

MEETING MINUTES: CCCoLA AUGUST 14, 2025

PRESENT: BETSY BLUME (DEVIL TRACK LAKE), KATHY BOGEN (LOON LAKE), BARB BOTTGER (HUNGRY JACK LAKE), DAVE COLEMAN (CLEARWATER LAKE), BIZ CLARK (POPLAR LAKE), PATTI CRADDOCK (POPLAR LAKE), AL FLIEDER (ASPEN LAKE), WOLFGANG GREINER (DEVIL TRACK), LINDA HAY (SEAGULL/SAGINAGA), RORY LAIHO (SOUTH GREENWOOD LAKE ROAD OWNERS), GARY MACIEJEWSKI (TAIT LAKE), IRENE MULLEN (CARIBOU LAKE), LARRY MULLEN (CARIBOU LAKE), MARK AND MARY PETERSON (EAST GREENWOOD LAKE), DANIEL SWENSEN-KLATT (HUNGRY JACK), ANN SULLIVAN (DISTRICT 4 COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONER) JERRY WILKES (DEVIL TRACK) GUEST PRESENTER -- GUNFLINT TRAIL LOON PROJECT: MONA HANSON (LEO LAKE)

Item	Discussion	Action
Welcome and introductions	Members introduced themselves and the lake/road/property owner associations they are affiliated with. 3 new members were present: Linday Hay representing Seagull-Sag and Mary and Mark Peterson of the East Greenwood Lake Property Owners Association	Welcome Linda, Mary, and Mark! Thanks to Mona Hanson for joining us to give a presentation on the Gunflint Loon Project! Thanks to 4 th District Commissioner, Ann Sullivan, for her presence and keeping us connected with the County!
Review and approval of 7/10/25 Meeting Minutes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biz made a motion to approve the 7/10/2025 meeting. minutes as submitted. Gary seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
Review and approval of July 2025 Treasurer's report	<p>Thank you from Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy for CCCoLA's \$100 donation was read.</p> <p>Total dues collected this year: \$820 Ending balance July 31, 2025 \$810.44 Total accessible funds: \$822.43</p> <p>We incurred \$976.97 in expenses this year due to increased outreach efforts to inform and engage the public, especially youth, in protecting and preserving the waters and shorelands of Cook County. The AIS cards, purchased from Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council, were an effective incentive and teaching tool. The cost for these was \$491.50 for 125 decks of cards. We have around 50 decks left that can be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patti made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as submitted. Rory 2nd the motion. Discussion included the points listed in the discussion column. The motion passed unanimously. <p>If you haven't paid your dues for 2025, please send checks to:</p> <p>Gary Maciejewski P.O. Box 323 Lutsen, MN 55612-0323</p> <p>Dues are \$50/annually for Lake/Road/Property</p>

	<p>used for next year's events. In the future, we could design our own cards and have them produced. Since this would reduce cost and would promote CCCoLA along with providing Cook County-specific education, we'll investigate this option. Ideas suggested are that we could sell them to resorts, outfitters, VRBO's, gift shops, etc. This would also generate income for CCCoLA.</p> <p>Discussion: Due to expansion of CCCoLA's public outreach efforts, might we consider increasing dues for the future?</p>	<p>associations and \$10/annually for individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion was made to take the proposal to make a moderate increase in annual CCCoLA dues to the Steering Committee to decide on an amount. • The motion passed unanimously. <p>Members are welcome to purchase decks of cards for \$5 per deck if they wish. This will help to offset the expense incurred for the cards, and the cards are very nice!</p>
<p>County Updates-- Ann Sullivan</p>	<p><u>Construction Projects:</u> Great progress on construction projects. Little Devil Track project should wrap up in December.</p> <p>Transfer Station construction is under way to deal with the volume of solid waste being created in the County. Note: increased tourism supports the Cook County economy and puts pressure on the County's capacity to deal with demands on infrastructure.</p> <p>Addition to the Law Enforcement Center will begin soon. Remodeling in the Courthouse is completed but furniture hasn't arrived. This will provide 8 workstations.</p> <p><u>Septic Inspections:</u> One Watershed One Plan funds are being used to inspect septic systems on Loon and Birch. Only 50% of respondents got their surveys back. They will be inspected whether surveys are returned or not.</p> <p><u>Invasive Terrestrials:</u> Paper "no Mow" signs have been replaced with permanent ones which will be up for 2-3 years.</p> <p><u>Affordable Housing:</u> Housing modules that were being stored at the airport are being moved to the housing site.</p>	<p>Kathy will send a note out to Loon Lake residents regarding their septic surveys.</p>

This will begin mid-September. The apartments will provide much needed affordable housing.

