

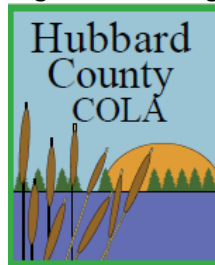
## HC COLA Accomplishments 2022 of the HC COLA Mission and Strategic Actions and Plans for 2023:

**Vision:** HC COLA is the Leader in Protecting Hubbard County Lakes & Rivers

**Mission:** HC COLA's 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. HC COLA's mission enhances, promotes and protects the interests of lakeshore property owners, lake associations, local government, the general public and future generations.

**The Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HC COLA) formed in 1988 and currently represents 43 lakes with 31 lake associations composed of 2,776 members. We have been in existence for 35 years already!**

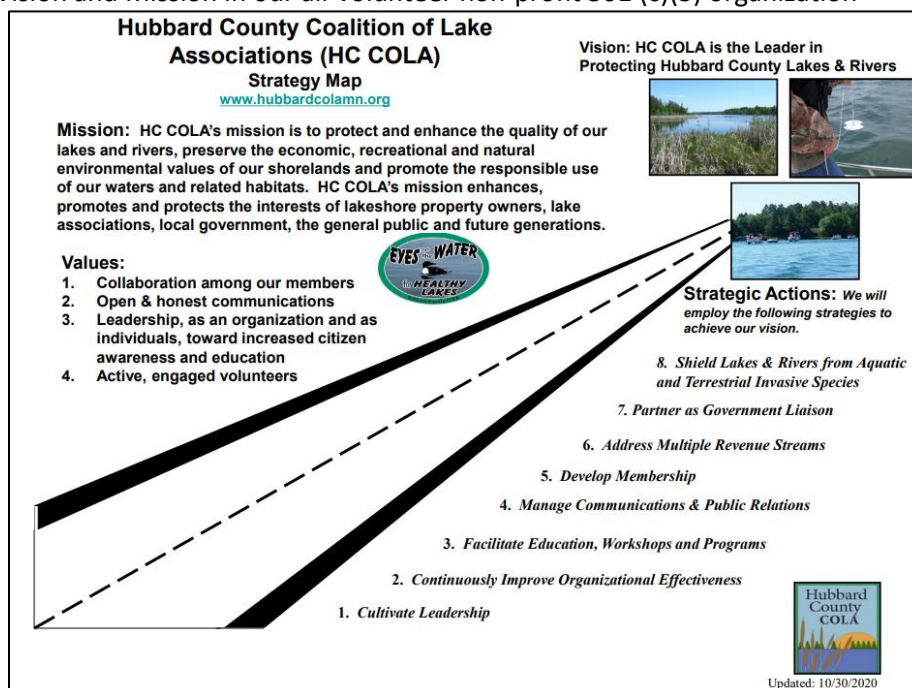
**Plan for 2023:** Use Banner under the HC COLA Logo "Celebrating 35 Years" on correspondence and at events.



### Values:

- Collaboration among our members
- Open and honest communications
- Leadership, as an organization and as individuals toward increased citizen awareness and education
- Active, engaged volunteers

Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HC COLA) will employ the [Strategies](#) identified on our [HC COLA Strategy Map](#) to achieve our Vision and Mission in our all-volunteer non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization



**The Accomplishments for 2022 are listed with each Strategy. The Plans for 2023 are also included for each Strategy.**

**Strategy 1) Cultivate Leadership:** HC COLA Executive Team on 2/17/2022 asked the Lake Association Presidents and HC COLA Representatives to share the E-Team's Letter of 2/17/2022 regarding leadership opportunities with their lake association membership. We added committee members to the AIS Operating Team, Communications, Education, plus transitioned to new Treasurer and added Vice-President / President-Elect, also serving on the Executive Team (E-Team).

**2023 Plan:** Add to the Membership team, plus Secretary, who is also an E-Team member

**Strategy 2) Continuously Improve Organizational Effectiveness:** Implemented hybrid board of director meetings with in-person / Zoom, plus added OWL technology, zoom e-team meetings, and a mix of tech available for committee mtgs.

