

MEETING MINUTES: CCCoLA APRIL 9, 2026

PRESENT: LARRY BICK (POPLAR LAKE), BETSY BLUME (DEVIL TRACK), KATHY BOGEN (LOON LAKE ROAD ASSOCIATION), BARB BOTTGER (HUNGRY JACK), PATTI CRADDOCK (PIKE LAKE), AL FLIEDER (ASPEN LAKE), GAIL GIESEKE (GREENWOOD LAKE), ILENA HANSEL (COOK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER DISTRICT), KATE KELNBERGER (WEST BEARSKIN), Rory Laiho (South Greenwood Lake Road Owners), Kirsten Long (Poplar Lake), MARGRE LIND MILLS (PIKE LAKE), JOHN MILLS (PIKE LAKE), GARY MACIEJEWSKI (TAIT LAKE), LARRY MONTAN (HUNGRY JACK LAKE), IRENE AND LARRY MULLEN (CARIBOU LAKE), KATHY SCHAAF (TOM LAKE), Daniel Swenson-Klatt (Hungry Jack), Amanda Weberg (Cook County AIS), Jerry Wilkes (Devil Track Lake)

Item	Discussion	Action
<p>County Updates, Ann Sullivan 3rd District Commissioner</p>	<p>Commissioner Sullivan was unable to join the meeting today as she is in St. Paul meeting with Minnesota and US legislators to build support for funding resurfacing and improvements to the last 10 miles of the Gunflint Trail. She will let us know after these meetings about messaging and the appropriate parties to send letters of support concerning these important road improvements. Commissioner Sullivan’s report is attached.</p>	<p>Patti made a motion that a letter be written and sent on behalf of the CCCoLA Board in support of funding for the Gunflint Trail road improvement project once we have more details. Gary 2nd the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
	<p>Another key topic in Commissioner Sullivan’s report is the proposed closure of loss of the US Forest Service research facilities in Ely and Grand Rapids. The potential closure or consolidation of the U.S. Forest Service research offices serving northeastern Minnesota could have significant implications for Cook County and the Superior National Forest. These research programs provide the scientific foundation used to guide forest management, protect water quality, and understand climate impacts in the region’s boreal forest ecosystem.</p>	<p>Motion was made by Patti to send a letter to the appropriate person at the U.S Forest Service expressing CCCoLA’s concern about the closing of the research stations in Ely and Grand Rapids and our hope that the valuable research being done on the Superior National Forest will continue.</p>
	<p>There will be another meeting of the BWCAW Collaborative next week to finalize recommendations to the U.S. Forest Service. Al shared that it is important for CCCoLA to communicate our concerns.</p>	<p>Gary 2nd the motion. Motion passed unanimously.</p>

	<p>Rory asked about whether the consolidation of US Forest Service research facilities will result in continued research on the Superior National Forest.</p>	<p>For more information about the USFS consolidations: https://queticosuperior.org/what-the-forest-service-move-to-utah-means-for-superior-national-forest/</p>
	<p>Larry Montan shared that his 3 contacts at the Forest Service note that the decisions about closing the research stations and moving the USFS headquarters to Salt Lake City Utah are being made in Washington DC with little involvement of people working within the Superior National Forest. There is also a philosophy among the Federal Administration that Climate Change isn't a risk and therefore there is no need to address it.</p>	<p>Larry Montan believes that the person we should send a letter to is Tom Hall, Director of the Superior National Forest.</p>
	<p>The head of the U.S. Forest Service, Chief Tom Schultz, is going to be on a virtual meeting next Friday afternoon, April 17. The meeting is sponsored by the National Forest Homeowners, and this is a membership organization that advocates for cabin owners that are on permitted U.S. Forest Service lands.</p>	<p>Larry will be attending the National Forest Homeowners virtual conference on April 17 and 18, and he encourages CCCoLA members who have questions for Chief Hall to send them to him ldmontan@comcast.net asap so he can submit them ahead of time.</p>
<p>Cook County Soil and Water District Updates— Ilena Hansel</p>	<p>There is a grant submitted to fund improvements on the Clearwater Lake boat landing, and if received, CCSWD may also be able to do some improvements on the Hungry jack resort and boat landing.</p>	<p>Please reach out to the CCSWD office if you or others on your lake are interested in developing a shoreline buffer or other forestry project on your property.</p> <p>Patti Craddock will be reaching out to people interested in helping to coordinate this Task Force and/or participate as water samplers once she has the information needed from RMB</p>
	<p>CCSWD is moving forward this year on a sediment reduction project on the Poplar River.</p>	
	<p>There is funding available for cost share projects for individual property owners. CCSWD staff are booked up for these projects for the year but are available to do site visits, so it would be a good idea for interested property owners to reach out to CCSWD now if they have projects in mind (e.g. creating shoreline buffers and forestry) Cost-sharing is 75/25 (CCSWD/property owner—may be in-kind).</p>	
	<p>Due to funding decreases, CCSWD water monitoring is limited this year to monitoring the Cross River twice per month. If funding is available next year, CCSWD may be able to expand water monitoring efforts. In the meantime, the Water Monitoring Task Force (organized by some CCCoLA members) will be reaching out to folks who have signed up or</p>	

