



WICOLA NEWS

White Iron Chain of Lakes
Association, Inc.

Volume XXVII Book II
Autumn 2020

President's Report

Jeff Pike, WICOLA President

It's hard to believe that we are getting ready for the fall newsletter and the fall leaves are gone. It is mid-October, and we have snow on the ground. As you may know, summer was remarkably busy this year with lots of activity out on the lakes. Ely was busy and folks were really enjoying the lake life. Fall color came early with the maples turning quickly in September. With the addition of the yellow from the aspen and birch, it was an incredible color season. But high winds and early cold quickly moved from brilliant color to bare trees and snow.

meeting was by Zoom and included a great presentation by Dr. Euan Reavie from UMD. WICOLA presented at Ely's Tuesday Group with a focus on our water monitoring and results, also by Zoom. With the help of an equipment loan from the USGS and efforts by Darren Lilja, WICOLA conducted our 3rd lake sediment testing in three sites (Birch, White Iron, and Garden Lakes). This helps us build on our water metals testing and creates an important baseline with over fifteen years of data. We hope to use this data in a comprehensive report next year.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) efforts continued in earnest again this year. We partnered with Lake and St. Louis Counties Soil and Water District staff to include our chain's water access points in watercraft inspections. We also participated with groups such as the BWCAW Coalition which is dedicated to stopping Aquatic

Invasive Species from spreading into the BWCAW; this includes the waters flowing through our chain that return to the wilderness. WICOLA has also participated with the Ely Area Invasive Team which coordinates many field experts and AIS prevention needs of the Ely area. WICOLA continues sponsoring trapping of invasive rusty crayfish with several trappers having a remarkably high catch rate, helping to reduce the impacts of the rusty crayfish. If you would like to participate, let us know; we will have free traps available for members again next



Despite the challenges that Covid 19 brought this year, things at WICOLA moved along. Although we missed having Ely's Blueberry Arts and Harvest Moon Festivals, other activities continued. Dave and Mary Setterholm teamed up to handle water monitoring on three of our lakes. Darren Lilja, Dave Johnson, Ben Johnson, and Liz Anderson handled Birch and Fall lake monitoring. Together they continued WICOLA's important efforts to document our lake conditions.

Like everywhere, Zoom meetings have become the norm. WICOLA's annual

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Mark Your Calendar for 2020

January 11, February 9,
March 8, April 12, 2021:
8:30 a.m. WICOLA
Board Meeting,
remote meeting
online



Visit the
WICOLA website:

www.wicola.org

for the
latest news,
updates, information
and resources.



Like us, and
search for
'White Iron
Chain of Lakes
Association –
Wicola.'



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year. The captured Rusty Crayfish are also particularly good to eat.

The WICOLA members that maintain WICOLA had a busy year with managing our website and Facebook posts, keeping track of our financial data, minutes, and, of course, publishing the newsletter. Our activities include membership recruiting, seeking grants, tracking hours spent by volunteers, and many other organizational items.

With so many moving parts within WICOLA, we are always having change. Going into next year is no

exception. John Rossi, who has helped make our website noteworthy, has moved on to a warmer climate and is turning over this important function to Sue Duffy.

Please thank John for his dedication and help to our association. Vice President David Lee is also focusing on other non-profit goals and will be missed for his many contributions well beyond the role of Vice President. He will be missed, but still a dedicated WICOLA member. This year also included Jeff Hanson joining the WICOLA Board. Jeff lives on Birch Lake and is our Membership Chairperson.



Here you have it: bits and pieces of WICOLA's Annual Meeting in August, Zoomed right into your newsletter.

Membership renewal reminders will be coming out after Thanksgiving. So, get ready, and **RENEW!** It's fast and easy, especially when you do it online. Just go to WICOLA/membership/online



Would you like to be part of the WICOLA team? **VOLUNTEER!** All kinds of fun jobs await your input: White Iron Representative, Newsletter input and/or editor, and whatever else creative you might have to offer. Contact WICOLAely@gmail.com and let us know what you'd like to do.