**2023 Plan:** Utilize technology to assist in secretarial role plus improve use experience in hybrid BOD meetings

**Strategy 3) Facilitate Education, Workshops and Programs:** See the 2 major milestones and other accomplishments...

**Milestone 1 accomplished for 2022: 25 Years of Water Quality Monitoring (WQM)**



**In 2022, we achieved 25 Years of Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) thus far, with 37 lakes participating in the program currently in Hubbard County.** The program began in 1997 with leadership from late Jerry Knoblich (Portage Lake) with 23 lakes participating in the water quality monitoring lakes program with RMB Environmental Laboratories Inc in Detroit Lakes.. Jerry led the program, managing volunteer and cooler coordination along with providing the volunteer shuttle service until 2012 when protégé Peter Tuomisto (Blue Lake), transitioned to lead the program. He is willing to train additional shuttle drivers to help back him up in case Peter is not available on the specific date / time each month to get the coolers promptly to RMB in Detroit Lakes (in 2022, the HC COLA Board gifted \$75/round trip for the shuttle driver).

The WQM program analysis provides the measurement of [chlorophyll-a](#) and [total phosphorus](#) in the water sample which is taken 2 meters below the surface using a 2-meter integrated sampling tube. The volunteers also record the water clarity depth using a [secchi](#) disk. The volunteer repeats the water sampling, for 5 months, from May through Sept on a specific date / time schedule. The volunteer marks the sample bottles appropriately and delivers the cooler to the shuttle drop off site in proper time range for delivery to the Detroit Lakes lab.

RMB provides the trend analysis to HC COLA and the lake association through the lakes database monthly, plus provides the data to the MPCA for the season. The DNR utilizes the MPCA data for [Lakefinder](#), which integrates the data with fisheries stocking and analysis, water level, and ice info for public viewing through a website or mobile device. This 26 years' of WQM data is also being used to help ground truth satellite imagery for lake health factors as part of the [University of MN Remote Sensing and Geospatial Analysis Laboratory](#) . We learned about this from Leif G. Olmanson, PhD, Research Associate, Dept. of Forest Resources, University of MN when [Leif spoke](#) at our HC COLA meeting 6/30/2022. This satellite info is also part of Lakefinder or can be accessed directly. It will help us be aware of opportunities that complement our physical water monitoring on a lake, for example, algal blooms. This will help show water quality trends on lakes that have no volunteer monitors.

**2023 Plan:** Educate volunteers on testing protocols. Determine sampling costs at beginning of season.

## Milestone 2: 18 Years of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention.



**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Celebrating 18 Years

In 2005, HC COLA began Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention activities. This summary of historical development of AIS Prevention in Hubbard County is by Dan Kittilson & Ken Grob:

### 2004 – Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership (HLRP)

- In 2004 Hubbard COLA participated in the Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership (HLRP) in conjunction with the Initiative Foundation and the Northwest Minnesota Foundation.
- 5 lakes participated including Wadena County.
- Lake Management Plan (LMP) common areas of interest identified the “Big 3” focus areas including Water Quality, Land Use/Zoning & Management, and **Aquatic Invasive Species**.

### 2005 – Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership

- Six additional lakes including Plantagenet which is in Hubbard County and bordering in Beltrami County also
- Again, the LMP’s identified the “Big 3” focus areas including Aquatic Invasive Species.
- Since HC COLA’s involvement with the HLRP, Hubbard COLA has had an active AIS prevention program since 2005. The program was managed by a HC COLA AIS committee (AIS Extended Operating Team collaboration today) with active participation from Lake Associations. Each lake association determines an AIS coordinator.
- Watercraft inspections became a primary vehicle to provide hands-on education to boaters. This began as a volunteer effort by lake associations with training from the MN DNR for education at public water accesses.
- Hubbard COLA initiated public awareness and education actions starting in 2005. The core actions of this initiative included contracting BSU student to install the “Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!” signs throughout the county, public service announcements, AIS brochures/cards and billboards and DNR public access signs. In addition, numerous presentations on AIS prevention were provided to local organizations.

### 2006 – Early Detection efforts began.

- Hubbard County Lake mapping initiatives have been a focal point for a number of Lake Management Plans that have been developed through the Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership. Mapping vegetation in area lakes has forged a partnership between citizens and resource professionals to inventory and analyze the aquatic plant community in participating lakes.

- Another important role in monitoring is early detection of invasive plants. Many lake association members in Hubbard COLA have participated in training on aquatic plant identification and how to monitor our lakes for AIS.

### **2009 – Watercraft inspection program**

- In 2009 the inspection program expanded through DNR inspection grants placing paid interns at accesses in Hubbard County.
- Lake Emma Township inspection program began with DNR grant, Lake Emma Township contribution, lake association funding and a gift from Zorbaz on Little Sand Lake.
- The Lake Emma Township contribution in 2009 was a prelude to the formation of the Lake Emma Township Healthy Lakes Grant Program. Of course, we all know the importance of the Lake Emma grant program and how it has served as a model for other townships.

