



Fighting The Good Fight

A Summer 2023 Committee Actions Report

Correction in Bold
By Caitlin Hagar-Kuhn

For those unfamiliar with COLA's mission, the purposes of COLA are (1) to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of the Courte Oreilles Lakes, 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 the membership of the organization. This summer, the focus on "protect" and "preserve" was steadfast. Even before spring icebreak, actions were well underway to obtain herbicide permits, tune-up the equipment, and rally volunteers. Like every year, the summer flies by at the lake. It seems like the Annual Meeting was just yesterday, but June and July have come and gone. COLA has much to report back to property owners and lake lovers. Below are this season's summaries from COLA's committees.

Fisheries & Water Quality

Our local fish biologist, Max Wolter, has **submitted the application for a permit to the DNR** to begin restoring the Musky spawning area on Musky Bay. The dedicated area is alongside the road leading out to Victory Heights. However, the lake bed where the fish spawn is covered with silt. This inhibits reproduction. When the fish drop their eggs on the bottom, they are enveloped by the silt and perish due to lack of oxygen. COLA plans to use funds from a private donation to install water fans. Water fans can blow the silt out of the spawning area. Kasco Marine in Prescott, WI is loaning the equipment for the project. Work will start this fall and resume in the spring before the Muskies spawn.

Muskies are back in LCO! Mike Perrson has collected data from several sources and estimates 32 Muskies have been caught in LCO as of August 22nd. The charts at Anglers Haven claim 13 fish. Muskies Inc. members have registered 14 muskies. Additionally, we have 5 individual reports of musky snags this year. Five of the fish were 18-23 inches, fifteen were 30-39 inches, and eight were over 40 inches. Thanks to Max Wolter and his crew for increasing the stocking numbers and removing the excess Pike which were eating the stocked Muskies. Release them with care so they can keep growing and hopefully reproduce.

Aquatic Invasive Species

The 2023 approval process for treatment of aquatic invasive species (AIS) began in Fall 2022. A virtual meeting was held on November 29, 2022 which included attendees from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Department of Agriculture, COLA, the Cranberry Association, a Cranberry operation representative, and the LCO Conservation Department (Tribe). The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate communication between organizations and gain permit approval for both chemical treatment and mechanical harvesting of AIS in both Big and Little LCO. The results of this meeting only gave COLA guidance on what chemicals would not be approved. Top on our list for chemicals was Procellacor, but it was disapproved due to a lack of agricultural use labeling.



AIS in LCO

A required Public Hearing was held April 5th for COLA's treatment permit. A follow up public meeting was held in May at the Bass Lake Township hall. The 2023 permit approval process proved more difficult than years past. Historically, the WDNR would provide guidance on required changes if a permit was denied, but this year permits were denied without guidance several times which delayed our process significantly. COLA is unsure why the WDNR's process has changed after 15 years of collaboration. Analogously, 2023 was the first year COLA was required to gain chemical application approval from abutting cranberry operations. These obstacles caused critical delays and inefficiencies in the treatment plan, and resulted in poorer efficacy of the application. The nearly 6-week delay caused the applicator to miss the optimum window for treatment. It even prevented some areas from being treated altogether such as Stukey Bay, Elto Bar, the West Basin, and areas of Little LCO.



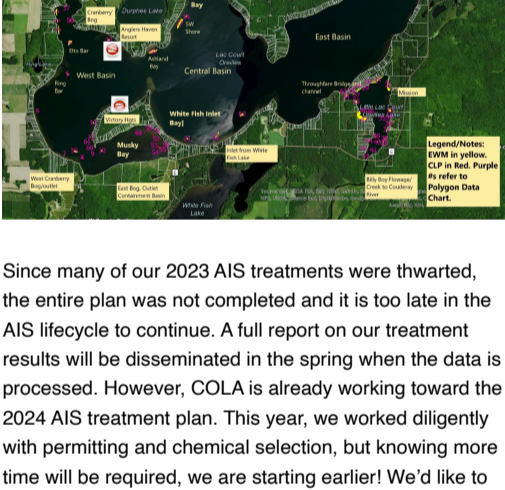
Eurasian watermilfoil in LCO

When the 2023 permit was finally approved, Ashland Bay and west Chicago Bay were excluded for non-conforming industry guidance. We are devoted to gaining 2024 approval in these areas, but the path forward is still unknown.

Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP) was chemically treated the last week of May in Musky Bay. Our permit approved treatment using Aquathol K. This year's treatment will be evaluated in the spring of 2024, but early reports indicate our treatments were successful.

On June 12th, the WDNR approved our chemical permit for Big LCO. Chicago Bay and Anchor Bay were treated June 19th and June 20th respectively. Preliminary reports are promising. We put a big dent in the largest patch of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) in Chicago Bay. Similarly, in Anchor Bay we have reports of a very successful elimination of EWM.

Little LCO was treated on June 24th with 2-4-D Amine after our delayed permit was finally approved on June 14th. Preliminary reports from treated areas are still being processed. Like Big LCO, the WDNR excluded certain areas from our proposed treatment plan for industry non-conforming reasons.

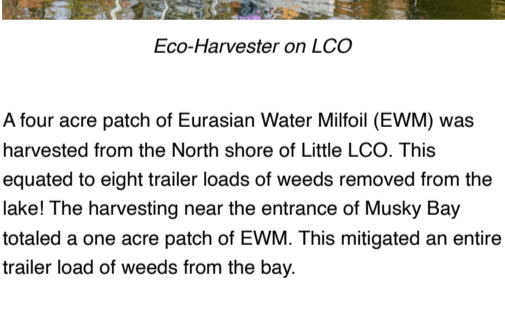


2022 AIS Mapping on LCO

Since many of our 2023 AIS treatments were thwarted, the entire plan was not completed and it is too late in the AIS lifecycle to continue. A full report on our treatment results will be disseminated in the spring when the data is processed. However, COLA is already working toward the 2024 AIS treatment plan. This year, we worked diligently with permitting and chemical selection, but knowing more time will be required, we are starting earlier! We'd like to thank our applicator for an outstanding job despite the circumstances; proving that chemical application to control EWM and CLP has and is working for our lake.

Eco Harvester

You may have seen the Eco Harvester on the North shore of Little LCO and in Musky Bay. This summer we used new techniques for harvesting invasive species. The method of slower and smaller paths allowed more plants to be pulled out by the roots. It was also more effective (and recommended) to only harvest early in the season while the weeds are sturdy. We have found that mechanical harvesting later in the season when EWM falls apart may thwart some of our efforts. Mechanical harvesting continues to be a very slow process and produces only temporary results. We had a good number of lake owners volunteer for netting fragments which is much appreciated.



Eco-Harvester on LCO

A four acre patch of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) was harvested from the North shore of Little LCO. This equated to eight trailer loads of weeds removed from the lake! The harvesting near the entrance of Musky Bay totaled a one acre patch of EWM. This mitigated an entire trailer load of weeds from the bay.

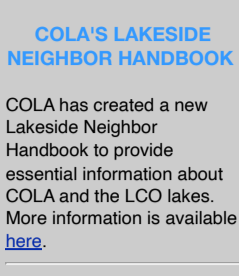
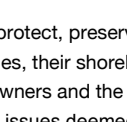
Clean Boats

With almost a month and half still left in the boating season, there have been 14,641 recorded observations by the Internet Landing Inspection Device Sensor (I-LIDS) and our ramp inspector has logged 261 hours at the HWY K launch. (This data was collected on 08/18/2023.)



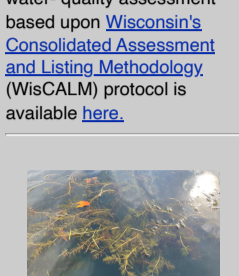
The Internet [Landing Installed Device Sensor \(I-LIDS\)](#) is at the DNR landing in Chicago Bay to monitor boats and trailers for aquatic invasive plants. The Clean Boat/Clean Water boat launch inspections are funded, in part, with a \$4,000 WDNR grant, along with a \$1,400 grant for video cameras.

COLA needs your ongoing support
Please consider a tax-deductible donation today!



COLA'S LAKESIDE NEIGHBOR HANDBOOK

COLA has created a new Lakeside Neighbor Handbook to provide essential information about COLA and the LCO lakes. More information is available [here](#).

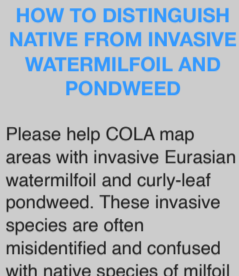


2022 Water Quality

The complete 2022 LCO water-quality assessment based upon [Wisconsin's Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology](#), (WisCALM) protocol is available [here](#).