Shoreline Resotation on White Iron Lake - From Concrete to Pollinators

Sue Duffy

Our house is on the north side of White Iron Lake and the shoreline, when we purchased the property, included a deteriorating concrete structure and a vertical concrete rock wall that created a boat slip. Our goal was to create a more natural and ecologically functioning shoreline with native vegetation, and one that could withstand fluctuating water levels and big waves.

We consulted with Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District and obtained permits from Lake County and the DNR to work in the lake and bring in fill. During the summer of 2018, a contractor removed the concrete and vertical rock wall and brought in rocks

and fill to create a more natural shoreline. We also applied for and received a grant from Lake County SWCD to help with the cost of planting. We hired Zone 3 Gardens, who have extensive knowledge of native plants, to plant the entire area with native plants and shrubs. We did lose some plants and fill the first summer because of high water and waves but now, two years later, the shoreline is stable, and the bees, butterflies and other pollinators are active. We also have turtles and ducks climbing up on the rocks. And we get beautiful flowers and fall colors.

BEFORE



AFTER

Don't forget to check the WICOLA website www.wicola.org frequently for news updates and announcements.



UMD Researchers Studying Cyanobacteria on White Iron Lake

Christopher Filstrup

This summer, a team of researchers from University of Minnesota Duluth's Natural Resources Research Institute and Large Lakes Observatory visited White Iron Lake every other week from mid-June through September. This was part of a state-wide research project to better understand factors contributing to cyanobacteria harmful algal blooms (cHABs) in Minnesota Lakes. The project integrates cutting-edge DNA and RNA sequencing and toxin screening approaches to identify environmental conditions that cause cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) to produce toxins that are dangerous to people and pets. The research team will use this information to develop a novel molecular tool to rapidly assess the toxicity of cHABs.

In addition to White Iron Lake, the research team sampled five additional Sentinel Lakes stretching from southwestern MN and the Twin Cities to north of Lutsen, which resulted in the team traveling approximately 7,200 miles this summer. Lakes were selected across gradients of latitude, climate, and land use to ensure that the assessment tool would work for Minnesota's diverse lake types across the entire state.

"Although previous studies have documented large amounts of cyanobacteria in White Iron Lake, we really didn't see noticeable cyanobacteria blooms develop this

year, especially when compared to the southern lakes in our study," said lead investigator Dr. Christopher Filstrup of NRRI. "When we finish analyzing the samples this winter, it will be interesting to see if cyanobacteria were present in low levels in White Iron

Lake, but conditions were not right for them to develop into dense blooms."

As part of her dissertation research, graduate student Kaela Natwora traveled the entire 7,200 miles to sample all lakes this summer, including all nine visits to White Iron Lake. "White Iron is a really beautiful lake, and it's nice to know that WICOLA and others are actively participating in maintaining its health and beauty", said Kaela. "I enjoyed meeting people at the boat landing and talking about the lake and our research project."



UMD graduate students Leah Egan (left) and Kaela Natwora (right) sampling White Iron Lake on October 1, 2020, the last day of sampling for the year.

While the research team is done sampling for the year, they will be back next spring to continue sampling for the project. If you see them, feel free to say hi and chat with them about the project.

This project is funded by the Minnesota Sea Grant College Program. Dr. Cody Sheik (UMD Large Lakes Observatory and Department of Biology) and Dr. Kathryn Schreiner (UMD Large Lakes Observatory and Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry) are co-investigators on this project.

Coming Soon! The "WICOLA Channel"

WICOLA will be introducing a new feature on our website (www.WICOLA.org) that will present videos that will inform, educate and entertain. The videos will focus on topics in support of WICOLA's mission to preserve & protect the clean waters of our community. The first two videos that will be available are recent presentations from local/regional experts including...

