

SHORE LINES

Promoting Safe Fun on Clean Lakes

Cisco Chain Riparian Owners Association

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October 2025

President's Report

By Eugene Clark

Hello everyone! Summer has come and gone again! Snow is just around the corner. To all you snow birds, I hope you are having fun somewhere in the sun! Winters are a critical part of our balance of life here. A snowy long winter is good for us. It brings recreation activities in snowmobiling, skiing, and ice fishing. Our local businesses depend on this. It brings much needed moisture to our lakes. Lastly, a good snow cover on the ice knocks down the growth of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM).

A big thank you to our Officers and Board Members who have served us all this past season. "Thanks for your service" to outgoing Board Member Spencer Cable (Vice President). Thanks to Steve Kessler for stepping up to the VP position. Thanks to Richard Thomas for filling the AIS Manager position.

Thank you to our membership who support our activities and programs on the Chain to maintain the pristine nature of our waters. Last year was the first time we contacted Lifetime members, thanking them for their commitment, and asking them to contribute funds to support our Lake Management and Walleye Funds. Thank you to those who contributed. We will reach out again this Autumn with the same request.

We are pleased with our grant funding positions. We finished our 3rd year of our 3-year grant from the Wisconsin DNR covering \$115+k of our water quality



An Eagle soars over calm waters on Thousand Island

programs for 2023-24-25. We are applying to renew this grant. We will also be renewing our Clean Boats/Clean Waters grant for the 2026 season. The US Forestry Service Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) grant was secured this past summer covering water quality activities on the Michigan side of the Chain. This is a 2-year grant (2025-26) for \$33,200. These grants help sustain our financial position.

We still felt the impact of the early ice out in 2024 this past summer. We had our second year of high EWM abatement spend. This drained more cash from our reserves. Our hope is that with a normal winter this season, we will return to normal levels of EWM abatement in 2026. Our financial position remains strong, but we were concerned that if we have an early ice out this coming Spring, that will trigger another high spend. For this reason, the Board decided to have the \$100 assessment on this Winter's real estate tax bill. Our last assessment was in 2021. See the AIS and Lake District reports below.

We put orange buoys on the water marking the presence of EWM, and we ask all boaters to keep 100ft from those buoys. Propellers can cut up plants which will further spread them. Please let your visitors know about this.

The CCROA remains committed to balancing the various recreational activities on the Chain. We support everyone's right to enjoy their private property. These rights need to be balanced with potential long-term impacts on the quality of our waters. We ask that all activities be consistent with our Mission: "*Promoting Safe Fun on Clean Lakes.*" This is our *Lake Culture*. We ask that operators of all motorized watercraft be aware of their wakes, the depth of the water they are in, and their impacts on shorelines, lake bottom, and wildlife habitat.

The value of this Chain of Lakes is important to our whole community; that is Watersmeet and Land O' Lakes. The tourist trade generated here supports many of our local businesses and tradesmen. This is one of the few large bodies of water in the lower 50 that retains the wilderness feel. So, enjoy the natural beauty of these waters, have fun with your water activities, and be respectful of each other.

We want to encourage all riparian owners to become members of the CCROA and to contribute to our programs. During the year, we send out but a few emails notifying members of important issues we all face. Join and stay informed! Your membership and donations help fund our operations and minimize the need for assessments under our Lake District organizations. ***Your membership is important!*** Find the Membership Form in this newsletter.

Lastly, this *Shore Lines Newsletter* is being emailed to all CCROA members for which we have email addresses. It will also be mailed via US Post to all addresses on file for riparian owners on the Cisco Chain. The mailing address will be that to which Watersmeet or Land O' Lakes mails your tax bill. You can also access this newsletter online at www.ciscochainroa.com.

A Thank You from ISCCW

Rachel Wheeler, President

Welcome to Winter! I am Rachel Wheeler, President of the ISCCW. I am also a Cisco Chain resident, living in Michigan Bay of Big Lake with my husband, Bob. The ISCCW thanks the many CCROA members

who continue to support our activities in Watersmeet Township and on the border lakes with Land O'Lakes. You often see us on your boat landings where we monitor, inspect and power wash boats coming and leaving your Chain of Lakes. Steve, Danny, Dave, Nathan and Gary have all mentioned how much they enjoy working on the Chain. Michelle Kanipes, our Educator, is also present in many area venues throughout the boating season presenting information on AIS and increasing awareness. She was present at your July Annual Meeting.



The value of these boat inspection/washing and educational services to you are approximately \$30,000 per year. The CCROA's current grant with the Wisconsin DNR also allows the CCROA to submit services we supply for free at your Wisconsin boat landings for reimbursement for just over \$7,000 per year for the 2023-25 boating seasons.

We know you have many nonprofits vying for your dollars. We appreciate your continued support of our organization as we partner with you to protect the Chain. You currently make up approximately 40% of our total membership, contributing about \$20,000 to our efforts. We also thank you for your support of our fund-raising activities: in the Spring we had the Muskie Expo and in September we had our Golfing for a Lake event. Funding our mission to protect our lakes is one of our biggest challenges.

