

Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HC COLA) Accomplishments 2020 and Goals for 2021

HC COLA, a 501c3 formed in 1988 currently represents 42 lakes with 30 lake associations with over 2500 members. We are an all-volunteer organization. We welcome your participation in our Zoom meetings implemented during the Covid-19 Pandemic. We will use Zoom during 2021. We look forward to in-person / Zoom meetings when facilities available 2022.

Our mission is to protect and enhance the quality of our lakes and rivers, preserve the economic, recreational and natural environmental values of our shorelands and promote the responsible use of our waters and related habitats. These accomplishments & plans support our mission!

Lake Water Monitoring Program

The Lake Water Monitoring Program that HC COLA has coordinated since 1997 had excellent participation by member lake associations and also lake neighbors on a lake without a formal organization. We pivoted to a masked / socially distanced drive-thru for cooler pickup & for volunteer shuttle service to RMB Environmental Labs in Detroit Lakes.

New Water Monitoring Reports for 41 lakes were compiled for up to 10 years of most recent samples (see related article in Dec 2020 HC COLA newsletter) and 41 Reports here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KFuzz-Hr6x3Zt448bidFvzP0GY05MTPJ>

HC COLA chose to support the Healthy Waters Initiative in a Wake / Propulsion Study by the University of MN St. Anthony Falls Propulsion Lab with a \$1000 contribution where \$760 comes from 2019 sports sale and remainder from the general fund. Follow the two year study here: <https://sites.google.com/umn.edu/healthywatersinitiative/welcome>

For 2021 we'll provide even more clarity on sampling, costs, forms prep & billing with HC COLA, RMB & lake associations.

Restore the Shore Program

The annual HC COLA Restore the Shore program for trees, shrubs, plant plugs and seeds began in circa mid 1990's thanks to "Mr. Restore the Shore", the late Gary Stolzenberg (see related article in Dec 2020 HC COLA newsletter). Gary collaborated with the Hubbard County SWCD for the HC COLA program creation to benefit lakeshore owners so that a fewer number of trees could be purchased (instead of a bundle of 25 for example). In 2020, more lake association orders were received for \$ amounts greater than 2020 for delivery May 2021 through the Hubbard County SWCD.

In Sept 2020 HC COLA co-sponsored two workshops with the University of MN Extension – Hubbard County on "Lawns & Lakes – There is a Connection" and "Shoreland Advisors 101". We partnered with HC SWCD in their autumn newsletter to promote the concept of using a complimentary HC COLA "Shoreland Advisor" coach if a lakeshore owner wanted to discuss "lawn" ideas to prevent runoff, erosion and improve water quality. HC SWCD may have cost share options too.

For 2021 we'll grow the "Shoreland Advisor" program (4 & growing) from Itasca Waters along with the Waterside principles shared by Beltrami / BCLARA. We'll continue to explore coaching concepts for ways to help lakeshore owners achieve rain water infiltration, erosion prevention plus wildlife / pollinator habitat on their lakeshore / lawns & more. For example, MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates Dec 2020 mtg featured Dorothy Whitmer, Gull Lake on a "Lake Stewards" successful pilot.

Education Program

Hosted educational speakers at 6 of our monthly HC COLA meetings in 2020. For continued learning, we have video and slide presentations available on our HC COLA website at [www.hubbardcolamn.org](http://www.hubbardcolamn.org/presentations.html) → Communications → Presentations: <http://www.hubbardcolamn.org/presentations.html>

Offered 3 outdoor/socially distanced/masks workshops held at South Access of Long Lake for HC COLA: Drive-thru demo on planting "Restore the Shore" trees in May, AIS sampling /ID class for "Eyes on the Water" meanders in June & August.

HC COLA column articles in Park Rapids Enterprise preserving fishing lakes and also the loon program. Continue in 2021.

Membership Committee

Updated the HC COLA master list with new column for AIS Coordinator / Monitors for the member lake associations. We welcome new lake association presidents / HC COLA representatives & thank outgoing presidents/HC COLA Reps. We appreciate active participation by HC COLA Reps to help us keep the HC COLA master updated & "Friends" list too.

