



# Short Ears, Long Tales

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

## Tales of Two Plants

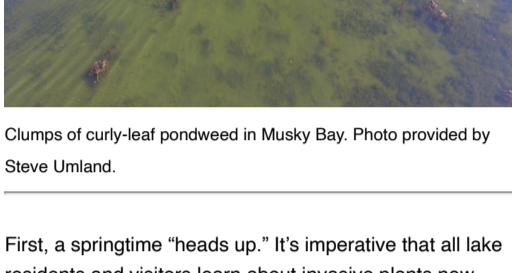
### It is invasive, or is it not?

By Allison Slavick

There are the best of plants, and there are the worst of plants and in this spring of hope, we have everything before us. Apologies for the cliché, stolen (and mangled) from the opening lines of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. But we do indeed, in the spring of 2022, need to take a close look at the good and bad plants found in Lakes LCO and Little LCO. Let's examine the role of humans in their proliferation and consider everything before us: how lake residents can learn to identify invasive and non-invasive species, stop the spread of the "worst" of plants, and support and join COLA's leadership in protecting the lakes.

Are there good and bad plants? I love plants, and I have street and professional credibility in the field of botany. My heart tells me to take a step back from any plant and consider its beauty and significance in an ecosystem. "Weeds" fill a niche through no fault of their own. They are simply doing what they do best, which is expressing their **fitness** as biological organisms. But my head tells me something else. If you have seen a lake or pond **filled – shore to shore** – with one kind of an invasive plant it is shocking. A lake filled with lush mats of curly leaf pondweed – quite pretty and easy to identify, my heart says – presents a heartbreaking scene.

You've heard this before: we – humans – are messing around with natural ecosystems and habitats to the detriment of native plants and animals. I've written about the **biology and ecology** of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) and about **efforts to map** invasives on LCO and Little LCO. Kevin Horrocks, Jim Coors and I took another look at the **biology** of invasives and use of the **Eco-Beast** to mechanically control them. You might ask, what's left?



Clumps of curly-leaf pondweed in Musky Bay. Photo provided by Steve Umland.

First, a springtime "heads up." It's imperative that all lake residents and visitors learn about invasive plants now, before the boating season is underway. To help provide a fuller understanding of the Lakes' plant diversity, COLA conducted a **survey of all aquatic plants** in the LCO Lakes in 2018. Full point-intercept surveys were completed following WDNR survey protocol and included sampling pre-determined locations to document individual species present and their density. Main message – there are a great many native species contributing to the Lakes' ecology, and they need to be protected. At this point CLP and EWM are the only two invasive plant species.

As you know, invasives lie dormant in the winter and grow quickly and prolifically as the sun intensifies and the water warms up; they spread through the segmentation of stems and dormant buds that can float around and take root; and they impede a healthy fishery and lake ecosystem. Specifically, it is important for all Lake residents and visitors to **learn to identify** EWM and CLP with confidence. Those are the worst of plants, and your **Lake Association** has produced an **excellent reference** that should be on every refrigerator, inside every boathouse, in every tackle box, and handed over to every guest. Indeed, COLA hopes to make printed copies of the illustrated guide available at every boat landing this year.

INVASIVE

### Curly-leaf Pondweed

*(Potamogeton crispus)*

rounded leaf tips  
branched secondary veins  
fine teeth  
prominent midvein  
"lasagna" leaves

flower spike

turion

- Grows in depths up to 15 feet from ice-off through August and forms dense, thick reddish-green mats
- Green to reddish-brown leaves arranged alternately along stem
- Dense cylindrical flower spike 1/2 to 1 1/2 inch above water with reddish-brown flowers
- Wavy, lasagna-like leaves, 1/2" wide and 2 to 3" long
- Rounded leaf tips
- Secondary leaf veins branching from prominent midvein
- Produces greenish-brown buds (turions) in leaf axils that remain viable for long periods before sprouting to form new plants

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NATIVE

### Clasping-leaf Pondweed

*(Potamogeton richardsonii)*

pointed leaf tips  
parallel veins  
"clasping" leaf base

flower spike

- Grows in depths up to 15 feet
- Leaves arranged alternately along stem
- Dense cylindrical flower spike 1/2 to 1 1/2 inch above water
- Wide (1/2 to 1"), long, green leaves
- Leaves have a broad base (stipule) that clasps stem
- Leaf edges are smooth (without "teeth")
- Leaf tip is pointed
- 3 to 5 prominent parallel leaf veins

A quick re-cap: CLP has narrow wavy-edged leaves, similar to a lasagna noodle. From a distance, the dense mats it forms are reddish-green to rust, or reddish-brown. EWM has many leaflets compared to a similar native plant, and the bad plant is limp, not rigid, when removed from the water. See the **guide** for clear illustrations and photographs of these features and others.

