

AN OPEN LETTER TO COLA MEMBERS AND FRIENDS From the Board of Directors

At our Annual Meeting last July, hopeful the growers will share in this important work over the next few years. members were asked to advise the Board of Directors which were the highest priority issues they wished to have addressed. The highest priority was Water Quality. So a Water Quality Committee was formed by Dr. George Paine, and chaired by Colin Williams, with Mary Austin as the Board Coordinator. The Committee discussed our water quality with officials from the WDNR, water engineers and specialists, and the LCO Tribal Administration, to find the best ways to be helpful. Their recommendation was for COLA to encourage and support the LCO Tribal Government as the sponsor in seeking a WDNR Lake Management Grant. LCO and COLA have since agreed to jointly engage and fund Barr Engineering of Minneapolis to plan, organize, and supervise a Water Quality Study. Both COLA and LCO have already committed about \$4,000.

Last January, we instructed Barr to prepare a WDNR Grant request on our behalf, and in March it was approved at about \$20,000. Also in January, the COLA Board of Directors sent copies of the Grant Proposal to the four cranberry growers on our lakes, inviting them to participate as they saw appropriate, and also to discuss the project with COLA, Barr, WDNR and LCO. We are still

As of yet, however, this has not happened. Recently, the growers requested a list of COLA members and their addresses. The Board discussed this matter, and like other similar requests to release our mailing list, declined. Our position was that since the COLA Board, the LCO Conservation Department and Barr Engineering were the active directors of the Water Study, any of us would welcome meeting, discussing and sharing any concerns or ideas. Some of you received a March 20th letter from Randy and Jean Jonjak. If you have not, and would like to receive a copy, you may contact Bob Degen.

The Jonjak letter suggested that the study would only focus on cranberry marshes and neglect other lake impacts such as the septic systems, run-offs, tributaries, fishing and boating stress. COLA did not agree, and organized a meeting on April 6 at the Bass Lake Town Hall to discuss these concerns and any other thoughts or feelings from the growers. While there was attendance from COLA, LCO, WDNR, Sawyer County and Barr Engineering, no one reflecting the views of the growers chose to attend. We felt that this was unfortunate. It was a good meeting

with a full and open discussion of the project. There is continued hope that the growers will join the project. Those in attendance chose to proceed with the study.

So at long last this critical Water Quality Study is underway. Dan Tyrolt, LCO Conservation Officer is the Project Director. Meg Rattei of Barr Engineering is Consultant, and Bob Degen is the Lead COLA Volunteer. Volunteers from around the lakes have been organized and will be active this year from ice-out to freeze-up. Please call Bob Degen at 634-3336 if you would like to volunteer.

Please be assured that this study will seriously assess all possible sources that may be affecting our water quality. Current sampling, historical data, computer modeling and other professional research systems will be utilized. Bob Degen has copies of the Study Proposal available. The results of the study will be available to everyone starting in the spring of 1997.

We all love these lakes and this land and care deeply for its well being. We want to give it to our children as it was given to us. Our goal is to learn what we can do, and together keep this wonderful legacy for those who follow.

-The COLA Board of Directors
April 27, 1996