Please continue this support and encourage others on the Chain to participate and together we can protect our lakes for generations to come.

THANK YOU!

Do not hesitate to reach out to our Educator, Michelle Kanipes at educator@isccw.org or Rachel Wheeler at info@isccw.org when questions arise. Visit our website at isccw.org to learn more and renew your membership.

Walleye Stocking Update

By Tim Lathrop, CCROA Board Member (At-Large)

As many of you know, the Cisco Chain walleye stocking program has been a journey filled with patience, persistence, and plenty of learning. Thanks to the efforts of riparian owners, volunteers, and our partners at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), we're moving forward with a long-term plan that balances both science and sustainability.

MDNR Prescription-A Roadmap for the Future:

Just recently, the MDNR released a formal stocking prescription for the Cisco Chain, specifically targeting Thousand Island Lake.

Their recommendations are clear and encouraging:

- Stocking Authorization – The MDNR will prepare a management prescription for Bay De Noc strain spring fingerling walleye in Thousand Island Lake for the 2026 stocking cycle.
- If fish are unavailable in 2026, the request will roll forward to 2027.
- Biennial Stocking – Stocking will occur every other year to allow assessment and ensure proper balance within the fishery.
- Recruitment and Stocking Evaluation – The MDNR will develop a strategy to evaluate both wild and stocked walleye contributions, collaborating with other agencies as needed.
- Ten-Year Monitoring Commitment – Monitoring surveys will continue for a decade. If results show poor recruitment from stocked fish or negative impacts on naturally reproducing populations, stocking will be discontinued.

Management Objectives: The prescription focuses on two key goals:

- Boosting Abundance for Natural Recruitment – Increasing overall walleye numbers should help stimulate natural reproduction.
- Enhancing Angler Success – Stronger populations will translate to better catch rates for those who love to fish the Chain.

Why This Matters: This is a strong step forward for CCROA's long-standing investment in walleye. After years of uncertainty around hatchery availability of approved strains, we now have a science-based plan—and the MDNR's direct support—to move us toward a healthier, more balanced walleye population.

Equally important, this plan is adaptive. Stocking will not simply continue on autopilot. Instead, it will be monitored, measured, and adjusted as needed to ensure it benefits both the fishery and the anglers who enjoy it.

Looking Ahead: Our next key milestone will be preparing for the 2026 stocking permit and working alongside MDNR Biologist Kris Nault and his team to align on sourcing. We're also excited to share that both Kris and his colleague Cory Kovacs have been invited to attend our CCROA Annual Meeting in 2026. For those who have heard me say, "I'm not a biologist—I'm just here to help the process," this will be your chance to hear directly from the experts guiding this effort.

Thanks to all of you who continue to support the walleye program—whether financially, with your time, or simply by staying engaged. Together, we're ensuring that the Cisco Chain remains not only beautiful, but bountiful, for generations to come.

Cisco Chain Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Program: 2025 Season

By Richard Thomas CCROA AIS Manager

During the 2025 Summer season, Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) growth was surveyed and targets were treated with great success. Our EWM surveyors reported that they found a few plants on Indian Lake, Poor Lake, Record Lake and some also in the channels. These plants were hand pulled, and immediately bagged while in the water to prevent fragmentation and properly disposed of. Forthcoming surveys in early 2026 will determine if that hand pulling was sufficient or not. We are concerned that EWM was found on these remote lakes.

We use the chemical ProcettaCOR to treat Eurasia Water Milfoil (EWM). *(See separate article on EWM treatment)*. PLM (one of the resources we hire to assist in EWM treatment) has observed a consistent 2-to-4-year effectiveness of ProcettaCOR and there are no other comparable chemical treatment innovations on the foreseeable horizon.

Our 2025 spending on ProcettaCOR treatments was \$110,000. Last year we spent \$62,000. Both years were record spends due to the mild winter and early ice out in 2024. The total 2025 AIS budget was \$263,000 and we

estimate the actual spend will be \$249,000. See the chart below for details.

Activity for 2025	Estimated Actual 2025	Budgeted 2025
Survey, Dive, DASH EWM	\$70,000	\$78,265
Chemical Treatments	110,000	109,988
Update of Aquatic Mgmt Plan (every 5 yrs)	13,500	13,656
Water Quality	22,000	22,295
Boat Landing Inspections and Washes	25,000	29,900
AIS Education & Admin.	9,000	9,000
Total	\$249,500	\$263,104

This summer Cisco Lake, Clearwater Lake, West Bay Lake (Michigan only) and Big Lake had various amounts of treatment with ProcellaCOR. After recent inspections, Many Waters reported that all the outcomes were “really good.” Most recently, the 14-acre treatment on Cisco Lake was inspected with “no EWM plants detected.”

Formerly treated areas like Morley and the west end of East Bay Lake were inspected in September and are experiencing a slight recurrence of EWM. We will need two additional permits. We will work on securing them in the coming months. The slight recurrence is probably due to high traffic which increases EWM fragmentation.

