert." They can also provide lights, radios and cell phone chargers during power outages, and can be recharged themselves by solar panels or hand cranks.

When you hear a severe weather warning, go to your basement and turn on a radio for more information. If you're at school or work, or don't have a basement, go to a small interior room. Stay away from large rooms (like gyms or auditoriums) and rooms with windows. Get out of a mobile home. If you're in a car drive away if you can, but stay in your car. Do NOT get out and lie in a ditch, and do NOT park under a bridge which can funnel winds.

We should all have a basic survival kit in our homes that includes food and water for 3 days, a radio and flashlight, first aid, contact information and personal items like medications.

Finally, plan to attend **Lake County's Skywarn Class**, put on by the National Weather Service at Silver Bay's emergency management office (Mary Mac Center) on Tuesday, April 26 at 6:30pm, to learn how to detect and report severe weather. Please RSVP to BJ Kohlstedt at x480 or 218-226-4444 or [bj.kohlstedt@co.lake.mn.us](mailto:bj.kohlstedt@co.lake.mn.us) to assure space and materials.

## WICOLA ANNUAL MEETING

**When: June 11, 2011**  
**Where: Vermilion Community College  
Lecture Hall**  
**Time: 9AM Social Hour, 10AM to  
Noon, Meeting**

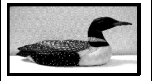
This year's speaker will be **Derrick Passe**, WICOLA's project coordinator. Derrick will be discussing our Kawishiwi Watershed Protection Project. Come to meet Derrick and hear what we have planned, what is done and what is yet to do.

### DON'T MISS IT!

**Get all the details of this important project.**

We need to elect a Vice President and Representatives from Farm and White Iron.

Volunteer to be Newsletter Editor or work on our Website. GET INVOLVED!



## A big 'THANK YOU'

To everyone who has contributed so far to our Clean Water Project. As of our publication date we had received **\$8,505.35**, which gets us off to a great start.

**We're still a long way** from our goal of **\$79,350** in cash.

**These funds are vitally important** to the success of this project: a strong, scientific database which can then be used to protect our lakes. Without such data, agencies and lawmakers lack a solid foundation for their decisions, and bad decisions cause lasting harm.

**This is a complicated project.** If you have questions about it, please feel free to contact any board member. We will keep everyone informed about our activities and results through our newsletter, website, informational meetings, and other media.

**We're also actively pursuing additional funding opportunities. If you know of potential grant sources, please tell us about them.**

There are two ways to give:

Write your check to White Iron Chain of Lakes Association and send to:

WICOLA  
P.O. Box 493  
Ely, MN 55731

OR:

Visit [www.GIVEMN.org](http://www.GIVEMN.org) for online gifting with your credit card.

Either way you choose to give, you will promptly receive an acknowledgement. WICOLA IS A 501 (c)(3) nonprofit.

If you'd like another copy of our mailing from March, please call Mary Ann Jurgens, 952.479.7031

**Thanks again to all who have contributed. Everyone is deeply grateful.**

The following are notes from various seminars that President Jo Kovach took while attending the 2011 Minnesota Waters Conference.

### Septic Systems –

- A state survey in 2004 found that 27% of on-site septic systems were failing and an additional 12 % were imminent threats to the environment. (=39% )
- Learned far more about how our grant will be conducting its survey of existing septic systems and how the county might use that data to later offer citizens grants or low-interest loans from the MN Public Facility Authority. The speakers showed numerous creative solutions to septic systems and solution to fitting approved septic systems into difficult/restrictive lots.

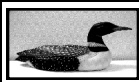
### Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) - (notes from several different presentations)

- The Detroit Lakes (lake association) offered an effective Legislative Summit Conference inviting their local legislators, city officials, county officials and the general public. Resulted in significantly raised public awareness.
- Bill boards, road signs and signs at the launch sites were installed
- DNR trained volunteer inspectors
- DNR interns and volunteers then inspected boats and trained owners to inspect their own boats
- Uniform professional opinion: "Easier to prevent than to correct"
- Reported public response: "Why didn't they tell me earlier" – we're telling you now.

**DNR Commissioner Landwehr "AIS is a personal responsibility issue"** "If we don't do a great deal now in 20 years the problem will be of such a magnitude that nothing will be successful."

### Shoreline Management and Vegetative Buffers - (notes from two different presentations)

Our shoreline vegetation management practices



significantly affect the water quality. Vegetation:

Increases the number of fish  
Improves water quality  
Increases number of other shore-line critters like frogs

- Surveys in several different research projects show that 70% to 80% of lake shore owners prefer and value 'natural' vegetation at the shore. However, they believe that their neighbors and especially potential buyers prefer a more suburban-like shore line and so do not act on what they themselves value.

- The vast majority of property owners wish to be "good stewards"

- The DNR has produced a "lake-scaping" book [www.dnr.state.mn.us/restoreyourshor/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/restoreyourshor/index.html)

- Several companies offer native plants, our area's Master gardeners can help us locate sources for these plants. Also included in above website.