AIS AT YOUR DOCK

If you see Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) alongside your boat dock, it is recommended that you remove it by hand pulling it. EWM is this beside your dock, will spread very fast with your boat propeller causing fragments. Fragments cause new plants. It is not easy work pulling it. You must try to remove the roots and get the floaters. See [here](#) for more tips.

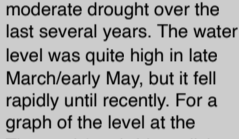


HOW TO DISTINGUISH NATIVE FROM INVASIVE WATERMILFOIL AND PONDWEED

Please help COLA map areas with invasive Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed. These invasive species are often misidentified and confused with native species of milfoil and pondweed that are common in the LCO lakes, so please use [this guide](#) before contacting COLA. If you find invasive species and even remotely suspect that they are not recorded on [current COLA maps](#), then please report your observations by using COLA's [Observation Forms](#) or send COLA an [email](#).

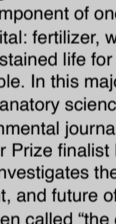
Property owners are encouraged to manually remove AIS from areas close to their shore. But it is essential to distinguish native from invasive species and not remove the former.

Here's [more information on manual pulling](#). Also check [Section NR 109.06 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code](#).



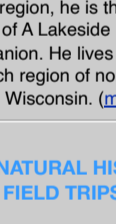
WATER LEVEL IN THE LCO LAKES

Heavy snowfall during the winter of 2022/23 may have countered the effects of the moderate drought over the last several years. The water level was quite high in late March/early May, but it fell rapidly until recently. For a graph of the level at the Thoroughfare bridge, click [here](#).



THE DEVIL'S ELEMENT by Dan Egan

Phosphorus has played a critical role in some of the most lethal substances on earth: firebombs, rat poison, nerve gas. But it's also the key component of one of the most vital: fertilizer, which has sustained life for billions of people. In this major work of explanatory science and environmental journalism, Pulitzer Prize finalist Dan Egan investigates the past, present, and future of what has been called "the oil of our time."



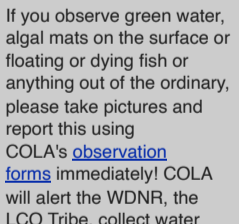
RIPPLE EFFECTS by Ted Rulseh

Ted Rulseh writes the newspaper column "The Lake Where You Live" and is active in lake-advocacy organizations, including the Wisconsin Citizen Lake Monitoring Network. The editor and publisher of several books on the Great Lakes region, he is the author of A Lakeside Companion. He lives in the lake-rich region of north central Wisconsin. ([more](#))

2023 NATURAL HISTORY FIELD TRIPS

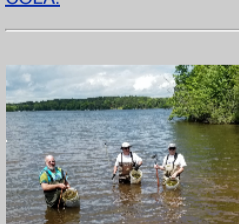
The Extension Program at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University is once again sponsoring natural history field trips led by Mike Heim. The upcoming September trip:

Saturday September 23rd: The Blue Hills Felsenmeer from 9:00 a.m. until approximately 5:00 p.m. More information [here](#).



LCO TRIBAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES OFFERED

Lac Courte Oreilles Museum and Information Center will hold a Public Lecture Series on Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal History beginning in August 2023 at the Museum Center (Old Kinnamon School). The lecture series will be hosted twice monthly by museum employees and conducted by Rick St.Germaine, History Professor Emeritus. More information [here](#)



LAKE OBSERVATION FORMS

SEE ANYTHING WEIRD?

If you observe green water, algal mats on the surface or floating or dying fish or anything out of the ordinary, please take pictures and report this using COLA's [observation forms](#) immediately! COLA will alert the WDNR, the LCO Tribe, collect water samples, etc.



TALES OF LAC COURTE OREILLES

This book, edited by Tom and Sue Burgess, together with COLA's history committee, provides a detailed history of Lac Courte Oreilles. Copies are available at the St. Francis Solanus Mission in Reserve, or contact [COLA](#).

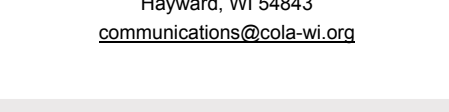
LCO NEEDS YOUR HELP

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 if interested or you need more information.

SHORT EARS, LONG TALES

[ARCHIVED ISSUES OF SHORT EARS](#)

Questions, comments or suggestions for future articles may be sent to communications@cola-wi.org



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