

WICOLA NEWS

White Iron Chain of
Lakes Association, Inc.

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KAWISHIWI WATERSHED CLEAN WATER PROJECT PROPOSAL

The **WICOLA Board** and an appointed committee has been working diligently since last fall on the above project. This issue will focus on sharing with you, our membership, on what it is and what we hope to accomplish with it.

Some background information:

Four years ago at our annual meeting, **Euan Reavey**, research scientist with the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI), spoke with us of the value in doing **sediment core analysis** on our chain. The prohibitive cost (approximately 10,000 dollars for each of the five recommended cores) put this on the back burner. Way back!! Since then, at two of our spring partnership meetings Euan has reiterated the usefulness of the information we would derive.

At a board meeting last fall, **Nolan Baratono**, MPCA Rainy River Basin Coordinator, told us that the MPCA had CWP (Clean Water Project) grants available for up to 200,000 dollars in matching funds, which translates into **projects up to 400,000 dollars!** Suddenly, the sediment cores were within our reach!

One of the requirements of the CWP grant is sponsorship by a local government entity. Having had considerable Lake County support in the past, we contacted Wayne Seidel, Lake County Conservation Specialist/Water Plan Administrator. Wayne presented our proposal to the Water Plan Advisory Committee and the Soil Water Conservation District Board, both of which agreed to be our sponsor.

Our thinking went big — we are part of a huge (1200 square mile) watershed that we would like to protect for generations to come. Everything was on the table as you will see from our **Goals and Objectives**, included in their entirety in this newsletter. Go to page two and three and **please read and study them carefully**. As you study the document, please keep in mind that it is the result of much discussion and input from experts in the various fields. Our 4th annual Partners Meeting was held on March 26th, and some of the suggestions/comments made at that meeting are incorporated in the plan. (see related article on the meeting and attendees).

This is a work in progress and we value your input — **Email, write or call** a board member and tell us your thoughts. **Are you willing to help with this project? Let us know that too!**

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ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting will be held Saturday, June 20th at Silver Rapids Lodge. Social hour at 9 AM, meeting from 10 to noon.

The meeting will be dedicated to questions, answers, and discussion of the CWP proposal.

Join us for this important meeting!



Phase I

Goals and Objectives

Goal - Gather watershed data necessary for the development of a comprehensive watershed management plan with parameter-specific thresholds that will provide even greater water quality protection than MN Rules Ch. 7050 for the Kawishiwi Watershed.

Objective 1 - Continue and expand current water quality monitoring program to provide WICOLA a comprehensive overview of:

- Current trophic conditions throughout the Kawishiwi watershed
- Compare the water quality of BWCA waters vs. waters in developed areas
- Determine how groundwater effects surface water
- Identify and assess climate change impacts
- Identify and assess fish and wildlife habitat

Objective 2 – Integrate and Coordinate monitoring activities within the Kawishiwi Watershed for all agencies, research institutions and organizations (including Minnesota Power’s FERC required monitoring, and MDNR/MPCA’s Sentinel Lake monitoring on White Iron Lake) throughout the watershed.

Objective 3 - Build on the previous heavy metals data from Birch and White Iron Lakes with a paleolimnology investigation of Farm, White Iron and Garden Lakes to include trophic status based on diatoms analysis, metals concentrations (parameters TBD) and pollen analysis from 1750 (Do we need to extend this analysis to an earlier start date?), 1850 and 1950 (approximately) from pre-European settlement to present

Objective 4 – Document and graphically present trophic status of Farm, White Iron and Garden lakes from pre-European settlement to the present day using both paleolimnology and water quality data

Objective 5 – Survey or surveys to accomplish:

- Sewage Treatment System inventory to determine number of existing and potential systems, system condition, replacement upgrade needs and costs
- Locally identify high priority beneficial uses needing protection
- Determine vulnerability of the Kawishiwi Watershed to introduction of aquatic invasive species, including identification of most vulnerable waters through surveys conducted of people fishing and/or boating within the watershed

Objective 6 – Develop and conduct a comprehensive study to determine the effects – cumulative and acute – of individual onsite sewage treatment systems (ISTS)

