

MEETING MINUTES: CCCoLA MARCH 12, 2026

PRESENT: LARRY BICK (POPLAR LAKE), BETSY BLUME (DEVIL TRACK), KATHY BOGEN (LOON LAKE ROAD ASSOCIATION), BARB BOTTGER (HUNGRY JACK), BIZ CLARK (POPLAR LAKE), PATTI CRADDOCK (PIKE LAKE), AL FLIEDER (ASPEN LAKE), Wolfgang Greiner (Devil Track), Rory Laiho (South Greenwood Lake Road Owners), MARGRE LIND MILLS (PIKE LAKE), JOHN MILLS (PIKE LAKE), GARY MACIEJEWSKI (TAIT LAKE), CLARE SHIRLEY (SAWBILL CANOE OUTFITTERS), ANN SULLIVAN (DISTRICT 4 COUNTY COMMISSIONER), Daniel Swenson-Klatt (Hungry Jack), Amand Weberg (Cook County AIS), Jerry Wilkes (Devil Track Lake)

Item	Discussion	Action
Welcome and Introductions	All members present introduced themselves and their affiliations. Welcome Clare Shirley from Sawbill Lake Outfitters!	
County Updates, Ann Sullivan 3rd District Commissioner	<p>Amanda Weberg will be leading the State AIS Advisory Committee.</p> <p>County Staff and Commissioners advocated for AIS and CCSWD funding at the Capitol last week. They also support a grant application for a mobile biochar unit which can used to dispose of invasive plant material by an ecologically sound method which produces material that can be used as a soil amendment.</p> <p>Ann has met with Representative Roger Skraba and Senator Grant Hauschild advocating for State bonding funding for the wastewater treatment facility and resurfacing and other improvements to the last 10 miles of the Gunflint Trail. She has also been in touch with 8th District Representative Pete Stauber’s office regarding Federal funding for this project.</p> <p>The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Collaborative are making recommendations about improvements to the permitting and reservation system.</p> <p>Starting in May, the Subordinate Governmental Service Districts working group will meet to address road maintenance concerns. At the January County Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Mills brought up the possibility of permitting ATV’s on the CJ Ramstad Trail. This was due to his being approached by Kevin Johnson, the</p>	<p>Gary: Made the motion to send a letter of support for CCCoLA to send a letter of support for State Bonding Bill funding dedicated to completing improvements on the last 10 miles of the Gunflint Trail. These letters should be sent to Senator Hauschild and Representative Skraba who are supporting funding this project.</p> <p>Al: Seconded the motion.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Kathy will compose and send a letter of support.</p> <p>Ann invited one of Representative Pete Stauber’s staffers to visit the Gunflint Trail this summer to see the need for</p>

	<p>Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Area Supervisor. Kevin's role is the development and management of ATV trail networks, and he was curious about the status of the CJ Ramstead Trail. Commissioners and residents of Cook County over the years, have raised concerns about environmental impacts on sensitive areas, damage to trout streams, noise created that's close to cabins and homes, and the need to really address increasing maintenance costs on the trail. The County Board last year voted not to consider any development of the CJ Ramstead Trail until we had 3 letters of support from all the user groups, and we do not have those 3 letters. There is going to be no change or movement till those letters are received.</p> <p>Grand Portage Band is holding a signing ceremony on Monday, March 16th to commemorate the return of Paradise Beach, Francis Island, that's part of the Susie Island Archipelago, and about 80 acres of forest up along Mineral Center Road to the tribe. These were lands that were lost due to the Nelson Act. The Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation has purchased these for \$1.23 million and is returning the land back to Grand Portage. And it's really a milestone to restore and steward our tribal lands for future generations.</p> <p>County Personnel: Neva Maxwell will be replacing Tim Nelson as our new Director of Land Services. Sheriff Eliason has indicated he's not going to run for another term, and the County Board has, appointed Chief Deputy Ben Hallberg to serve as our interim sheriff until the elections occur.</p>	<p>improvements on the last 10 miles of the Gunflint Trail.</p> <p>Ann encouraged members to reach out to her via email or phone regarding any questions about her written updates or this report.</p>
<p>Updates from the Steering Committee: Formation of a Water Sampling Task Force</p>	<p>Many members of CCCoLA participate as volunteer water samplers on their lakes. While the pick-up, storage, and transportation of the samples to RMB laboratories has been coordinated by Cook County Soil and Water District, this will no longer be possible due to loss of grant funding. Patti Craddock has met with Ilena Hansel, CCSWD Director to discuss details of how the coordination of the program works so that CCCoLA members and others can continue getting the samples to RMB labs for analysis in a coordinated manner. RMB labs</p>	<p>CCCoLA members at this meeting unanimously support the idea of CCCoLA having a role in establishing a task force to coordinate water sampling, pick-up and delivery of samples, and communication among samplers.</p> <p>Any CCCoLA members interested in</p>