### **2010 – Healthy Lakes & Rivers Partnership**

- 6 new lakes participate in HLRP – Lake Management Planning
  - New lakes bring total of 18 lakes with Lake Management Plans.
  - Most effective tool for lake protection (Big Impact)
  - HLRP stimulus for AIS Task Force
  - Lake Association Core programs
    - AIS Teams
    - AIS Coordinator
    - Citizen monitoring

**2011 – Hubbard County, by resolution, formed the AIS Prevention Task Force.** This resulted in major involvement / expansion to include all townships, Community organizations and additional outreach to resorts.

**2014 – Minnesota Legislature passed the “State Aid to Counties for AIS Prevention” funding law.** This provided watercraft inspections for a lot more lakes in Hubbard County, expanded Early Detection work, and provided the Watercraft Decontamination Station area near the South Transfer Station on Hubbard County.

**2016 – AIS Prevention for Hubbard County was transferred to Hubbard County Environmental Services Department** from the HC SWCD.

Our partnerships in AIS Prevention also include the UMN AIS Research Center (MAISRC) formed in 2012 and UMN Hubbard County Extension plus MN COLA and MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates and others.

**2023 Plans:** MAISRC expects to add an additional tool to help assess “intervention impact” in 2023 which we will utilize when available. We will promote the DNR’s new Pledge to Protect Minnesota Waters [here](#).

HC COLA’s AIS Operating Team continued collaboration with the Hubbard County Environmental Services AIS Program in 2022 on a number of activities; see the multi-page **accomplishments and plans** for 2023 for the AIS Operating Team [here](#). This information was shared at the HC COLA 10/27/2022 hybrid meeting with the HC COLA Board of Directors. Aaron Anderson, Environmental Specialist, Hubbard County Environmental Services – AIS Program also **presented** on the outcome of the AIS Program 2022 including community outreach, inspection summary, decontamination of watercraft summary, AIS infested waters update and plans for 2023. Aaron pointed out that there were no new Hubbard County lakes added to the DNR Infested Waters List in 2022 (see [list as of 12-16-2022](#)). The total number of watercraft **inspections in 2022** was 21,767 where 0.96% had the drain plug in place and 2.14% had plants, animals or mud. The percent entering from infested waters was 28.76% (which does not include curly leaf pondweed and invasives like mystery snails that are not included on the MN DNR Infested Waters list; i.e. would be about 10% greater, if included).

The recap of the [AIS Watercraft Inspection Summary for 2009 – 2022](#), updated by HC COLA annually, shows that the lake associations have contributed supplemental funding for watercraft inspections totaling \$950,626 from 2009 thru 2022, thus far. The 2023 supplemental funds are due by 1/31/2023 – see the details [here](#)! The State of MN along with some early years of DNR grants contributed \$1,324,825 thus far. Township/City contributions are at \$399,279 thus far.

Additionally, 116 citizens on a variety of lakes reported on their early detection efforts in the annual “Eyes on the Water” survey in 2022. See the annual historical numbers [here](#).

The 2022 Grant recipient from the HC COLA Charitable Fund was Little Sand Area Lake Association. They will provide a report at our April 2023 meeting on the results from their aquatic vegetation survey completed in 2022 through RMB.

**2023 Plan that is new on the horizon – Hold the Date: Friday, June 2, 2023**, the Univ of MN Extension / MAISRC to train AIS Detectors in a 1-day course, in person, in Park Rapids. Additional details will be communicated soon. Note: Some lake associations have a reimbursement policy upon successful course completion with paid receipts for their lakeshore owners that become AIS Detectors, for example. There also are scholarships available through the Univ of MN Extension. This will be an open class available to not only Hubbard County but others too. We will do outreach to other COLAs about the opportunity.

**Item 3: Restore the Shore (RTS) Program:** The HC COLA RTS Coordinator managed the 12 to 14 lake associations’ orders from the LA RTS coordinators that participate annually for trees, shrubs, plant plugs and seeds along with payments, combining them into 1 HC COLA order for the HC SWCD. The HC COLA Treasurer combined the LA payments to provide 1 check from HC COLA to the HC SWCD for the entire order to arrive May 2023.