Many Waters is the biologist firm the CCROA engages to assist in development and execution of the AIS management plan. In the final months of 2025, we will be meeting with Many Waters to make grant amendments which will fully prepare us for managing invasive species in 2026. According to PLM and Many Waters, invasive species projections for 2026 will heavily depend on weather and the tenacity of invasive species.

Finally, the DNR would like to remind migratory bird hunters that they are essential partners in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species during the fall hunting seasons. The steps hunters take before leaving boat launches or access points are vital to protecting the wetlands and waterways that support our hunting traditions. Mud stuck to boots or gear can carry invasive plant seeds, fragments and tiny organisms. Water left in boats, decoys or motors can harbor microscopic zebra mussel larvae or disease-causing pathogens. Even hunting dogs can unknowingly transport invasive species – seeds, snails and insects can collect under their vests or in their coats. A quick rinse and brush-off of your dog after a hunt can make a big difference.

One invasive species of particular concern to migratory bird hunters is the faucet snail. These tiny snails carry

parasites that can kill ducks and other waterfowl that eat them. They’ve been linked to large bird mortality events in the Upper Midwest. Preventing their spread is essential to keeping our hunting areas healthy and productive. Hunters can learn more about stopping faucet snails and other aquatic invasive species by watching the following video; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DNMyg2e3DQ>

Eurasian Water Milfoil Treatment Information

By Kevin Magee

A primary purpose of the CCROA is to control and eradicate invasive species in the Chain when necessary. Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) is an invasive aquatic plant that affects many lakes, including the Cisco Chain. The CCROA contracts with licensed biologists to manage the EWM monitoring and treatment.

One of the tools to control EWM is the chemical ProcellaCOR EC. This article will explain to riparians how this chemical is applied and precautions to take in treated areas.

In 2019 our biologists, Many Waters, recommended that we switch to the more expensive chemical ProcellaCOR, as a more effective treatment compared to the 2,4-D product. ProcellaCOR was 3x more expensive, would last 2-4 years, was more selective in killing the EWM plant, and better for our waters. We piloted ProcellaCOR in 2019 and after inspection in 2020, were very satisfied with the results. We made the decision to exclusively use ProcellaCOR. We remain very comfortable with this decision.

There are different means of treating EWM and other invasive plants. When the area affected is relatively small, plants can be hand pulled by divers, but once a large area is affected by EWM, chemical treatment is the most effective means of treatment. It is most effective if applied when EWM is actively growing so it has been applied in late June or early July. It can be sprayed in the water or on EWM directly when leaves are at or near the surface. It can also be injected sub-surface. It is absorbed through the leaves, shoots or roots within a day or two.

It is recommended that people avoid activity in treated areas for a few days after application to minimize any disturbance in the water until ProcellaCOR EC has been

absorbed. Treated areas are marked by buoys. It is especially important to avoid boating activity in treated areas because EWM can spread from sections of the plant that have been cut. Boating and fishing should generally be avoided in any area with EWM

ProcellaCOR EC is not considered harmful to people or animals. There are no recommended precautions on swimming or wading in a treated lake, other than activities that would disturb the water near the treated area. The recommended protections for people applying the chemical are limited, as well. The only protective clothing is long sleeved shirts and pants, boots and socks, and rubber gloves. The only recommendation if there is direct contact with the eyes during application is to wash the eyes with water.

Another recommendation is that water from a treated lake should not be used to water broadleaf plants or gardens for one to two days after treatment (the product instructions for ProcellaCOR EC say that it can be used to irrigate turf immediately after application).

Because some strains of EWM are resistant to ProcellaCOR EC, it is not recommended for use for more than two consecutive years. Other chemicals should be used after that to prevent a resistant strain from becoming dominant. The full product label for ProcellaCOR EC is available online. It provides detailed instructions and recommendations regarding this chemical.

Stay Away from The Red Buoys!

By Debra Kessler and Eugene Clark



The red buoys on the Cisco Chain are placed by the Manny Waters Biologists to indicate where Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) has been identified. Please stay 100 feet or more from these buoys, if possible, as any

disturbance of the EWM plant can cause it to spread. Even a tiny leaf of the plant can reroot and cause a new plant to grow. Managing EWM is a significant and growing cost for Cisco Chain Riparian's. Please inform any guests of the importance of steering clear of these markers.

At our annual meeting in July, several members mentioned that they see people running boats/jet skis around the EWM markers. We believe they do not know what the markers are for. We will post more signs regarding the buoys. Several riparian owners have offered to post signs on their shorelines. We will also reach out to our resort owners.

Lake District Reports

By Steve Kessler, Chairman, Cisco Chain Lake District

The Lake Districts have both voted to assess property owners \$100 each on property tax bills this December. There are approximately 570 private taxable lots on the Michigan side and 175 such lots on the Wisconsin side. The assessments will raise approximately \$74,500 to support our AIS budget for the coming year

This will be the fourth time that the districts have assessed since formation in 2018.