Objective 7 – Geographic Information System analysis of

- Development potential, sensitive areas and potential threats throughout the watershed
- Sensitive areas in need of soil erosion plans for restoration following wildfire events
- Land use within the watershed



Phase II

Goals and Objectives

Goal – Maintain or Improve the Waters of the Kawishiwi Watershed

Objective 1 - Targeted long term monitoring of the watershed to provide early identification of deteriorating water quality, including:

- Effects of climate change
- Changes to trophic status (identifying and measuring trends)

Objective 2 Develop a comprehensive watershed management plan for the Kawishiwi Watershed. The plan will include:

- Importance of Kawishiwi Watershed as a headwaters of the Rainy River Basin and the United States/Canada transboundary waters
- Implementation of locally developed parameter-specific thresholds that will provide greater water quality protection than MN Rules Ch. 7050
- The need for better compliance with and enforcement of existing zoning regulations
- Address the vulnerability of the Kawishiwi Watershed to introduction of aquatic invasive species, including, if indicated, strategic protection of most vulnerable waters identified in Phase I
- Replacement and/or upgrade the sanitary sewer systems if indicated from the Phase I studies
- Protection of areas sensitive to development and address potential threats as identified in Phase I
- Prevention of erosion

Preliminary Budget Estimates for Phase I

Objective 1 - Continue and expand current water quality monitoring program to provide an adequate overview of:

- current trophic conditions through out the watershed
- integrate/coordinate existing water quality monitoring activities within the Kawishiwi Watershed, including Minnesota Power’s FERC required monitoring, MDNR/MPCA’s Sentinel Lake monitoring on White Iron
- identify and assess climate change impacts
- identify and assess fish and wildlife habitat

part-time coordinator at \$25K/year for 3 years	\$75,000
Equipment and supplies	15,000
Mileage and misc. volunteer expenses	<u>15,000</u>
SUBTOTAL	\$105,000
10% contingency	<u>10,500</u>
TOTAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING	\$115,500

Objective 2 – Integrate and Coordinate monitoring activities within the Kawishiwi Watershed for all agencies, research institutions and organizations (including Minnesota Power’s FERC



Mining Issue Ballot Results

As a result of a resolution requiring us to draw up a plan and submit it for membership approval, here is the plan, and the results of the ballot:

The Plan:

1. **Continue water testing** of the chain of lakes.
2. **Continue heavy metals testing.** The next test is in the estimated date of 2012.
3. **Review the upcoming Environmental Impact Statement** of Polymet.
4. **Pursue grant funding** for obtaining sediment core samples on the chain of lakes to determine the historical data for comparison of water quality.

Continue to gather and present more information regarding area mining.

Ballot Review:

- **Of the 230 ballots sent out, 25 were returned**
- **Of the ballots received, 24 voted to approve the plan and 1 voted no**
- **Of the ballots, 15 had no comment**

Comments of the remaining 10 ballots ranged from:

- Doesn't go far enough (still voted to approve plan)
- Too little too late
- Come out against sulfide mining, at least poll the membership
- Put the website in the newsletter so members can read why there are concerns
- Hopefully this plan can be amended if the membership feels there is a further need, in the future
- We must be pro-active, suggest we work with the Mn. Ctr. For Environmental Advocacy
- "Press on"
- Good Job! Sensible and balanced
- I think the plan is a good start, WICOLA needs more Volunteers and Grants to get job

done

- We are not against mining, jobs, or more tax money. But it has to be done right. WICOLA and Gov't agencies have to keep a close watch on the mining
- I understand they banned sulfide mining in Wisconsin, why?
- Great! It's controversial but vital to protect our environment. Have additional forums/newsletters
- Our area needs mining-Polymet should be the plan. Elyites need mining over half of our area. Population depend on it. Thank You!