	comes to the Cook County Courthouse every Wednesday to pick up other samples, so there may be a possibility of coordinating drop-off of coolers so that RMB can pick them up. Patti mentioned that she sees the coordination of pick-up and delivery of the water sample coolers as too large of a task for any one person or group, but that smaller groups of samplers organized by location could do this.	working with Patti and others on a Water Sampling Task Force, please contact Patti Craddock at (651) 247-8405 Patticraddock@msn.com
Updates from the Steering Committee: Formation of a Get the Lead Out Task Force	Mona Hanson, who is involved with the Chik Wauk Museum Loon project has been in touch with members of the CCCoLA Steering Committee about the possibility of partnering to create a more robust Get the Lead Out campaign. By working together, we would be able to better monitor lead tackle collection sites and Chik-Wauk could serve a both a collection and educational site for Get the Lead Out. GLO would then join with the Chik Wauk Loon Project to form a Loon Protection Task Force.	CCCoLA members at this meeting are in favor of the Get the Lead Out action group merging with the Chik Wauk Loon Project on a Loon Protection Task Force to expand outreach and effectiveness of the Get the Lead Out project.
Review and updates on CCCoLA's decision to focus on Copper Nickel mining this winter.	Kathy gave a summary of CCCoLA's plan to address the issue of copper-nickel mining over the winter and early Spring months through action groups including Legislative, Education and Outreach, and Partnerships.	The April CCCoLA meeting will focus on sharing progress made by each of the groups on efforts toward opposing copper nickel mining in the Rainy River and Lake Superior Watersheds.
Action group discussions on addressing Copper Nickel Sulfide Mining	<p><u>Legislative Engagement</u> members: Biz Clark, Barb Bottger, Ann Sullivan, Kathy Bogen</p> <p>Discussion about the importance of sending timely letters to members of the Minnesota State Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy and House Environmental and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committees. The key points to be made in the letters will emphasize quality of life issues such as threats to drinking water resources, sustainable employment opportunities, and protection of a premier recreational site which serves families and communities throughout the Midwest.</p> <p>Hand-written and/or attractive letters providing succinct messaging and specific requests are most effective.</p>	<p>The legislative group will send letters to key MN legislators and US Senators in defense of a moratorium on further mineral exploration in the watersheds potentially affected by future mining in the BWCAW. The letters to the Minesota legislators should be sent out by March 21st to reach them before their break.</p> <p>Letters to key U.S. Senators and Representatives should focus on areas of interest they can relate to, based on their States' economies, interests in outdoor recreation, etc. Ann will provide a list.</p>

		Kathy will draft letters. Biz and Barb will send letters with hand-written notecards
	<p><u>Community Outreach and Connection</u> Margre Lind Mills, John Mills, Patti Craddock, Gary Maciejewski, Wolfgang Greiner, Jerry Wilkes, Amanda Weberg</p> <p>Discussion focused on planning a community workshop covering various aspects of the Copper Nickel mining issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actual process of copper nickel mining and how it compares to iron mining • The economics of copper nickel mining – how many jobs created, for how long, what types of jobs • Impact on tourism as an industry • Mining safety and potential for environmental harm—mitigation measures in place <p>The workshop will be conducted in a “café style” format in which participants rotate in small groups to tables led by individuals with expertise in specific topics. Active listening and discussion are encouraged along with access to reliable, accurate information.</p>	<p>This group will connect with Cook County Higher Education about offering a workshop on Copper Nickel mining sometime over the summer. The group will meet outside of the regular CCCoLA meetings to plan the workshop. Reserving a date and location at CCHE is a priority.</p> <p>The group will also do outreach and education through staffing a booth at Fisherman’s Picnic, Gunflint Canoe Races, etc.</p>
	<p><u>Partnership with other organizations and governmental bodies</u> Betsy Blume, Larry Bick, Clare Shirley, Rory Laiho, Al Fleider</p> <p>Clare from Sawbill Outfitters - thanked her for being with us and gave her time to share her insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business connections do need to focus on economic impacts • She is a plaintiff with BWCA lawsuits - so has a seat at the table to tell the story • doesn’t feel comfortable “broadcasting” positions - that just encourages battles with customers • appreciates when customers raise the issues with her / offering their support • encouraged us to recruit a wilderness-minded business owner or two to be a part of the Cook County Chamber of 	<p>This group includes Clare Shirley who is a resort owner. The group will continue to look for ways to connect with other resort owners and businesspeople in Cook County who have an interest in maintaining the pristine nature of Cook County’s waters and shorelands.</p> <p>Participation in staffing the CCCoLA booth at key events over the summer.</p>

	<p>Commerce (she doesn't have the time to participate) — Perhaps Ben Seaton at Hungry Jack Outfitters? Ida Ago?</p> <p>There was conversation around being ready for upcoming summer events - assuring that we have a way to present our values as an organization that create a common ground. We want to start from shared values as we present position papers in these settings. Is there a way to highlight those values as part of a summary of the position paper?</p> <p>We acknowledged that we look to the CCCoLA Chair and others involved in organizing the CCCoLA informational booths to help us prepare to show up at events to build relationships - our best strategy for strengthening partnerships.</p> <p>We noted that the Lake Steward activities can give us a wider network for building partnerships as well.</p> <p>Clare shared information about the BWCA Collaborative (noted Ann Sullivan's great work there) - and helped us understand how it supports the efforts of the Forest Service to develop better policies for permitting AIS, fire response and visitor experiences.</p> <p>We finished with the recognition that this year's elections are even more important to protect the wilderness so partnerships with voter education groups is a must.</p>	
Meeting Reflection	<p>Members shared that the meeting provided a sense of connection, feeling energized, inspired, and excited, and that the meeting was productive and informative. Others mentioned the concrete tasks we arrived at, a clear sense of direction, and gratitude.</p>	
Next Meeting	<p>Next meeting will be held 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom Thursday, April 9th, 2026</p>	<p>Please send along agenda items you would like included.</p>