We decided to levy this year due to the rising cost of managing aquatic invasive species. Expenditures for herbicide treatments alone this past season totaled \$110,000.

The Cisco Chain has two lake districts: one in Michigan and one in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin lake district is known as the Cisco Chain Lake District or CCLD. Under Wisconsin law the CCLD is a separate legal entity. The Michigan lake district is the Michigan Special Assessment District or MSAD. Watersmeet town officials sometimes refer to the MSAD as the "Cisco Chain of Lakes Special Assessment District". Under Michigan law, the MSAD is not a legal entity but rather, an extension of the Watersmeet Town Board.

The CCLD has an elected Board of Commissioners the MSAD does not. The CCLD Commissioners are Steve Kessler (Chairman), Ron Buczkiewicz (Treasurer), and Paul Steinbrecher (Secretary). Our Town of Land O'Lakes representative is Sam Otterpohl. District #4 Vilas County Supervisor Michael MacKenzie has joined our Board as our Vilas County representative.

Spiny Water Flea Detected in Spider Lake, First Verified Detection in the Manitowish Chain of Lakes

By Steve Kessler/Edited from email received from Catherine Higley, Vilas County Lake Conservation Specialist, on September 24, 2025

Following 2025 AIS monitoring efforts by the North Lakeland Discovery Center, Spiny Water Flea have been verified in Spider Lake, one of 13 lakes in the Manitowish Chain of Lakes. This is the first confirmed detection of this species in the Chain.

While Spiny Water Flea has been previously found in nearby Sandy Beach, Ike Walton, and Trout Lakes, this detection represents a new presence within the Manitowish Chain.



Image from National Invasive Species Information Center

No Known Control – Prevention is Critical:

Currently, **no known effective treatment or control** exists for Spiny Water Flea in lakes. Once introduced, they can disrupt aquatic ecosystems by altering zooplankton communities. However, long term monitoring of Wisconsin's lakes with spiny water flea has also shown impacts can vary greatly from lake to lake.

Preventing their spread is our strongest defense.

We are urging all lake users — boaters, anglers, visitors, and property owners — to remain vigilant and follow Clean Boats, Clean Waters required practices:

- **INSPECT**, boats, gear, and equipment for aquatic plants and animals
- **REMOVE** all aquatic plants, animals, and mud from boats and gear
- **DRAIN** all water from compartments, bilges, and live wells
- **NEVER** move water or live bait between lakes

More information about Spiny Water Flea and prevention resources can be found on the WDNR website: dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/fact/SpinyWaterFlea.html

We Need Your Help

Whether you're a full-time resident, seasonal visitor, or occasional boater, your actions matter. Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species like Spiny Water Flea protects not only the Manitowish Chain, but all Wisconsin waters. Let's work together to keep our lakes healthy, connected, and resilient.

Please help us by sharing this information with lake groups and partners.

Catherine Higley
Lake Conservation Specialist\

Additional Notes on Potential Spiny Water Flea impact:

Spiny Water Flea consume zooplankton, including Daphnia. Daphnia consume algae. Without Daphnia algae growth proliferates (sometimes toxic) and water clarity drops. Lake Mendota, Madison, WI experienced a one-meter water clarity reduction following 2009 spiny water flea detection. Dead algae sink to the lake bottom and decompose consuming oxygen. Gamefish can be impacted by oxygen reduction. Small fish including perch and bluegill fry typically feed on Daphnia. As Daphnia levels drop small fish may be stunted or may disappear. The bottom of the food chain may collapse and may no longer support game fish.

A study by the University of Wisconsin Center for Limnology estimated **the property value loss following the 2009 discovery of spiny water flea on Lake Mendota to be \$80 - \$160 Million.**

Be Septic Smart!

By Debra Kessler

Poorly maintained or failing septic systems can be a major contributor to poor water quality in a lake. If not maintained, failing septic systems can contaminate groundwater and harm the environment by releasing bacteria, viruses, and household toxics to local waterways. Proper septic system maintenance protects public health, the environment, and saves the homeowner money through avoided costly repairs.

Some simple tips for homeowners can be found at the EPA's SepticSmart Program:

<https://www.watersmeet.us/septic-smart-2025-septic-systems-and-the-environment/>

Lupines Galore!

By Francie Stoner -Master Gardener

After replacing our septic system 3 years ago we were left with a yard that was mostly sand and rocks with very little soil! I immediately thought, "This is the perfect spot for a wildflower garden."

That Fall, after the first frost, I scattered a couple of pounds of Northwoods Wildflower seeds over the whole sandy area. The seeds then were able to stratify naturally over the winter, and by spring, a variety of wildflowers began to slowly emerge. This past May, in their third year, the lupines were absolutely stunning—a gorgeous sea of purple! The saying, "the first year they sleep; the second year they creep; and the third year they leap," truly proved to be accurate. May and June were filled with abundant lupines. And that was followed by an incredible display of Black-eyed Susans, sunflowers, yarrow and other varieties in July, August, and September. It was stunningly beautiful! And the hummingbirds, bees and butterflies flourished in abundance!