INVASIVE

### Eurasian Watermilfoil

*(Myriophyllum spicatum)*

leaf – 4 per whorl  
whorls

flower spike

- Grows in depths of 3 to 15 feet and forms dense, thick mats
- Feathery looking with 4 leaves per whorl
- Pink and white flowers on spike above surface
- Stem segments can root and grow into new plants
- Each leaf has 12-20 leaflet pairs
- Leaves become limp when taken out of water

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NATIVE

### Northern Watermilfoil

*(Myriophyllum sibiricum)*

leaf – 4 per whorl  
whorls

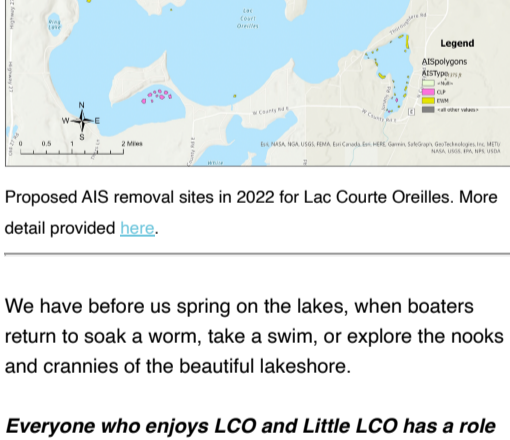
flower spike

- Grows in depths of up to 20 feet
- 4 leaves per whorl
- Pink and white flowers on spike above surface
- Stem segments can root and grow into new plants
- Each leaf has 4-11 leaflet pairs
- Leaves have a central vein and are rigid when taken out of water

Eurasian watermilfoil can hybridize with northern watermilfoil. Hybrid plants are intermediate in appearance and considered invasive. They should be reported when found.

COLA's **Aquatic Plant Management Plan** calls for 1) controlling invasives; 2) preventing their spread and; 3) preserving the Lakes' diverse native plant communities. The fourth goal? "Lake residents and users are made aware of the importance of native aquatic plants, the means to protect them, and the threat of aquatic invasive species." Unless a property owner is 100% certain of a plant's identity, it should not be removed from the lake. It is illegal to remove native plant species from a lake. Report the locations of suspected EWM or CLP using the online **form** found at the COLA website.

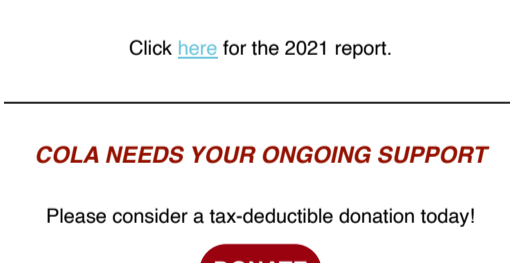
This summer COLA is considering placing buoys around large patches of the invasive CLP and EWM to discourage boat traffic, which unwittingly spreads the plants throughout the lake. Boaters should stay away from those areas. If you can, **volunteer** to become a lake monitor who reports locations of aquatic invasives or checks boat trailers at launch pads for attached invasives. A **paid position** is available, too.



Proposed AIS removal locations in 2022 for Lac Courte Oreilles. More detail provided [here](#).

We have before us spring on the lakes, when boaters return to soak a worm, take a swim, or explore the nooks and crannies of the beautiful lakeshore.

**Everyone who enjoys LCO and Little LCO has a role to play in protecting the lakes' health, and that's no cliché.**



**COLA**  
STATE OF THE LAKES  
KEVIN HORROCKS, COLA PRESIDENT

Click [here](#) for the 2021 report.

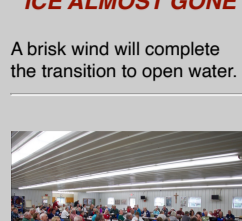
**COLA NEEDS YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT**

Please consider a tax-deductible donation today!



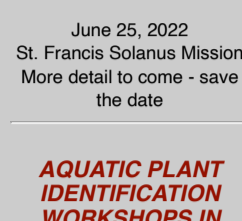
Issue #52 May 1, 2022

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### ICE ALMOST GONE

A brisk wind will complete the transition to open water.



### 2022 COLA ANNUAL MEETING

**Hurray! We will meet in person again**

June 25, 2022  
St. Francis Solanus Mission  
More detail to come - save the date

### AQUATIC PLANT IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS IN JUNE 2022

Four aquatic plant identification workshops are being offered this June for lake professionals and lake monitoring volunteers. Join aquatic plant experts from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Extension Lakes to learn about the native and invasive aquatic plants in Wisconsin lakes. These FREE workshops are being offered at two locations - Woodruff, WI and Delafield, WI.

For more details or register for a workshop click [here](#).



### HELP WANTED!

**Want to make \$5K this summer and protect LCO?**

COLA needs to hire a Clean Boats inspector for the 2022 season on LCO. Must be available for weekend work, Saturdays and Sundays, May through September. More information available [here](#).

If interested, contact [communications@cola-wi.org](mailto:communications@cola-wi.org).