**2023 Plan:** HC SWCD is considering a potential pilot for HC COLA online orders in bundles of 5 trees and two of our RTS team provided input for HC SWCD.

**Item 4: Loon Liaisons for 23 lake associations** each worked in partnership with the team members of the [MN DNR Loon Restoration Project](#) on their lakes’ Loon Friendly Lake Management Plan in this Year 2 of the DNR program.

Our HC COLA hybrid meeting on 5/26/22 featured [presenter](#) Kelly Amoth, Program Coordinator with the “Get The Lead Out” tackle program with the MPCA. We learned how loons come in contact with lead tackle, causing death. Approximately 25% of loon deaths are related to lead poisoning. We hosted lead tackle collection box at the meeting and at the fair, providing lead-free tackle samples in exchange. We will do this type of activity again in 2023.

HC COLA hosted 3 presentations by the MN DNR Loon Restoration Project Team during 2022 for Loon Liaisons and lake associations’ loon helpers, LoonWatcher Survey(ors) and the Next Steps for Implementing the lake associations’ loon friendly lake management plans.

**2023 Plan:** HC COLA working with Daisy Lake Loon Liaison on building an Artificial Nesting Platform as the Loon Treatment suggested by the DNR and their Federal project team members from the USGS. The HC COLA education team is collaborating with Hubbard County Solid Waste | MPCA GreenCorps Member for demolition materials reuse and instructing Hubbard County Extension 4-Hers in building the ANP. We will use S.T.E.A.M. concepts (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) in the four class sessions with an optional 5<sup>th</sup> session for launching the ANP after ice-out with 4-Hers / parents.

Encourage additional loon liaisons to volunteer on Hubbard County lakes with loons. It is not necessary that the lake have a lake association for a loon liaison to work in partnership with the MN DNR Loon Restoration Project.

Encourage LoonWatcher Survey(ors) to sign up with the DNR to provide annual loon nesting information. The Loon Liaison on a lake may also be a LoonWatcher Survey(or).

**Item 5: The Shoreland Advisors (SA)** were invited by 10 individual lakeshore owners during summer 2022 to walk with them and listen to their ideas and share insights to prevent runoff, erosion, and promote water quality. After



researching questions and potential opportunities, a complimentary visit recap was shared with the lakeshore owner. In addition, presentations were made by SA at 2 lake associations' annual meetings and 2 at HC COLA meetings. Our SA team grew by 1 SA in 2022 so we now have 9 SA's on 5 lakes; some are willing to help lakeshore owners on other lakes.

Related to the SA Program, our HC COLA hybrid meeting on 5/26/22 featured a second presentation by Jake Shaughnessy, Water Quality Resource Technician from the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District (HC SWCD) team and Libby Martin, Bemidji State University Graduate Student. They **presented** on the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership grant received in partnership with the Crow Wing County SWCD. The grant includes 3 chains of lakes. In Hubbard County, this is the Mantrap Chain of Lakes. They encouraged anyone interested to join the virtual and field events to be held over the summer.

**2023 Plan:** At our HC COLA Meeting 8/25/2022, Sue Schiess, Kabekona Lake, one of our first HC COLA Shoreland Advisors when we started the program in Sept 2020, **explained** the concepts promoted by HC COLA's trained volunteer Shoreland Advisors to protect water quality. Sue draws on her 18 years of experience as a Master Gardener when making shoreland suggestions. She explained that presentations and visits are a free educational service. Contact [hccolamn@gmail.com](mailto:hccolamn@gmail.com) to invite a lakeshore visit, a lake association presentation, or to get trained as a shoreland advisor for your lake!

**Strategy 4) Manage Communications & Public Relations:** The Communications Committee members maintained the HC COLA Website and Facebook Page posts. Also manage HC COLA updates on Chamber of Commerce website, Downtown Business Assoc website and kiosk, plus United Way Volunteer Opportunity presence. HC COLA provided three Newsletters in 2022 instead of the monthly format for 2021, plus Email Updates along with with Zoom registration links, Meeting Minutes, Committee Reports, Invoice mailings for WQM, etc.