- *The Amazing Loons* – Presented by Sherry Abts (Ely's very own "The Loon Ranger")
- *Aquatic Invasive Species* – Presented by Dr Euan Reavie, Senior Research Associate at University of Minnesota Duluth



At The Beach

Dave Lee

With Fall evident all around us, we look to bridge the gap between our short summer and long winter. We will have longing memories of time spent at the beaches of our cabins and lake homes, tiding us over during the months of snow and cold, when shorts and swim trunks are packed away until late spring. The beach is “where it’s at” in the summer. Tots learn to dunk while older siblings learn to navigate deeper waters. Adults swim, sun, and watch over their charges. Grown-ups and kids, alike, revel in beach time.

While turtle heads surface, then disappear, youngsters snoop the shallows and learn to catch frogs and crayfish. Then there is fishing. Get out that Mickey Mouse Zebco and have Grandpa hook a worm underneath the bobber. What will that first fish be? A “sunny”, bluegill, or even a small northern? Whichever it is, it’s exciting.

Often located by the beach is the dock. What a hub of activity during the warm months! Oh sure, Dad complains about the cold, both putting the dock in and taking it out, but how could we get along without it? Sometimes, the beach is not sandy at all and the dock is the only access to the cool, clear waters of our White Iron Chain. You must graduate to being a “real” swimmer if you are going to jump, maybe even dive, off the dock. The dock is also where we can spend our nights, flat on our backs, admiring the night sky in all its splendor. Planets, stars, galaxies, and even satellites twinkle above on a clear night. If we are really lucky, the Northern Lights, Aurora Borealis, favor us with their amazing spectacle. Big



brother sits down on the end of the dock with his special friend, long after the youngest have hit the hay. And the dock is the location of the boat.

Ah, the boat. The beach is great, but how about expanding your horizons? Be it a fishing boat, canoe, or kayak, you know you’re growing up when you can leave the homeplace for extended fishing, neighborly visiting, and even overnight trips. One of the great advantages of having a place on our chain of lakes is access to the BWCAW.

Hold those memories dear as the leaves turn and drop. Things change around the beach. On our lake, “dead heads” wash ashore after a long summer (or two) of drifting our way. These are reminders of the logging that took place around our lakes more than a hundred years ago. Probably emerging from the bottom due to gas created by bacteria, they drift with the wind. In this photo

of a dead head on our beach, there is another reminder of Fall: a stick that has been chewed by a beaver. The beavers are cutting down the alder and other small trees along the lake shore to feed on underwater while the lake is covered with ice. The turtles are

hunkered down in the mud where they wait out the cold months.

Winter is coming and soon the only visible difference between the lake and the land will be the absence of trees, because all will be covered with snow. Sit by the fire and remember the fun times at the beach this past summer while you look forward to the adventures that next summer will bring.

Let’s catch some CRAYFISH!

When the water opens up again in spring, there’s a job that’s fun for adults and kids to do together: catching Rusty Crayfish. It’s also an important part of staying ahead of Aquatic Invasive Species. Contact WICOLAely@gmail.com to find out about getting some traps and how to become part of the WICOLA Crayfish Trapping Cohort!