### 2022 NATURAL HISTORY FIELD TRIPS

Here are this year's natural history field trips sponsored by the Extension Program at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College near Hayward, Wisconsin. For more information, contact Cali Quaderer-Cuddy, Extension Program Coordinator, at [cquaderer@lco.edu](mailto:cquaderer@lco.edu)

- 5/14 Hardwood Forest Salad Bar
- 5/25 Morgan Falls/St. Peter's Dome
- 6/1 Pipestone Creek/Black Bear
- 6/22 Amnicon Falls/Wisconsin Point
- 7/6 Lost Creek Falls
- 7/20 Little Girl's Point, MI
- 8/17 Brunweiler Canyon
- 9/17 Hawk Ridge, Duluth, MN
- 9/24 Blue Hills Felsenmeer
- 9/8 Juniper Bluff
- 9/15 Morgan Falls/St. Peter's Dome- autumn colors

[\(more\)](#)

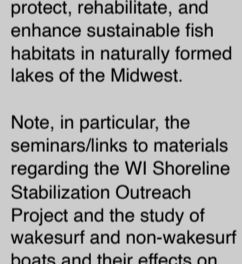


### WISCONSIN LAKES AND RIVERS CONVENTION

April 6-8, 2022  
Stevens Point, WI

This year's theme is "Protecting What We Love for the Future." The hands-on workshops and engaging presentations during this year's event will be centered around this theme of protecting our water resources.

[\(more\)](#)



### MIDWEST GLACIAL LAKES PARTNERSHIP

[2022 WEBINARS](#)

The Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (MGLP) brings together resource agencies, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders to protect, rehabilitate, and enhance sustainable fish habitats in naturally formed lakes of the Midwest.

Note, in particular, the seminars/links to materials regarding the WI Shoreline Stabilization Outreach Project and the study of wakesurf and non-wakesurf boats and their effects on lake shore.

[\(more\)](#)

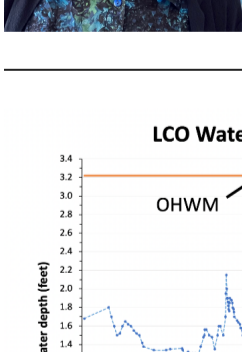


### LCO NEEDS YOUR HELP

COLA is a **volunteer organization**. That means essential jobs don't get done unless someone steps up to help out. Contact [communications@cola-wi.org](mailto:communications@cola-wi.org) if interested or you need more information.

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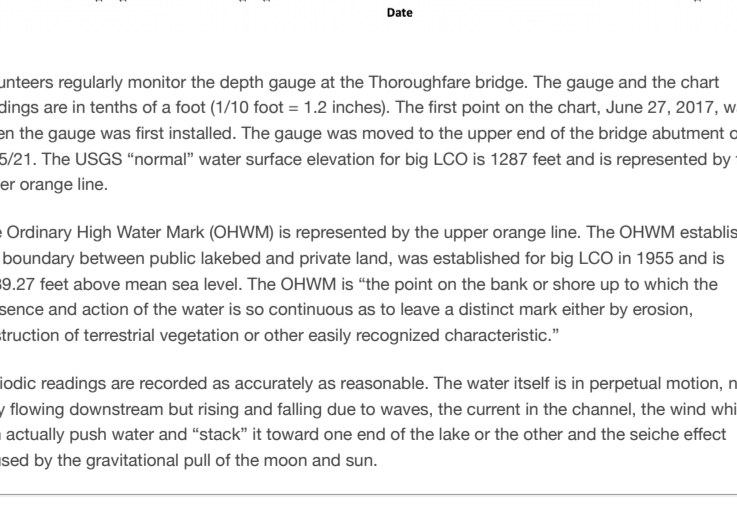
[ARCHIVED ISSUES OF SHORT EARS, LONG TALES](#)



Allison Slavick is a nature lover who bicycles, skis, and picks berries near her home on Crystal Lake in southern Bayfield County.

Questions, comments, or suggestions for future articles may be sent to her at [allison.slavick@gmail.com](mailto:allison.slavick@gmail.com).

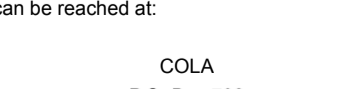
### LCO Water Depth Recorded at Throughfare Bridge Gauge



Volunteers regularly monitor the depth gauge at the Throughfare bridge. The gauge and the chart readings are in tenths of a foot (1/10 foot = 1.2 inches). The first point on the chart, June 27, 2017, was when the gauge was first installed. The gauge was moved to the upper end of the bridge abutment on 4/15/21. The USGS "normal" water surface elevation for big LCO is 1287 feet and is represented by the lower orange line.

The Ordinary High Water mark (OHWM) is represented by the upper orange line. The OHWM establishes the boundary between public lakebed and private land, was established for big LCO in 1955 and is 1289.27 feet above mean sea level. The OHWM is "the point on the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of the water is so continuous as to leave a distinct mark either by erosion, destruction of terrestrial vegetation or other easily recognized characteristic."

Periodic readings are recorded as accurately as reasonable. The water itself is in perpetual motion, not only flowing downstream but rising and falling due to waves, the current in the channel, the wind which can actually push water and "stack" it toward one end of the lake or the other and the seiche effect caused by the gravitational pull of the moon and sun.



**COLA Mission:** 1) to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Lac Courte Oreilles and Little Lac Courte Oreilles, their shorelands and surrounding areas, while respecting the interests of property owners and the rights of the general public; and 2) to consider, study, survey and respond to issues deemed relevant by COLA's membership.

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