The HC COLA monthly articles, for the Park Rapids Enterprise "Northland Outdoors" section. are prepared by the Communications team. We welcome our newest team member, Craig Bihrlle, Potato Lake Associations' HC COLA Rep, retired writer and photographer. The HC COLA contributed PRE articles in 2022 included:

- "AIS Prevention continues with winter fishing" – Dec 17, 2022; Craig Bihrlle
- "Three Hubbard County lakes involved in cattail study" – Nov 22, 2022; Craig Bihrlle
- "Purple loosestrife's threat to Hubbard County lakes" – Oct 14, 2022; Craig Bihrlle
- "Shoreland Advisors assist with improving water quality" – Sept 10, 2022; Craig Bihrlle (Potato Lake)
- "The potential lessons in the abandoned aquarium" – Aug 19, 2022 - Sharon
- "Turn in your lead tackle at the Hubbard County Fair" – July 11, 2022 - Sharon
- "Local Conservation Officer will answer FAQ" – May 10, 2022 - Sharon
- "Learn how the Shoreland Management Ordinance protects our loons" – April 15, 2022 - Sharon

The Communications team is also grateful for the Park Rapids Enterprise Editor's coverage of HC COLA-related topics throughout the year. Examples from 2022 by Shannon Geisen include:

- Aaron Anderson, Environmental Service's presentation at the October HC COLA mtg on the AIS Program Update: "Zebra Mussels Caught at Plantagenet, Big Stony Lake watercraft inspections"; Nov 7, 2022
- "Natzel honored for her critical AIS work in Hubbard County; Oct 14, 2022
- "Lake Loving Volunteers Needed for Starry Trek 2022"; Aug 7, 2022
- "95k Grant Promotes Water-Quality-Friendly Living on Mantrap Chain; June 11, 2022
- "One lead sinker kills a loon, so 'Get the Lead Out'"; June 5, 2022
- "June 9<sup>th</sup> UMN AIS Research Center Update" article shared by Shannon from Detroit Lakes Forum paper on the event that HC COLA is co-sponsoring; May 28, 2022
- "Wade Massure is new PR fisheries supervisor"; May 6, 2022

The local newspapers post the reminders for the 5 Water Quality Monitoring sampling Sundays and cooler drop Mondays for the WQM team.

The local newspapers publish the press release provided by the Northwest Minnesota Foundation for the annual HC COLA Charitable Fund Open Grant Round Application Opportunity. Info on open grant round [here](#) with deadline 4-15-2023. Then the HC COLA Charitable Fund Advisors will review the grant requests and make recommendations to the BOD for a decision planned for the 4/27/2023 HC COLA meeting.

HC COLA E-Team approved correspondence for:

- HC COLA letter of support for the Univ of MN St. Anthony Falls Lab submission for grant to the LCCMR
  - See the update on progress as of 12-22-2022 from SAFL [here](#).
- HC COLA letter of support for the HC SWCD on Protecting Priority Lakes in the Upper Mississippi Basin: Managing Forests for Water Quality Protection US Forest Service FY23 Landscape Scale Restoration Competitive Grant Process

HC COLA was represented by President, Sharon Natzel at these meetings in 2022:

- HC SWCD hybrid meeting on the Hubbard County Local Water Plan on December 1, 2022.
- ACTION Park Rapids on Nov 11, 2022. (Actionable, Collaboration, Together, Implementing, Opportunity, Now)
- Stop Starry Cross-County Monthly Zoom Mtg with MLR – ongoing representation for 2023 too
- MN Lakes & Rivers Webinars and Annual Mtg on Zoom – ongoing representation for 2023 too
- MN COLA Quarterly Zoom Meetings – ongoing representation for 2023 too
- Northern Waters Land Trust Quarterly COLA Collaboration – ongoing representation for 2023 too

**2023 Plan:** President Natzel will represent HC COLA at these meetings:

- the Crow Wing River One Watershed One Plan team meetings will begin.
- MPCA's Mississippi River Headwaters Watershed Cycle 2 meeting is Jan 12, 2023 on Microsoft Teams
- Continue memberships and collaborations from 2022; consider adding NALMS membership for HC COLA

The team also looks for opportunities to positively impact public relations, examples include:

At our April 28, 2022 HC COLA hybrid meeting, HC COLA invited Bryan Haugen, Assistant Environmental Services Director, Hubbard County Environmental Services Department to present on two topics. He covered the AIS Prevention Program for 2022 first. Then Bryan shared "What Changed with the 'Updated' Hubbard County Shoreland Management Ordinance No. 17, Amendment 20, August 17, 2021." One of the significant modifications was that short-term rentals (STR) require an annual license to operate after May 1, 2022 (when they are located within a 1000 feet of a lake).