So why Lupines? Lupines are truly amazing plants. They are nitrogen-fixers, acting as a natural fertilizer for surrounding plants, which I've observed helps my other plants flourish. Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) is a native plant that grows between 8 and 24 inches tall. It thrives in dry to moderate moisture conditions, similar to prairies and woods, with sandy soil and full sun. (1) Given these preferences, many of us on the Chain here in the Northwoods area have ideal spots to grow them. Their flower colors can range from white, blue, purple, or pink, but are most often blue or bluish-purple. Wild Lupines typically bloom from May to June. (2)

An interesting fact about lupines is their long taproot, which grows deep, making them drought-tolerant and helping to break up compacted soil, sand, and rocks—something many of us deal with in this area. This deep taproot means they don't particularly like to be transplanted, but in my experience, they do a fine job of proliferating on their own. While some recommend scarifying the seeds to aid water absorption, I've found they germinate just fine without it. (3)

Lupines are also excellent pollinator plants, attracting bees, birds, and butterflies, thereby supporting local ecosystems. The federally endangered Karner blue butterfly, in particular, relies on *Lupinus perennis* as a

larval host plant, leading to significant interest in reestablishing lupine colonies. (4)



It's worth noting that using this plant for medicinal purposes is not recommended, as it is quite toxic and potentially fatal. Historically, Native Americans did brew a leaf tea for nausea and internal

hemorrhaging, and also used it as fodder for horses, but I would advise leaving such uses to those with traditional knowledge.

I encourage you to enjoy your lupines. Once established, they will provide a spring full of gorgeous purple flowers! If anyone needs seeds, I have an abundance! And planting time is right now! Happy growing!



- (1) <https://www.growingwithnature.org/grow-lupines/>
- (2) https://authenticwisconsin.com/wild_lupine.html
- (3) [https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/lupinus_perennis.shtml?fbclid=IwY2xjawMuycxleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETfkYjYyWGNJZENYN1A4MHJrAR7cXwClh2Ofjtccm3tnAvOt5qTlIMzOxZGIw41J3oNHVLfcUpj36gWyQ-2\)WsA_aem_FNWopQTHC3PA5mtwe7vGxQ](https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/lupinus_perennis.shtml?fbclid=IwY2xjawMuycxleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETfkYjYyWGNJZENYN1A4MHJrAR7cXwClh2Ofjtccm3tnAvOt5qTlIMzOxZGIw41J3oNHVLfcUpj36gWyQ-2)WsA_aem_FNWopQTHC3PA5mtwe7vGxQ)
- (4) <https://www.fws.gov/species/karner-blue-butterfly-lycaeides-melissa-samuelis>

How Healthy Are Our Lakes?

By: Carol Steinbrecher

References: Michigan Clean Water Corps

The CCROA monitors water quality on each individual lake throughout the summer months by measuring water clarity and phosphorous levels. Water clarity (transparency) measures how far light can travel in water. It is affected by the levels of algae and sediment in the water. Transparency is measured by using a Secchi disk in each lake on a regular basis throughout the summer months. Phosphorus levels are measured by collecting a water sample from each lake shortly after ice-out, and again in mid-August.

This data is forwarded to the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP) administered by Michigan State University Extension. The CLMP monitors changes in lake productivity, providing baseline information and trends in long term water quality, enabling us to make proper management decisions for individual lakes as well as the entire Chain.

The health of each lake is indicated by a numerical scale called the Trophic Status Index (TSI), determined by equations converting results from phosphorus and Secchi depth. TSI numbers are further grouped into general categories to give us a way to understand the general nutrient level of the lake.

Michigan classifies lakes as follows:

- Oligotrophic: TSI <38 - generally deep & clear, little plant or algae growth, least productive (fewer nutrients). Support cold water fish i.e., trout, whitefish)
- Mesotrophic: TSI 38-48 – Mid-range amount of nutrients
- Eutrophic: TSI 48-60 Shallow, turbid lakes supporting abundant aquatic plant growth. Support only warm water fish such as bass and pike.
- Hypereutrophic: TSI >61 – exhibits extremely high productivity such as nuisance algae and weed growth

Where do our lakes stand?