- "Score your Shore" a self administered survey is available on the MN DNR website. It offers immediate feed back and I learned numerous things from it.

- A 20' buffer back from your shoreline would collect 60 to 80% of all potential run off. This is especially important on steep shores. Our lakes would show significant improvement if all of us had even 5' to 10' back from the shore line returned to nature.

Soil & Water Conservation District is a good resource for info.

### **Update on Sulfite Mining**

This worthy session was jointly addressed by a water scientist for the Fond du Lac Reservation and a lawyer for Water Legacy. The tribal input is going to be very important in the debates to come. The presenters concentrated on the proposed mining by Poly Met.

The second draft of the EIS was initially expected sometime in the last 3 months; instead it is now expected during the last quarter of this year. The mining companies jointly have turned their attention to challenging the water quality

standards set by DNR. Two issues were the focus: PH values (e.g. acid or alkaline levels) and bio-availability of mercury.

While the mining companies claim there is no hard data showing the PH values at which wild rice thrives or dies; the DNR says their data, while old, is conclusive and is holding firm to their standards. Industry attention then shifted to asking the legislature to mandate reductions in the standards. It sounds to me as if this issue – the PH of any run off - may be the deciding issue in the permitting process. This is an opportunity for the average citizen to influence rule-making. Write to Governor Dayton with your views on lowering the PH standards required by permits: Governor Mark Dayton, 130 State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155.

The connection between Sulfite mining and water for fishing and drinking was explained. Sulfites make mercury more bio-available – meaning any mercury already in the water, or in the run-off - can then be directly consumed and assimilated by the fish (and passed on to those who consume the fish) or us if we drink the water. Mercury (unknown sources) in some of our local lakes has already limited the consumption of fish. If the sulfites in the gigantic amounts of rock (e.g. overburden or waste rock) are totally protected from any water their damage-making potential is contained. That containment needs to be in place and totally secure for over 2000 years. If only 6% of the sulfite in the rock is exposed to water a chain reaction begins that turns it all into sulfide acid, thus becoming damaging runoff.

The question was asked of these presenters "Is there a way that this kind of mining can be done without damage?" The tribal scientist replied yes, the lawyer offered a qualification: "Maybe, but not likely in the wet lands on which this mine will be developed."



## “NEVER ON THE 4TH OF JULY” BOAT PARADE

The boat parade this year will be on  
**Saturday, July 2 at 10AM.**

**We'll meet at the Farm Lake channel opening to Garden Lake.** Tour will be of Garden Lake. Decorate your boat (or not!) Bring horns and whistles to let people know we are on the water!



## SWF, (AIS)

Ok, now that I have your attention, allow me to introduce myself. My name is **Derrick Passe** and I was recently hired by WICOLA to help all of you to protect the Kawishiwi Watershed. I will be working with you this Summer and next to monitor the Watershed to see what is out there, just waiting to get in.

**Here are a couple of ways that we are going to do this.**

To return to the title of this article, I am referring to **Spiny Water Flea**. That is **SWF** that I am

talking about. It is just of a number of **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)** that is around the fringes of the Kawishiwi Watershed in Burntside Lake to the West and along the Gunflint to the East. All it takes is one minnow bucket or leech locker to put them in to the Kawishiwi River and White Iron Chain. Monitoring Aquatic Invasives and talking to people at boat landings are a couple of things that we (You and I) will be doing this summer to protect the Watershed. Once invasives get into the watershed, eradication is costly and except for the case of Sea Lamprey, rarely succeeds.

Gazing into the depths of the Lake (**Water Quality Monitoring**) -Are you one of those people that can stare endlessly into the Tannin stained waters of the Kawishiwi?

**We are looking for you** to help us with our monitoring program. The first step in Water Quality Monitoring is to simply look into the water and write down what you see (and when). Then we will have you lower a secchi disk into the water until it disappears. By doing this once a MONTH, you will be providing valuable information on the current water quality of our lakes.

**For those of you who prefer to get out and about more, you can help with the stream monitoring program.** Just drive to your nearest stream once a WEEK and tell us how high the water is, what it looks like and then take a sample and put it into a turbidity tube and tell us how clear the water is. **That is all it takes** and you can hop back in your car and get to work or the next stream. We will also be taking water samples in some lakes to chemically analyze what is in them.

**Closer to Home. (SSTS, Buffers and Erosion)** -In many cases, pollutants that are entering the watershed originate in our homes. Untreated sewage, lawn fertilizers and sediment all degrade the quality of our lakes.

**This Summer, I challenge all of you to take a**



look around your own home and see what you can do to reduce what exits your property and enters the water. We will be hiring experts to help us understand where the greatest potential for impacts is and what can be done to alleviate it. **We are NOT going to say that you have to replace your septic system, but we will give you information on how to maintain it.**

**We may also suggest ways to save on fertilizer costs and have a more natural buffer for wildlife.** If you are someone who loves to run, paddle or drive around with a GPS unit, you can help us see if the information that we are getting from satellite imagery matches what is on the ground.