Where we are with the plan:

1. Our **water testing program** continues to gather data and will again be in full swing starting in May.
2. As stated in the plan, **heavy metals tests** will be conducted again in 2012, as recommended.
3. The **Environmental Impact Statement**, although not yet available for public comment, is available as a draft. **Carla Arneson**, WICOLA member, has agreed to be on a committee for mining issues and for EIS review and report. **If you would like to be a part of this committee**, email Carla at carneson@frontiernet.net.
4. Last, but by no means least, **the CWP proposal goes far beyond just doing the sediment core samples.**

We will continue to keep you up to date on the mining issues as new information comes out.

The Ballot also asked for **volunteers**, and we heard from the following:

- **Clint Jurgens** is willing to help with pursuing grants and funding for sediment core sampling, please contact.
 - **Roger and Consie Powell** can help with the review of the Polymet EIS (wildlife Sections)
 - **Sheldon AJAX** made a note that he/she is willing to volunteer.
- ANYONE ELSE?**



We're looking for someone interested in being our WebMaster!

We are beginning to think we need to have our own domain name and web site. **Want to volunteer?** You don't need to be here year-round—it can all be handled with email.

Contact Curt at c.vandeen@juno.com or Peter at wrightpeter@frontiernet.net

FIFTH ANNUAL "NOT ON THE FOURTH OF JULY" BOAT PARADE!

Join us on Sunday, July 5th, 10AM to Noon. We'll be touring **Farm Lake** this year. Meet us all at the junction where Farm and Garden come together.

Decorate your boat or not —just join us for a pleasant ride!

Here are the highlights of the partnership meeting held on March 26th

WICOLA and partners met on March 26, 2009 at Kawishiwi Ranger Station to discuss the Kawishiwi Watershed Clean Water Project (CWP) Protection Proposal. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Proposal, recruit partners, and to move the project forward. There were 38 people in attendance (See attached list of attendees with their affiliation).

Jim Pinckney and Larry Squillace provided the history and vision of WICOLA, especially efforts in water quality testing in cooperation with MPCA. Previous sources of financial support for these endeavors have been Morse Township, Lake County Power, Lake County Soil and Water, and DNR Grants (License Plate monies).

Nolan Boratono and Don Carlson, MPCA, reviewed the Clean Water Project process. Most of the focus in the State has been on impaired waters, with recognition that prevention is an important component of any clean water protection efforts. The WICOLA Clean Water Project is a protection project which focuses on the Kawishiwi Watershed. The Project consists of two phases. Phase I is an evaluation phase to gather watershed data and determine vulnerabilities and current areas of concern. Phase II is the implementation phase. The CWP requires a work plan with timeline, budget, and semiannual, annual, and mid-project progress reports. The Grant must be matched with in-kind or direct contributions (excluding State monies).

Nolan Boratono reviewed the 1/07/09 Project Proposal (See Project Proposal, previously distributed). The Goals and Objections for both Phases I and II were reviewed. Questions on related issues were asked: If we identify faulty septic systems, are we not "handing" homeowners money? (Sue Spencer, Echo Trail landowner). Nolan indicated that the Project only identifies potential programs. Mike Forsman (St. Louis Co. Commissioner) stated that there is a difference between non-compliant and failing septic systems.

A discussion of revisions and/or additions to the Proposal was led by Nolan B. Following are the suggestions and comments about the Proposal.

Could we add pollen count to testing? (Marty Rye-SNF Hydrologist)

Septic issues and concerns

Feasibility of infrared/aerial photography? Nolan reported that this method has been used on Rainy Lake, but is fairly intrusive if individual properties are considered and is fairly expensive method of assessment.

Cost of septic system inspections? Warren Johnson says cost is approximately \$400-



600.

How do we get cooperation/participation of landowners with septic issues? (Tom Clifford) WICOLA survey indicates this as a concern of landowners on chain of lakes. Matt Huddleston indicated that we could do survey of septics (e.g. an education and outreach grant/program in southern Lake County to survey septics).