The CCROA has been monitoring the fifteen lakes of the Chain since 2017, providing us with 8 years of data. Fortunately, our numbers appear to be improving even as our shorelines become more developed! The following chart indicates which category each lake falls into and the TSI score in 2024 vs 2017. (note: the

dividing lines of the status are somewhat arbitrary)

Trophic Status	Lakes: 2024 TSI vs 2017 TSI
Oligotrophic <38	Poor: 37 vs 40
Mesotrophic 38-48	Big Africa: 42 vs 51 Big: 45 vs 50 Cisco: 45 vs 53 Clearwater: 45 vs 50 Fishhawk: 44 vs 45 Lindsley: 38 vs 43 Morley: 44 vs 46 Record: 41 vs 49 Thousand Island: 40 vs 40
Eutrophic 49-60	East Bay: 51 vs 57 Indian: 48 vs 54 Little Africa: 51 vs 55 Mamie: 49 vs 58 West Bay: 49 vs 49
Hypereutrophic >61	none

Plant nutrients are a major factor that cause increased productivity (higher TSI numbers) in lakes. In Michigan, phosphorus is the nutrient most responsible for increasing lake productivity. High phosphorus and low transparency can be signs of undesirable algae blooms, poor boating and swimming and low dissolved oxygen which can cause fish kills. Excess phosphorus creates algae blooms, the bloom dies and extracts oxygen from the lake, aquatic life suffers, and more phosphorus is released, feeding more algae blooms.

To continue to keep the Cisco Chain lakes healthy, we need to continue to reduce the amount of nutrients coming into the lake.

We know that many factors impact our water quality, some are beyond our control. Our lakes are complicated biosystems. There are actions we can take to help our keep our waters healthy. Conserving native vegetation along shorelines to filter runoff, avoiding use of lawn chemicals (increased nitrogen) and preventing shoreline erosion are ways to start. Do not cut those grasses and “weeds” the last few feet from the shoreline, consider planting native shoreline plants, leave the downed wood where it falls into the water, never rake leaves into the lake, keep your septic system well maintained and mostly, be a good steward of the beautiful land and waters we are so fortunate to live on.

Native Shoreline Tips

By Debra Kesler



Shoreline property owners have a critical role to play in protecting the health of our lakes. Many traditional landscaping plants, along with other notorious invaders, pose a significant threat to native ecosystems. By choosing native alternatives, you can create a beautiful landscape that also stabilizes soil, improves water quality, and supports local wildlife.

The trouble with invasive plants

Invasive species, both aquatic and terrestrial, can quickly take over shoreline properties. They outcompete native plants, form dense monocultures that reduce biodiversity, and often lack the deep root systems needed to prevent erosion. The following are some of the most common invasive threats:

Choose native plants instead

By replacing invasive and harmful plants with native species, you can create a more resilient and functional landscape. Here are some native alternatives to common invasives:

Invasive Plant	Native Alternative	Features and Benefits
Purple Loosestrife	Blazing Star (<i>Liatris</i>) Swamp Milkweed (<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>) Cardinal Flower (<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>)	Offers vibrant purple, pink, and red blooms that attract pollinators like bees and hummingbirds. Swamp milkweed is also a host plant for monarch butterflies.
Reed Canary Grass	Native Sedges (<i>Carex</i> spp.) Indian Grass (<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>) Switch Grass (<i>Panicum virgatum</i>)	Provides excellent erosion control with extensive root systems. Creates valuable wildlife habitat and offers year-round texture.

Japanese Knotweed	American Elderberry (<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>) Ninebark (<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>) Gray Dogwood (<i>Cornus racemosa</i>)	Forms dense, protective shrub borders. Provides seasonal interest with flowers, berries, and colorful stems.
Common Buckthorn, Japanese Barberry, or Burning Bush	Black Chokeberry (<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>) Winterberry (<i>Ilex verticillata</i>) Witchhazel (<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>) American Cranberry (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)	Offers vibrant fall color, attractive fruit, and dense growth for privacy hedges. Winterberry holds its bright red berries throughout the winter.
Bush Honeysuckles	Redosier Dogwood (<i>Cornus sericea</i>) Buttonbush (<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>) Viburnum (<i>Viburnum</i> spp.)	Provides beautiful spring flowers, fall color, and berries for wildlife. Redosier dogwood has striking red stems that add winter interest.
Yellow Iris	Blue Flag Iris (<i>Iris versicolor</i>) Marsh Marigold (<i>Caltha palustris</i>) Arrowhead (<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>)	Mimics the appearance of yellow iris with beautiful flowers but without the aggressive tendencies. Tolerates wet soil and provides important food and cover for aquatic wildlife.

How to Start:

- 1. Remove invasives:** Start by identifying and safely removing any invasive plants on your property. Small patches can be pulled by hand, while larger infestations may require more extensive removal methods. Refer to the Wisconsin or Michigan DNR for guidance.
- 2. Assess your site:** Evaluate the sun exposure, soil moisture, and type of soil in your area. This will help you select the native plants best suited to your conditions.
- 3. Choose local ecotypes:** When purchasing plants, ask for local ecotypes, which are genetically adapted to your specific area. Avoid generic seed mixes that may contain invasive species.
- 4. Create a buffer:** Establish a native plant buffer strip at least 35 feet from the water's edge to intercept runoff and prevent erosion.
- 5. Plant for diversity:** Choose a variety of plants, including different heights, bloom times, and species. A diverse landscape is more resilient to pests and diseases and provides better wildlife habitat.

By making the switch to native alternatives, you're not just improving your own property—you're contributing to a healthier, more vibrant ecosystem for the lake and shoreline.