**This is just a start of the opportunities to get out and help with the Kawishiwi Watershed Protection Plan. Please contact me at [derick.passe@co.Lake.mn.us](mailto:derick.passe@co.Lake.mn.us) to see how you can help.**

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### **A note about her Conference experience from Board Member Mary Ann Jurgens**

The Minnesota Waters conference was a productive and enlightening one for me, but the best workshop was **Building Healthy Lake and River Groups.**

**The following topics were covered: Structure and Governance; Clear, Effective Communications; Engaged Members; Leadership; Willingness to Raise Money; Shared Goals and a Plan to Get There; and FUN.**

**As you think about our upcoming work with our Clean Water Project, board members are always willing to hear your thoughts. E-mail or phone us, or share your ideas at the annual meeting June 11.**

Mary Ann Jurgens

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Burning garbage in your backyard—whether done in a traditional burn barrel, wood stove, fire-pit, or at the cabin—is far more harmful to your health, our health, and the environment than previously thought.

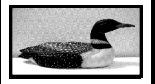
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### **Backyard garbage burning can affect your health**

**Garbage has changed**

Until a few decades ago, burning garbage in the backyard was much less dangerous to your health. Fifty years ago, most household garbage contained only untreated paper, wood, and glass. Today's garbage contains paper, plastics, and other types of packaging waste that release a hazardous mixture of carcinogens and other toxics (such as lead, mercury, and arsenic) when burned. Even seemingly harmless items, like paper, mail, packaging, and cardboard boxes used for frozen pizzas and vegetables, can give off toxic emissions.

**Smoke** Pollution created by backyard garbage burning increases the health risk to those ex-



posed directly to the smoke, which is an irritant that especially affects people with sensitive respiratory systems, as well as children and the elderly. Exposure to smoke can also increase the risk of heart disease, cause rashes, nausea, and headaches.

## DISPOSE OF TRASH AND GARBAGE RESPONSIBLY!

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## Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

**We hope that you will be more aware of WICOLA's alliance with this campaign.**

Why are we calling your attention to this, and asking for your help? Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are invading our lakes and streams in Minnesota. **We already have rusty crayfish in our chain of lakes. Spiny waterfleas are in Burntside Lake. Eurasian water milfoil and curly pondweed are in the Gilbert Pit, often known as Lake Ore Be Gone. Zebra mussels are in Lake Superior and many other good fishing lakes in Minnesota.**

As an example, rusty crayfish displace our native crayfish, harm our fish populations by eating the eggs and the young fish. Eurasian watermilfoil grows into dense mats that interfere with swimming and tangle boat propellers. Native plants are displaced, also affecting fish populations. Zebra mussels cost the US billions of dollars each year. They clog water intakes and damage equipment by attaching to boat motors and any hard surfaces underwater.

**WICOLA has partnered with MN SeaGrant and Doug Jensen, and the DNR to provide training and education for our members and to those visiting our area.**

Some of you would remember that Doug spoke at our 2010 annual meeting. **He is also pre-**

**senting to the Tuesday noon group at the Grand Ely Lodge in Ely on June 14.**

Bruce Anspach, DNR Watercraft Inspection Program Trainer presented a course on April 22. Twenty one people attended the course.

**Another Watercraft Inspection course is set for Friday, June 3, 2PM at the Kawishiwi Ranger Station.** Please come to learn more about aquatic invasive species and what we can do to stop the spread! As part of the preventing the spread of hitchhikers, we'd like a presence at 5 public boat landings during 3 weekends of the summer. We need your support and volunteerism to do so! **Please email me at [lsquillace@frontiernet.net](mailto:lsquillace@frontiernet.net) if you want to attend or can't make it but would like to attend a future program. We need a head count to have a manual for all.**

As part of our water-monitoring program, we plan to add sampling for invasive species. We look forward to learning from others that are now doing sampling, in order to develop our own program. If you would like more information or would like to volunteer in other regards, please don't hesitate to contact us. **We need more volunteers! Also look for our booth at the Blueberry Arts Festival. We will be sharing our WICOLA booth with MN SeaGrant.**

Larry Squillace



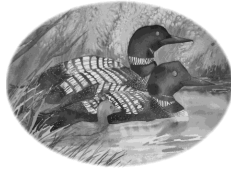
## STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

### When you leave a body of water:

- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
- Eliminate water from equipment before transporting.
- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.).
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

# WICOLA NEWS



P O Box 493, Ely, MN 55731

**We're on the Web!**  
**wicola.org**

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*Feel free to contact any board member at the addresses above or at the Association address. We welcome (and encourage) your comments and suggestions. Our Association is dedicated to continuing and improving the quality environment of our chain of lakes. Please join us in this endeavor **VOLUNTEER!***

**WICOLA NEWS** is published three times a year and mailed to members of  
**WHITE IRON CHAIN of LAKES ASSOCIATION, INC.**

If you are interested in improving the water quality, fishing, and recreational opportunities on White Iron, Farm, Garden and South Farm Lakes, **JOIN WICOLA TODAY**. Annual Membership is still just 20.00 per year. Send a check to our address above for all the benefits of membership.