On May 12, 2022, HC COLA hosted a zoom presentation by Nick Baum, MN DNR Conservation Officer, who explained his role and answered the previously submitted questions plus others. This topic area was suggested by lake associations.

In Sept, the HC COLA Board voted to help support the replacement of a damaged sign we had contributed to as partners several years ago for the Stony Lake beach area that the Stony Lake Beavers 4-H Club maintains; sign installed by LA.

**Strategy 5) Develop Membership:** We welcomed the Steamboat Lake Association as a new HC COLA member in April, 2022 and added a new Sustaining Member too from a lake without an association.

The membership team hosted a Meet & Greet (Pay For Your Own) on Taco Tuez, 5/17/22 at Zorbaz. We encouraged lake associations to provide the invitation to their members.

Our 9/29/2022 HC COLA meeting topic was each lake association representative is asked to share a brief 2-minute overview of your lake association's most important achievement this season and 2 challenges. This sharing may help to uncover future educational topic areas of interest for 2023 and beyond.

**2023 Plans "Developing Membership" include:**

HC COLA Monthly hybrid meetings are the last Thursday of the month April through October. We have reserved the Northwoods Bank Community Room. Mtg time is 6:30 to 8:30 PM: April 27, May 25, June 29, July 27, Aug 31, Sept 28, Oct 26 – will share zoom registration link closer to the mtg date. Meetings are open to the public for the educational presentations.

Back by Popular Demand! The HC COLA Membership Team will host a "Meet and Greet" for any interested lake assoc members or others at Zorbaz-Park Rapidz at 11:30 AM on Taco Tuez, June 6, 2023. Buy Your Own Food & Beverage; Mingle and Connect! HC COLA is Celebrating 35 years!

**Strategy 6) Address Multiple Revenue Streams:** HC COLA's current revenue stream comes primarily from dues paid by member lake associations. We also receive a spendable amount annually (generally speaking, interest less fund management costs) from the 0344 HC COLA Charitable Fund (an endowment fund) at the Northwest Minnesota Foundation. Occasionally donations are made by citizens to the endowment fund also.

**Strategy 7) Partner as Government Liaison:** We continued to partner in 2022 with Hubbard County Environmental Services Dept on AIS Prevention. We include the Hubbard County SWCD programs in our communications and they frequently announce programs. We will remind HC COLA how to subscribe for updates by the County Commissioners and the Board of Adjustment / Planning Commission also. In addition, Strategy 4) manage communications and public relations also relates to Strategy 7.

**2023 Plan:** Provide information from government organizations to help protect Hubbard County lakes and rivers; for example, here is a press release from the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) with educational links, "In de-icing season, [a "less is more" approach best protects](#) lakes and streams.

**Strategy 8) Shield Lakes & Rivers from Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species** - Please see "Milestone 2: 15 Years of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention and Early Detection Activities / Education" which is above in Strategy 3) Facilitate Education, Workshops and Programs.

Other accomplishments leaning into terrestrial invasive species: we learned more on management of Purple Loosestrife and Hybrid / Narrowleaf Cattail:

Also at our 9-29-2022 HC COLA Meeting, we played the educational video by Jon Dennis, HC COLA Rep for Spider Lake and our new VP/Pres-Elect. Jon utilizes a unique technique for the removal of purple loosestrife, an invasive species found in a wetland of Spider Lake. He has consulted with and also shared the technique with Nicole Kovar, DNR Invasive Species Specialist and Greg Hensel, Hubbard County Agricultural Inspector. Here is the link to the 6 minute video "Purple



Loosestrife – A New Way to Remove an Old Invasive Plant; With A Winch, There's A Way"

[https://youtu.be/WPdra\\_1roWs](https://youtu.be/WPdra_1roWs)

Six HC COLA individuals attended a MAISRC-hosted field site visit on Long Lake near the airport in Detroit Lakes, MN. The [project team is quantifying](#) and clarifying whether or not hybrid / narrowleaf cattail removal can increase plant diversity and benefit fish communities in nearshore lake ecosystems and how these effects vary regionally in MN. It will be interesting to learn more about the outcomes of this very important 2-year research project and the 1st & 2nd Crow Wing and Lake Belle Taine test site contributions too in 2023!

At our Oct 27, 2022 HC COLA hybrid meeting, [Deb Massey shared](#) with us the steps for the MN DNR Permitted Cattail Management Project on her Lower Twin Lake shoreline, in Menahga, MN. The management project took place next to the dock in late Summer 2022. We will get an update in 2023.