Budget: Hard to get a handle on Health and Human Services (includes SNAP and Medicaid). Difficult to know what the County must pay until more information from Federal and State. Fund balance is in good shape currently.

Outreach: Ann has had contact with 737 property owners this summer. She will meet with Loon Lake and Gunflint Lake Associations later this month.

Preserve the Bluff meeting this afternoon (August 14, 2025) regarding the bluff land above Grand Marais being put up for sale. Representatives of Grand Portage have been invited. The purpose of the meeting is to finalize a media packet for a Friday meeting with media outlets including the Minnesota Star Tribune. Meeting will be at 3:30 at the Cook County Community Center.

New County Administrator: Kristen Trebil-Halbersma. Her experience with personnel coaching is one of her many strengths and skill sets. She will be able to coach Department Heads in leadership skills and other key aspects of their roles. She is becoming familiar with Cook County and would love to come to a CCCoLA meeting in the future. On-boarding is going well.

Involvement with Association of Minnesota Counties Waste Committee which is working together to draft a proposal for all 87 MN Counties to bring to the legislature in the 2026 session. It takes 2-4 years to get big new ideas through the legislatures. Focus now is innovation, not increased cost. The Moccasin landfill in Cook County is being closed. The County leadership is currently thinking

	<p>long-range about infrastructure and planning.</p> <p>Cook County is interested in taking over maintenance of The Grade as well as plowing, as this is our emergency evacuation alternative route, if we cannot use Highway 61. Currently, the bridge on The Grade, a USFS road, has been under repair for nearly a year and a half, leaving us without an alternate route out of the County.</p>	
Gunflint Loon Project	<p>Mona Hanson (Leo Lake) gave an informative presentation about the Gunflint Loon Project which was initiated in April of this year.</p> <p>The project was inspired by Dr. Walter Piper's research on loon population, health, and survival factors. Dr. Piper has studied the Loon population in Central Minnesota and Wisconsin and found that numbers have declined.</p> <p>Phillis Sherman's passion for loon survival was instrumental to this project. Leadership at Chik-Wauk wondered "Do we have any data on Loon population on Gunflint Trail Lakes?"</p> <p>This inspired the Gunflint Trail Loon project which involves recruiting volunteers to collect data on loons on Gunflint Trail lakes. Volunteer "Loon Rangers" who observe loons on specific lakes/areas of lakes and record their bi-weekly observations are key to the success of this project.</p> <p>Mona Hanson Coordinates Northern Lights Lake to Loon Mark Ellis Coordinates Gunflint to end of the Trail Currently, there are 37 volunteers monitoring 21 lakes.</p> <p>Some observations and issues noted so far: There have been successful hatches of twins on Leo Lake. 10-15 loon chicks accounted for currently on the lakes where there is a "Loon Ranger" recording observations.</p>	<p>Kathy will send out handouts to members.</p> <p>Loon Ranger document Excel spreadsheet to collect data (Dr. Piper provided consult on this). Data includes # of loons and chicks, predators, watercraft, misc. Project description</p> <p>At the end of the season, Mona and Mark will compile data. The volunteer survey includes lake data that may impact loons.</p> <p>Next year, the project plans to go out and share information about how people can protect loons.</p> <p>The Loon project is hoping to hold a training for loon rescue with Gail Buhl from the Raptor Center. There is a group in Babbitt "Crippled Critters" that will provide care for injured loons for free.</p> <p>Mona will give a report at the end of the season through CCCoLA.</p> <p>The Gunflint Loon Project is hoping to have more volunteers and lakes involved next year.</p> <p>Organizers are looking to use technology tools to connect the volunteers and have more information available.</p>