Hosted Beauty Lake conference call of neighbors regarding resources available for lake association creation guidance. Provided input on engaging / building lakeshore owner participation for Steamboat Lake organization.

Provided info for resident on Lake Ojibway and also resident on Lord Lake interested in water monitoring. Provided info for lake resident from Lake George who contacted HC COLA regarding a project traversing a wetland.

Wished two special HC COLA collaborators "Happy Retirement": Doug Kingsley from MN DNR Fisheries in mid-summer and also Sally Shearer from University of MN Extension – Hubbard County in December. They still plan to attend our programs.

Finance Committee

Monthly treasurer reports, billing for dues & sampling, annual budget review of 2020 & 2021 planning completed.

Querying other area COLAs & LARAs on their membership fee schedules for benchmarking HC COLA this winter.

Charitable Fund Advisory Committee

Hubbard County COLA Charitable Fund seeks annual proposals for up to \$2000 in 2021 due 3/1/2021. The grant cycle was announced in May 2020. The Park Rapids Enterprise promotes regularly as has HC COLA. On www.NWMF.org also.

Communications Committee

Monthly newsletter pilot, collaborating with lakesadmin creator, John Kruse, also Becker County & Otter Tail County COLAs.

HC COLA representative participating on the advisory team developing the one watershed one plan (1W1P) for the Mississippi River Headwaters Watershed Comprehensive Plan.

The HC COLA Chili Challenge entry "Lakin' It Easy" in early March brought in \$2,130 thanks to 15 lakes and the public bringing our total over the 8 years that HC COLA participated to nearly \$20,000 for the Hubbard County Food Shelf.

Letter to Hubbard County Commissioners to consider continuing to provide \$35,000 for 2021 AIS Prevention Program. Letter to DNR Commissioner on support of Sunfish bag limit of 5 including Garfield Lake and participated in online survey & in-person appointment with Calub Shavlik, DNR Fisheries Interim Mgr-Park Rapids on topic. Comment period letters on Line 3 for MN Pollution Control Agency 401 certification, US Army Corp of Engineers 404 Certification and Governor of MN.

Updated HC COLA organizational documentation / website with additional focus on terrestrial invasive species on shoreland. <http://www.hubbardcolamn.org/organization--strategy.html>

HC COLA representative participated in virtual conferences of North America Lake Management Society (NALMS) <http://www.nalms.org/> and North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) <https://naisma.org/>.

HC COLA research team formed in Nov to provide input in Jan 2021 for the Hubbard County Environmental Services Planning Commission who were asked in Sept by the Hubbard County Commissioners to determine draft Shoreland Management Ordinance regulations by Spring 2021 for Short-Term Rentals. We'll review the AIS-focused Resort materials on our website over the winter and include Short Term Rental terminology also.

AIS Operating Team Program

The extended AIS Operating Team accomplishments of 2020 and plans for 2021 were documented in partnership with Hubbard County Environmental Services- AIS Program. Discussed at HC COLA 10/29/2020 mtg and in Nov newsletter. Link: http://www.hubbardcolamn.org/uploads/3/4/5/6/34563649/cr_2020_10_29_ais_extended_oper_team_accomp_2020_-_plans_2021_final.pdf

2020 "Eyes on the Water" participation recap: <http://www.hubbardcolamn.org/eyes-on-the-water---early-detection.html> Lakes may strive in 2021 to increase their participation rate and to examine additional tools to use in AIS prevention.

KARE Cabin Cast Ad 2020: HC COLA chose to help support an ad campaign on AIS prevention on KARE 11 from Memorial Day through Labor Day with \$500; coordinated by Wildlife Forever. Achieved getting Park Rapids on their Weather Map.

We'll experiment with the output from the new <https://AISexplorer.umn.edu> decision support dashboard for prioritizing AIS surveillance and watercraft inspection activities by MAISRC. Perhaps we'll learn additional opportunity areas.