- Suggestion to add ground water interface (Marty Rye, SNF)
- Add bullet to objective 6- Assess land use within the watershed (Wayne Siedel)
- Add objective 7- Coordinate monitoring activities (all organizations) throughout the watershed (e.g. SNF long-term monitoring).
- Add area on compilation and review of current/existing data.
- Add to Objective 3 of Proposed Budget-Single database to be used by all team members (Web base-GIS also needs to be added for access, but need to decide where web base should be located)

Paleolimnology Testing-Scientific detail to be given later, but suggestion to add 1750 or older

Larry Squillace led a discussion of areas of interest and possible assistance to determine potential partners. Mike Forsman would like to see a comparison of data between flowage out of BWCA (no development) and other areas with development. Marty Rye asked about copper/nickel study and availability. Wade Klingsporn sees the potential for VCC student involvement. D. Johnson says Sentinel Lake Project will continue in partnership. Jason Butcher (SNF) will determine how their monitoring programs (especially water) can fit into this project. Larry asked for letters of support from groups that can be attached to the Proposal.

Next Steps:

Future meetings

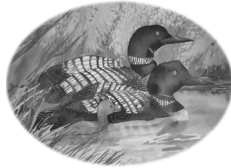
April 23, 2009, 10:00-noon, Kawishiwi Ranger Station

May 21, 2009, 10:00-noon, Kawishiwi Ranger Station

Contact Larry Squillace (by email) with ideas, suggestions of changes/additions, possible partnering, and letters of support

Here is a list of the attendees at the 3/26 meeting		Klingsporn, Wade	VCC Water Resources
Allinger, lisa	NRRI	Kuehl, Elroy	Logging Association
Arneson, Carla	WICOLA Member	Myers, Sonny	1854 Treaty Authority
Boratono, Nolan	MPCA	Ojanen, Paul	N. St. Louis Soil and Water
Butcher, Jason	Superior National Forest	Ortley, Don	WICOLA Board
Carson, Don	MPCA	Pinckney, Jim	WICOLA Board
Clifford, Tom	Lake Co. Commissioner	Rantala, Gary	N. St. Louis Soil and Water
Davis, Peter	WICOLA Board	Reavie, Euan	NRRI
Doran, Ray	WICOLA Board	Rye, Marty	Superior National Forest
Forsman, Mike	St. Louis Co. Commissioner	Sagen, Teresa	WICOLA Board
Garcia, Jacob	USFS	Seidel, Wayne	Lake Co. Soil and Water
Gruba, Rod	Fall Lake Township	Spenser, Sue	Echo Trail Property Owner
Haraldson, Paul	WICOLA Board	Squillace, Larry	WICOLA Board
Hicks, Gene	WICOLA Member	Tammen, Bob & Pat	WICOLA Member
Huddleston, Matt	Lake Co. Planning and Zoning	Thompson, Doug	MN DNR Fisheries
Johnson, Warren	Landowner	Tikkanen, Craig	VCC Water Resources
Josephson, Gus	Mining Minnesota	VanDeen, Curt	WICOLA Board
Kennedy, Kitty	NRRI	VanDenHeuvel, Walt	Lake Co. Planning and Zoning
Kireta, Amy	NRRI	Wichman, Ken	WICOLA Board
		Wilenius, Leo	Lake Country Power

WICOLA NEWS



P O Box 493, Ely, MN 55731

We're on the Web!
Minnesotawaters.org/wicola

To contact a **White Iron Chain of Lakes Association board member:**

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Paul Haraldson	13370 Pine Road	365-2592	elydog@hotmail.com	Secretary
Don Ortley	13345 Villa Rd	365-2820	drortley@frontiernet.net	Treasurer
Ray Doran	13071 Rocky Shore Rd	365-4962	prdoran@frontiernet.net	Membership
Larry Squillace	640 Voyageur Rd	365-2346	lsquillace@frontiernet.net	Farm Lake
Teresa Sagen	13667 Deer Road	365-6461	tkswagen@frontiernet.net	Garden Lake
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Lisa Squillace	640 Voyageur Rd	365-2346	safety_stop@hotmail.com	Hospitality
Jim Pinckney	468 Ernies Road	365-3258	jmp468@frontiernet.net	Editor
Kathleen Miller	153 Sunset Road	365-3199	kath-miller@comcast.net	Newsletter

*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.