***Secrets of the Loon* by Laura Purdie Salas and Chuck Dayton**

Book Review by Polly Carlson-Voiles

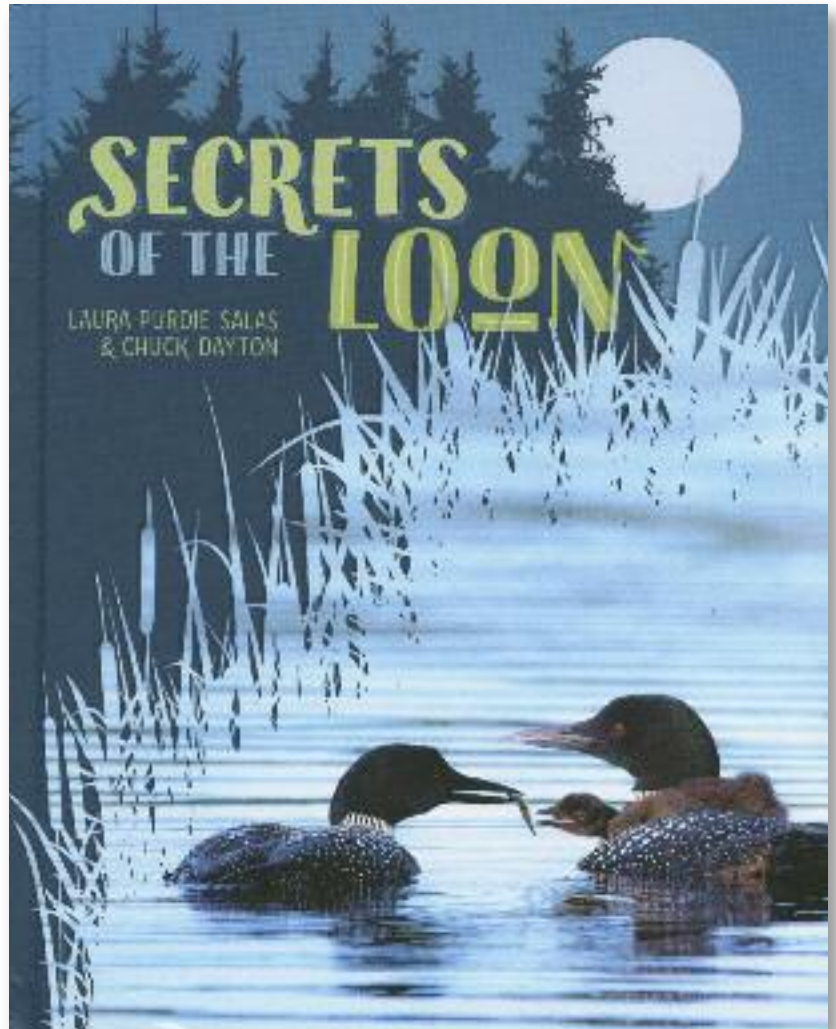
Sometimes a sound becomes a symbol, a source of awe. A sound can embed deep in memory, lasting beyond words—like the various wails and calls of the common loon, invoking northern forests, lapping waters, awakening in wilderness, the gift of wild creatures.

Secrets of the Loon, a picture book published by Minnesota Historical Society Press, captures this mystery for children of all ages. And magic happens. This marvelous collaboration between Chuck Dayton and Laura Purdie Salas is a succinct combination of poetry, well-researched science, the art of photography, and book design.

Chuck Dayton, beyond his work as an environmental lawyer, developed passions for photography and loons. He married the two by traveling in a kayak that he guided and paddled with his feet, leaving his hands free to operate his camera. This allowed him to enter the private world of the loon quietly and respectfully. After spending countless hours photographing the fascinating details of the family life of loons and after diligent digging into the science, Chuck wanted to share with children his awe and his excitement about the timeless mystery of this bird.

Minnesota Historical Society Press brought a well-known poet and writer of children's books, Laura Purdie Salas, into the collaboration. Her delightful poetry sings the story of Moon, a "brand new loon" from hatching, staying safe, learning to feed. Finally, doing what we all eventually do, Moon "spreads her wings wide," knowing that "Every Secret Moon needs, she carries inside."

Secrets of the Loon concludes with a highly informative four page section about the science of loons. This is a book to learn from, get lost in, refer to, to return to, a capsule of the mystery of nature's design. It reminds us that what we carry inside, our respect and love for the planet that is our home and our beginning, is where we begin.



A note from your editor:

You couldn't ask for a better idea for gift-giving at this time of year than to consider getting *Secrets of the Loon*. It's a book for children of all ages, from the wee ones to the great-grandparents. Look for it (and ask for it, if you don't see it) at your local independent bookstore. In Ely, that would be the Upstairs Bookstore, at Piragis. You *need* this book.