Some great resources:

- Wisconsin and Michigan DNR
- Michigan State University Extension
- Vilas County Land and Water Conservation
- Vilas County Lakes & Rivers Association
- Local Nurseries: Conover Gardens- Conover, Winkler's - Boulder Junction, Yenny's Wildflowers -Phelps.
- Online Catalogs: UP Native Plants-www.upnativeplants.com, Prairie Moon Nursery-www.prairiemoon.com

Have you Ever Heard of a Mink Frog? They Live on the Cisco Chain!

Debra Kessler with excerpts from AI

The mink frog, known for its unique musky scent, is a reclusive and highly aquatic amphibian found primarily in the cool, wooded waters of northern North America. Often mistaken for the more common green frog, this medium-sized frog is a fascinating species with distinct behaviors and adaptations for its chilly northern habitat.



Meet the "frog of the north"

The mink frog's range extends throughout eastern Canada, from Manitoba to Nova Scotia, and south into the northern United States, including states around the Great Lakes and northern New England. They are not found in the southern parts of Wisconsin or Michigan.

The smell that gives it its name

The most distinguishing feature of the mink frog is the pungent, musky odor it secretes when handled or threatened. The scent is often compared to that of a mink or rotting onions, a defensive mechanism to deter predators. This distinct smell is a surefire way to tell it apart from other frogs.

Identification at a glance

Mink frogs have a greenish to olive-brown body with irregular, dark-brown mottling or spots on their back and hind legs. They have a pale belly, and males often have a bright yellow throat. Unlike green frogs, their dorsolateral folds (the ridges on their back) are often poorly developed or absent.

A water-bound lifestyle

The mink frog is rarely seen far from water, living among the vegetation of cold, permanent water bodies like bogs, lakes, slow moving streams and beaver ponds.

It especially likes areas with abundant floating vegetation, such as lily pads, which it uses as stepping stones for basking, hunting, and escaping predators.

A prolonged tadpole stage

Mink frogs have a unique breeding cycle adapted to their cold environment.

- **Breeding season:** Mating occurs later than for many other frogs, from late May through August.
- **Vocalization:** Males call to attract females while floating on the water. The call is a rapid, distinctive "cut-cut-cut," sometimes compared to a hammer tapping wood or the sound of popcorn popping.
- **Egg laying:** Females lay between 500 and 4,000 eggs in a gelatinous mass attached to submerged plants.
- **Tadpole life:** Tadpoles take a long time to develop. Most overwinter for at least one year before transforming into froglets, and some may take two years.

Threats and conservation status

While mink frogs are listed as a species of "least concern" globally, they face threats, especially in the southern parts of their range. These threats include habitat loss, warmer water with reduced oxygen and pollution.

Enhanced Wake Regulation Update

By Steve Kessler

On May 21, 2025, the Town of Land O'Lakes adopted an ordinance restricting certain artificial wake enhancement. This ordinance is applicable to the Wisconsin waters of the Cisco Chain. The ordinance prohibits the use of ballast tanks, water sacks, or wake shaper fins to cause a boat to operate in a bow-high manner, or which increases or enhances a boat's wake. The ordinance also prohibits the operation of any boat in an artificially bow-high manner having the effect of increasing the boat's wake.

The Michigan waters of the Cisco Chain are not subject to the Land O'Lakes ordinance but are subject to the voluntary, unenforceable, guidelines adopted by the CCROA in May 2023 and were supported by a large majority of Cisco Riparians in a subsequent survey. Those guidelines recommend that the creation of enhanced wakes be limited to waters that are more than 20 feet deep, further than 500 feet from shore, and to lakes greater than 500 acres in size.

Recent studies confirm the reasonableness of the CCROA guidelines. The University of Minnesota-Saint Anthony Falls Laboratory published "A Field Study of Recreational Powerboat Hydrodynamics and their Impacts on the Water Column and Lakebed" in July 2025. This study recommends that surfing be limited to waters no less than 20' deep.

In August Terra Vigilis Environmental Services reported progress on in-lake studies conducted on Lake Beulah in Walworth County. Their summary includes: "Wake Boats in surf mode generated near shore impacts to dockage and moored vessels from 500' distance. Minimal impact demonstrated from comparable ski boats". Also: "Wake Boat surf mode reveals bottom plant movement and sediment disturbance at 21' depth. Ski boats show no evidence of impact at those depths."

Sixty-seven WI towns have enacted enhanced wake ordinances. Many more are in process. These "local control" ordinances cover approximately 25% of all WI lakes greater than 50 acres in size.

Legal challenges against town ordinances have begun. A lawsuit against the Town of Scott is underway and will proceed with a scheduled court date in October 2026. An

attempt to prevent the Town of Manitowish Waters from enforcing its hazardous wakes ordinance was heard and dismissed on August 7 by the Vilas County Circuit Court. There will likely be additional actions.