	<p>Abandoned tackle is a huge problem that leads to loon injuries and fatalities. Important to retrieve lures and other tackle.</p> <p>4 major causes of fatalities and injuries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead • Collisions with boats • Fireworks • Abandoned tackle <p>Betsy Bloom mentioned DNR doing loon counts on lakes and suggested coordinating data with theirs.</p> <p>Project starting small (Gunflint Trail) but plans to expand to all of Cook County. It is possible that data collected for the studies done so far may differ from data that could be collected from Cook County's lakes. Collecting data from Cook County could demonstrate differences in loon chick survival and other indicators of loon population health in different locations and the characteristics of those locations.</p> <p>Zoom workshops are available on citizen loon science, rescuing injured loons, understanding loon behavior, instructions for building, maintaining, and placing nesting platforms, etc.</p> <p>This is a unifying topic that is integrally related to CCCoLA's focus areas. How can CCCoLA help support the Gunflint Loon Project?</p>	<p>Sunday August 24, 2 p.m. Chickwauk Nature Center there will be a workshop with Mark Ellis on Loon photography.</p> <p>We could have a dedicated page on the CCCoLA website for the Gunflint Loon project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larry made a motion that we create a Gunflint Loon Project page on the CCCoLA website for information, photos, etc. to be posted. This can also be a page for "Loon Rangers" to post information and share observations. • Barb seconded the motion. • Discussion: It would be easier to do this on the CCCoLA website site than on the Chik-Wauk website. • The motion passed unanimously <p>Mona has agreed to be the liaison with CCCoLA.</p>
Summer Outreach events report and reflection	<p>Betsy thought that the CCCoLA outreach initiatives were well-organized. Enjoyed meeting the young people. Lots of people came to the booth. Great outreach to visitors both in Cook County and across the State and Country.</p>	<p>Amanda Weberg offered for CCCoLA to use the CCSWD tent which matches the Forest Service/AIS tent. This worked great since the booths are related and the heights of the tents match.</p>

	Thanks to Carrie Framstad for initiating this 2 years ago! Our exposure greatly increased.	Since it worked well to have the CCCoLA booth next to the AIS booth, 1854 Treaty Authority, and Cook County booth, we'll plan to do this again at Fisherman's Picnic next year.
Lake Steward Program report	14 Lake Steward evaluations done on Devil Track Lake. Exposure is expanding. Dialogue among lakeshore property owners has begun. The Devil Track group will connect with Mona Hanson to see about partnering with the Gunflint Trail Loon Project.	The Cynobacteria workshop, presented by Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District on August 12, was excellent and was recorded. Kathy will send the link out to CCCoLA members for those who weren't able to attend.
Non-profit status update	In going through the CCCoLA archives, it was discovered that our non-profit registration hadn't been updated for several years. Therefore, Gary Maciejewski filed the necessary forms to bring our organization up to date. Thanks Gary!	CCCoLA is now registered with the office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. Next steps are: File a Form 990-N form with the IRS. This is the form used for organizations generating less than \$50,000 annually. Gary will follow up on this.
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy /Sulfide Mining and Friends of the Boundary Waters	Kathy and others from CCCoLA recently attended the Friends of the Boundary Waters presentation at Gunflint Conference Center. Among other topics, the presentation focused on the threat of proposed sulfide mining near the Boundary Waters. Since this is an important topic affecting the health of Cook County waters, we need to be well informed and working with other organized groups to address this threat.	<p>We will plan to devote our October and/or November Zoom meetings to the topic of sulfide mining and will invite representatives of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Boundary Waters • Water Legacy • MCEA • Save the Boundary Waters <p>To present and discuss with us how we can partner with them in their efforts to oppose sulfide mining near the Boundary Waters.</p> <p>Note: There will be a presentation by Paula Maccabee, Executive Director and Counsel for Water Legacy at the Cook County Community Center 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 2nd. The meeting is open to all and will be an opportunity to learn more about the work we can do to protect our water and climate. Please invite friends and neighbors to attend.</p>
Meeting Reflection	Informative, energizing, informative. Thanks to Mona for	

	her presentation. Great opportunity to meet new people from our lake. Community building. Hopeful. Impressive. Lovely to have the County engaged. From Australia , we're being cheered on. Present our role to the new Cook County Administrator-- how we can help the County Administrator. Bringing along future generations. Place to grow... fun to be on. Thrilled to see new members	
Adjournment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary motioned to adjourn the meeting. • Rory seconded the motion. • Motion passed unanimously. • Meeting adjourned at 11:45.
Next Meeting	At our September meeting, we'll have presentations about AIS from DNR AIS Coordinator Doug Jensen and a presentation about diverse species planting from Mike Nicklow of Let's Plant Trees.	Thursday, September 11, 10-noon. at the Cook County Community Center