Meet *Secrets of the Loon* Creators Chuck Dayton and Laura Purdie Salas

Sigurd Olson was a witness for lawyer Chuck Dayton in his lawsuit leading up to the 1978 amendments to the Wilderness Act, the act that banned logging, snowmobiles, mining and most motorboats from the BWCAW. In 1972, Chuck represented the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG) in a Federal case to require an Environmental Impact Statement on logging in the BWCAW. This was the case that brought Bud Heinselmen into full time advocacy for wilderness protection. When they had gone as far as they could in the courts they turned to Congress.

This isn't the usual history of a man who develops a picture book about loons to be published the year of his 80th birthday. With a passion for loons, his camera, and with support and guidance from some creators of children's books, he began to shape his hundreds of photos and his research into a book for children.

Chuck Dayton has a long history with loons in Northern Minnesota, having spent part of 63 summers at his family compound on Jasper Lake. Having studied the loons he photographed in such intimate detail, he is also aware that the loons we love so much are threatened by lead fishing tackle, and by rising temperatures from global warming. Chuck's portrayal of the resilience of a young loon during her first summer is an invitation for young people, the heirs of his legacy of protecting the environment, to begin to treasure this iconic species.



In Laura Purdie Salas's words, "When I write for kids about our planet and its creatures, I have two big hopes. One is that they'll see something "ordinary" like leaves, water, rocks, or the moon, in a fresh new way. The other is that they will fall in love with our world just a little bit more, thus becoming more inclined to protect it."

"I often explore a broad concept through the lens of many different examples. But *Secrets of the Loon* is narrowly focused. I had to dive deeply (Ha! – couldn't help myself) into the world of just one animal. Although I'm glad that loons do live in some city lakes, I really wanted to capture the northern Minnesota wilderness of Chuck's photos and this single exotic inhabitant. I grew up in

Florida, and I had never even heard of the common loon before I moved to Minnesota as an adult. The times I've seen loons have almost all been up in the Ely area. I wanted my words to celebrate this region as well as both the science and the mystery of loons."

Books by Laura Purdie Salas include *A Leaf Can Be*, *A Rock Can Be*, *Meet My Family: Animal Babies and Their Families*, and many other wonderful books!

Newsletter photos by Jeff Pike, Dave Lee, Consie Powell, Sue Duffy, Chris Filstrup & Chuck Dayton.

Please join WICOLA! If you can volunteer to help out with various project needs, or if you can donate funds, you'll earn our appreciation! JOIN or RENEW now. Use this form, or go to www.wicola.org to join or donate online.

Send your check to WICOLA at PO Box 493, Ely 55731 - make Bill Bailey's day! (He's our treasurer...)

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WHITE IRON CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION, INC.

WICOLA NEWS



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We're on the Web! www.wicola.org

The White Iron Chain of Lakes Association (WICOLA) enhances, promotes and protects the interest of property owners on White Iron, Farm, South Farm and Garden Lakes, the contiguous waterways and surrounding watershed. WICOLA promotes good lake management through testing, education and support.

White Iron Chain of Lakes Association board members:

Jeff Pike	White Iron Lake	(248)931-1743	President
David Lee	Garden Lake	(651)592-3334	Vice President
Sue Duffy	White Iron Lake	(218)235-8903	Secretary
Bill Bailey	White Iron Lake	(952)412-5481	Treasurer
Jeff Hanson	Birch Lake	(651)792-5831	Membership, Birch Lake Rep.
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John Rossi	White Iron Lake	(218)365-7046	Director at Large
Consie Powell	Farm Lake	(218)235-8808	Newsletter Editor

Please feel free to contact any board member at WICOLAely@gmail.com.

We welcome and encourage your comments and suggestions. *Our Association is dedicated to continuing to protect and improve the water quality of our chain of lakes. Please join us in this endeavor, and VOLUNTEER!*

WICOLA NEWS is published twice a year and mailed to members of
WHITE IRON CHAIN OF LAKES ASSOCIATION, INC.

If you are interested in improving the water quality, fishing, and recreational opportunities on White Iron, Farm, Garden, Birch and Farm Lakes, join WICOLA today. Annual Membership is \$25 per year. Please send a check to our address above for all the benefits of membership.