Both the boating industry and the pro-regulation advocates are lobbying WI legislators for statewide legislation. It is widely expected that a boating industry supported bill will be introduced in the State Assembly before the current session ends in February 2026.

A coalition of 85 Wisconsin conservation groups is lobbying for a statewide enhanced wake law as well. The coalition's proposal focuses on stopping the spread of invasive species by requiring hot water flushing of ballast tanks prior to each launch into a new lake, setting minimum lake standards for wake sports areas at 700 feet from shore, at least 30 feet of depth and 100 contiguous acres meeting both requirements, and preserving local authority to adopt stricter rules than those contained in a statewide statute.

The State of Michigan legislature has seen enhanced wake regulation proposals in each of the last two sessions. Neither has moved forward. No local proposal is being considered in the Town of Watersmeet.

Miscellaneous

CALL 911 for EMERGENCIES

Non-Emergency Dispatch

Negaunee Regional Dispatch (for on reservation):
906 475 1199

Watersmeet Police: 906 366 0189
Vilas County Sheriff's Office: 715 479 4441

AED Locations

Cisco Lake Resort, Wilderness Bay, McCormack's Cisco Chain Marina, Bents Camp, The Black Oak, Bear Trap, Brew's Pub, The Alley

Around Town Events-Land O'Lakes

See Landolakeswi.gov for updates on events.

Zombie Crawl

October 25, 2025, starting at 3:00 PM

Three Bear Sled Dog Race

Town Hall Grounds – weather permitting
Sat Feb 7, 2026 – Sun Feb 8, 2026

LOLA Arts

Art Classes and Art Groups see Lolaartswi.com

Mah -jongg

Tuesdays 1 to 4 pm at the library
Email phildeanie@gmail.com if interested in attending

Around Town Events-Watersmeet

See Watersmeet.us for updated information

Ottawa National Forest

Purchase a Permit to Cut a Christmas Tree at the Ottawa Forest website

Sylvania Recreation Area

Hiking, Canoeing, Cross country skiing, fishing, snowshoeing

Watersmeet/Land O'Lakes are literally where "Waters Meet"

The Ontonagon River flows north from Watersmeet into Lake Superior; the Wisconsin River flows south from Land O'Lakes into the Mississippi; and the Paint River flows east into Lake Michigan!

Find more Cisco Chain information on the CCROA website
www.ciscochainroa.com

Watersmeet Township Transfer Station

8 am to 4 pm M, T, Th, F, Sat.

See Watersmeet.US for items accepted and Fee Schedule

Land O'Lakes Collection Site & Recycling Center Summer Hours

Tues 8-3, Thurs 12-4, Sat 8-4

See LandOLakesWi.gov for items accepted and fees see Land O Lakes Town website

Below are the website addresses and phone numbers for Watersmeet Township & the Town of Land O'Lakes . Town meetings are posted on these sites **You can subscribe to automatic updates to your email on these websites**

Watersmeet Township

www.watersmeet.us

906-358-4501

Town of Land O'Lakes

<http://townoflandolakes.com>

715-547-3255

CCROA Membership by Lake as of 9/30/25

Cisco	34
Clearwater	10
Little Africa	0
Big Africa	0
Record	0
Thousand Island	87
Lindsley	22
Fishhawk	13
Morley	2
Big	35
West Bay	25
East Bay	20
Poor	16
Indian	0
Mamie	18
Unknown	3
Off Water	2
Total	287

Board Members & Lake Representatives' Contact Info

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Membership in CCROA

Note: Membership year:
January 1st thru
December 31st

Cisco Chain Riparian Owners Association Membership Application

NEW _____ RENEWAL _____ DONATION _____

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Spouse _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____ e-mail Address _____

Cell Phone _____ Additional e-mail Address _____

Name of Lake _____ Lake Address _____

(If off water, indicate "Off Water")

Membership is \$25.00 per year. Advance payments are welcomed. Just indicate how many years you wish to pay:

Number of Membership years: _____ @ \$25/yr = Amount Due: \$ _____ **OR**

Lifetime Membership is only \$450.00. = Amount Due: \$ _____

Additional Donations:

General Fund Donation: \$ _____

Lake Management/AIS Donation: \$ _____

Walleye Stocking Fund: \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed (Sum of Membership plus Donations): \$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: CISCO CHAIN RIPARIAN OWNERS ASSN.
MAIL TO: CCROA P.O. BOX 687, WATERSMEET, MI 49969-0687

Be a Volunteer! Join Us and Make a Difference!!!

Officer or Lake Representative _____ Picnic Volunteer _____
Seasonal Committee _____ Educate at Boat Ramps _____ Special Projects _____

The Cisco Chain Riparian Owners Association (CCROA) provides many benefits to the property owners on the Cisco Chain. If you are not already a member, please consider joining the Association so you receive important information about CCROA activities in a timely manner and to assure you have a voice in future priorities. Also consider becoming a volunteer to the CCROA to help ensure the CCROA can continue to meet its mission of "Promoting Safe Fun on Clean Lakes"