	<p>previously served as water samplers. There is no funding to cover the cost of the analysis by RMB labs or ample delivery costs so these will have to be borne by individual Lake Associations.</p>	<p>labs.</p>
	<p>CCSWD will be sponsoring 3 forestry related workshops over the summer focusing on forest health.</p>	
	<p>There is a native plant sale going on currently and trees will be available through the end of the month—mostly oaks.</p>	
	<p>Tuesday, April 21st will be a Community Listening session on the topic of Climate Change and adaptation. It will be in person and will feature a traditional Ojibwe meal.</p>	
	<p>Minnesota Sea Grant is sponsoring a citizen science project called Minnesota Lookout. In this area the focus will be Cynobacteria and will be taking place on Devil Track, Caribou, and Poplar Lake. There will be a virtual training for people interested in participating as water samplers for this project. The samples for cyanobacteria will be taken towards the end of the summer and the fall, when there tends to be the blooms. All the materials are provided, but they want to make sure everybody's trained in, so there's no quality control issues.</p>	<p>The training will be on April 21st 10:30 am. All are encouraged to attend as this program may receive more funding in the future and be expanded to other lakes.</p>
	<p>Thursday, April 23rd, the Gunflint Ranger District is having their open house at the Carol A. and Paul Schaap Community Center.</p> <p>Funding for County Soil and Water Districts is threatened by budget cuts at the State level and exacerbated by reductions in Federal funding for some programs. It is therefore important that individuals and organizations advocate for CSWD funding especially during the 2028 budget planning.</p>	<p>This will be a good opportunity to meet with Forest Service staff and share perspectives.</p> <p>CCCoLA members can send letters individually to their State legislators, and we will work on a letter collectively in the future.</p>
<p>Cook County AIS Updates— Amanda Weberg</p>	<p>June 20th, 2026 will be the Voyageur Brewing AIS event which is an important way to connect with Cook County residents and visitors about AIS and how to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species. The species being focused on this year is the Mystery Snails, so Voyageur Brewing is serving Mystery Snail Ale at the event.</p>	<p>Amanda requested 2-3 volunteers to help at the event. Please contact Amanda if you would like to do this. It is a great event and fun way to engage the public on this important topic.</p>

	<p>The Festival is being held on the same day as the solstice Pageant, so people can go to the AIS event and then go to the Pageant.</p> <p>There is a job posting on the County Website for a seasonal watercraft inspector.</p> <p>The University of Minnesota Extension Service is offering a training on identifying Spiny Waterfleas. The program is called Spotlight Surveillance and provides training and equipment to use.</p> <p>Amanda is on the State AIS Advisory Committee and they are working on getting accurate information out to the Public and State legislators about AIS funding as there is some confusion and misinformation on this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The misinformation that is out there right now concerning cuts to AIS Prevention Aid is true. It is being cut by 50%. It's currently at \$10 million, and it's going to go to \$5 million starting in 2027. This money comes from the Minnesota Revenue. It's not attached to the DNR, and this goes to the Counties. It's dispersed by the number of landings and trailer parking spots that each county has, so it's a prorated amount. And that will get cut in half. Some counties that are barely able to have a program right now, won't be able to have anything with a reduction. • DNR has their watercraft surcharge that has been instated. It was passed last year in legislation, so that funding is going straight to the DNR and is funding four new positions within the DNR in the AIS division. And those are all based in Ramsey and Hennepin County. • The new Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grants is going to be into effect next year, and we're advertising for that for people. So, you're hearing news about all of these increases in funding through the DNR for AIS, but they are separate from the County prevention aid. 	<p>Please refer anyone interested in this position to:</p> <p>Get in touch with Amanda if you are interested in the training and participating as a Detector.</p> <p>Amanda will keep us posted on her efforts to provide the public and legislators with accurate information about the availability of County AIS Prevention Aid.</p> <p>It will be important for CCCoLA to support this information campaign as these monies are what fund the Cook County (and others across the State) AIS mitigation efforts.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR commissioners are promoting what the DNR is doing with the surcharges and the community grants and this may make it sound like that is going to cover the County AIS Prevention aid, which it will not. 	
Progress summaries from Action Groups addressing Copper Nickel Sulfide Mining	<u>Legislative Engagement</u> Barb sent out personalized notes to Minnesota Senators and Representatives on their respective Environment and Climate Committees regarding concerns about contamination of lakes/drinking water from proposed Copper Nickel Sulfide mining near the Rainy River and Lake Superior Watersheds. Biz sent letters to US Republican Senators from States known for their outdoor recreation industries to share concerns about the impact on wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation tourism.	
	Daniel reported on a public hearing organized by Friends of the Boundary Waters on March 25th, which served as a practice run for a future Senate hearing. The hearing included testimony from various experts including geologists, mining professionals, lawyers, and business owners advocating for Boundary Waters protection.	
	<u>Community Outreach and Connection</u> Margre Lind Mills and Patti Craddock reported on their action group's plans to host a Copper Nickel Mining workshop to be held on Thursday, July 16 th from 12:30-3:30 at Cook County Higher Education. The 3 main discussion areas will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the copper nickel mining process • Understanding watersheds and watershed risks • Understanding impacts upon shoreland residents and businesses Subject Matter Experts will be sought to provide a concise and accurate overview of each of these areas. The workshop will be conducted in a "café style" format in which	

The success of this workshop will depend upon having presentations by qualified Subject Matter Experts on each of the 3 topic areas, having at least 6 volunteer facilitators to help guide the small group table conversations, and getting the word out to Cook County residents and visitors.

CCCoLA members who would like to help with any of these are encouraged to contact Margre and Patti.

<p>participants rotate in small groups to tables each led by a facilitator to help guide conversation around each of the topics. The conversations will center around how the information presented has expanded participants' understanding of each topic area and what further questions they have. Active listening and discussion will be encouraged along with access to reliable, accurate information.</p>	
<p>The group will also do outreach and education through staffing a booth at Fisherman's Picnic, Gunflint Canoe Races, etc.</p>	<p>At our June meeting, we'll have sign-up sheets for members to volunteer to staff outreach booths at the Voyageurs Brewing Event on June 20th, the Gunflint Canoe Races on July 15th, and Fisherman's Picnic August 1-3.</p> <p>Margre will send the Fisherman's Picnic booth invoice to Gary for payment.</p>
<p><u>Partnership with other organizations and governmental bodies</u> Betsy Blume, Larry Bick, Clare Shirley, Rory Laiho, Al Fleider</p> <p>Betsy discussed ongoing efforts to engage with the DNR Commissioner and potential partnerships with local outfitters and businesses. She mentioned reaching out to Ben Seaton from Hungry Jack Outfitters and exploring connections with Gunflint Trail Association and Skyport Lodge.</p> <p>Patti mentioned that John Fredrickson from Gunflint Lodge is a member of the Gunflint Trail Association which is an organization of GFT business owners.</p>	<p>Participation in staffing the CCCoLA booth at key events over the summer will be key to developing partnerships and connections with individuals.</p> <p>Patti will reach out to John about possible partnership with CCCoLA and whether he is active in the Gunflint Trail Association or Chamber of Commerce.</p>

<p>Group discussion: What have you learned from our work together on the Copper Nickel Sulfide mining issue that will inform your engagement going forward?</p>	<p>Members discussed winter outreach efforts on copper nickel mining, with Al highlighting the importance of connecting with organizations like Friends of the Boundary Waters and mentioning an upcoming seminar on April 16th at the University of St. Thomas. There will be another Friends of the Boundary Waters presentation on July 8 at Gunflint Lodge.</p> <p>Barb mentioned that one of her insights is that CCCoLA made the right move to spend the winter months digging deeper into the Copper-Nickel Sulfide mining issue, developing a positions paper, and connecting with other organizations such as Friends of the Boundary Waters, Water Legacy, MCEA, Save the Boundary Waters, MNCOLA , and WICOLA who are dedicated to preserving and protecting our State’s waters and shorelands.</p>	<p>Betsy will reach out to Rochelle Christensen (Skyport Lodge) to inquire about her interest in shoreline restoration and/or Chamber of Commerce participation.</p>
<p>Approval of March 12, 2026 Minutes</p>		<p>Gary made a motion to accept the March 12, 2026 CCCoLA meeting minutes. Al 2nd No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.</p>
<p>Treasurers Report</p>	<p>Current balance is \$295.80 Annual dues are \$60/organization and \$15/individual or family</p>	<p>Members are encouraged to send their annual dues to: Gary Maciejewski PO Box 323 Lutsen, MN 55612</p>
<p>Meeting Reflection</p>	<p>Awesome action groups! Very informative. The group is moving forward. The power of the group vs individuals only is just fantastic! Great to see everyone and hear about the dynamic work that’s being done. Great to be around such committed and dedicated folks. Appreciate everything that’s being done. Great to have each other to hold ourselves responsible for our work. Clean water seems pretty basic, but it’s a very layered, complex, and political issues. I’m impressed with the ability to navigate all of these avenues.</p>	
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>Next meeting will be held 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom Thursday, May 14th, 2026</p>	<p>Please send along agenda items you would like included.</p>