



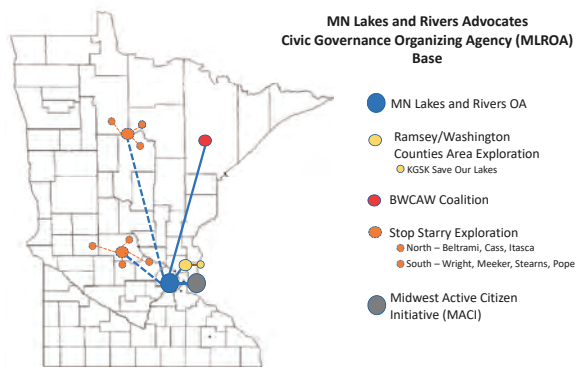
ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Minnesota
Lakes and Rivers
Advocates is your
trusted advisor
and advocate
for Minnesota's
lake and river
communities.



Photo credit: Kevin Corrigan

MLR supports
local capacity
with organizing,
science, media,
and professional
advocacy in
St. Paul



From Executive Director Jeff Forester



Greetings,

2021 was like a roller coaster. Hopeful climbs were followed by gut wrenching drops. Meetings were scheduled and held, and we started to get used to seeing each other. Travel and economic activity began to wind up, we emerged from social distancing and saw friends and family we had not seen in over a year. It seemed as if we were on our way back to a new normal.

But then summer became hotter and dryer and first the Delta and then Omicron variants of the COVID virus swept across the country. Temperatures spiked. Much of Minnesota descended into drought. Lake levels hit record lows and many crops failed. The skies filled with smoke as wildfires engulfed tens of thousands of acres in the north.

MLR adapted and pressed ahead. We made progress legislatively, supporting over \$2.75 million for lakes; \$850k for aquatic plant management grants, \$1m for Stop Starry deployment of boat cleaning equipment, and \$910k

to provide baseline funding to the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC.) MLR and partners raised \$145k to fund research by St. Anthony Falls Fluid Dynamics Lab into the impacts of boat wakes and prop thrust on lake ecology.

Working with partners in the Arrowhead, some of whom had been divided by the mining proposal, MLR helped organize; a weekly radio program on preventing AIS spread into the Boundary Waters, multiple news stories including a feature piece in the BWCA Journal, surveyed all the signage on the hundreds of access sites and hope to update signage there before open water 2022, worked with partners to get thousands of "Swedish DishCloths" into the hands of canoists after researchers found that this microfiber was best at snagging and removing spiny water fleas from fishing tackle, anchor lines and other areas where this AIS hitchhikes a ride.

The goal of this BWCAW Coalition is to reach 100% inspection and decontamination of all infested watercraft before launch in the Rainy River flowage. This broad civic partnership is a direct product of the Civic Organizing structure in line with the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative. Despite many hundreds of access sites, and the remote nature of many accesses there, strategic plans are being made, partners enlisted and the base of folks involved is growing.

There is hope.

In 2021 MLR added Civic Organizer/Program Manager Kayla Hanke to our team. She will use this framework to build support for the boat cleaning stations we are deploying at starry stonewort infested accesses. This is a big project for us with over 25 units being deployed. The project is being funded by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. By providing this equipment for boats leaving starry stonewort infested lakes, we are lowering the risk it will be transported to another lake including the lake you enjoy. She will also be working to expand the Lake Steward Program and Up the Creek Meats in 2022.

In 2022, MLR will work to expand four programs that strengthen and deepen the "powerful links" among lake advocates and policy makers outlined in the MLR Mission statement; Stop Starry, Lake Steward, Up the Creek Meats and Project WET. Besides protecting water, these programs also provide support for lake association missions, branding and membership efforts.

If you would like Kayla or me to speak at your lake association meeting or some other event, please get us your dates as soon as you know them.

And finally, in 2021, MLR adopted a new Logo and built a new website. We offer web hosting and web page design for MLR member lake associations. Our Citizens Action Network, CAN also has new capacity, increasing the impact of our shared voices in public policy debate.

No matter what 2022 brings, COVID variants, drought, catastrophic wildfire, social upheaval, or floods, we will be pressing forward to protect our shared "lake and river legacy for current and future generations." Thank you for this opportunity to serve you and the public good of clean and healthy lake ecosystems.

Please stay in touch,



Jeff Forester
Executive Director



“It is chiefly upon the lay citizen, informed about science but not its practitioner, that the country must depend [upon], in resolving the many public policy questions...”

- David Lilienthal, Chair of the US Atomic Energy Authority, 1948.

MLR's Civic Organizing model begins with the idea that “politics” is defined simply as “the work of the citizen,” and this work requires each of us to work with other citizens to define and then advance the common good.

MLR works to:

- Ask the questions relevant to lake and river advocates,
- Raise funds and support scientific infrastructure to answer those questions,
- Provide the best and most accurate information to the public via our email system, social media, and media outreach.

For this reason we were delighted when MLR Executive Director was recognized for MLR's efforts to support the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC.)



MLRA, Jeff Forester, Honored for Aquatic Invasive Species Research Support 10/6/21

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates, led by Executive Director Jeff Forester, has been named one of the first ever recipients of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center's (MAISRC) Research Partnership Award. The award recognizes people, groups, and organizations who have gone above and beyond to contribute to MAISRC's mission of advancing aquatic invasive species knowledge and inspiring action to protect and restore Minnesota's beloved waters.

MLRA has been actively involved and supportive of MAISRC since before the formal establishment of the Center in 2014. Most recently, MLRA worked with MAISRC researchers to disseminate a survey to lakeshore property owners and engaged partners with MAISRC's 'Stop Spiny' campaign by organizing lake associations and highlighting the risks of aquatic invasive species to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

"MLRA and Jeff were instrumental in MAISRC's creation and have provided critical legislative support and guidance to help secure long-term stable funding for the Center. In addition, MLRA has partnered with MAISRC on numerous occasions to help disseminate our research findings and have regularly advocated for the implementation of a science-based approach to management through webinars, legislative hearings, media outlets, newsletter updates, and more," said Nick Phelps, MAISRC Director.

The MAISRC Research and Partnership Awards were announced at the Center's annual Research & Management Showcase event recently (9/22/21). MLRA was one of four honorees in the award's first ever cohort. Nominations for the award were solicited from MAISRC research teams and partner program staff, and Advisory Board.

"I think it was 2006 or 2007 [...] we were talking about the need for better science [...] I have to say I'm amazed and think it's wonderful the progress that [MAISRC] has made. We were at a unique position with lake association members, individual members at the local level to plug in some of those gaps, it was really exciting work — I see a great deal of opportunity here," explained Forester during his award acceptance on behalf of MLRA.

Funding for MAISRC is provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), the State of Minnesota, and private donors.



Introducing our new Team Member Kayla Hanke

I was motivated to join the team at MLR after witnessing my life change because of water quality issues. I participate in several summer-time outdoor activities, and I love to spend time on the beach with my family or out boating on the water. Environmental factors have changed the ways that I am able to enjoy nature over the past few years, and I think it is important to begin working

immediately toward the preservation of our lakes and rivers. With my background in education, I hope to guide and teach groups of people when making necessary changes to preserve the environment. I am thrilled to be working with others that share the same passions as myself, while keeping in touch with the most influential people in decision making - concerned community members and their friends, neighbors, and families. Please feel free to contact me with any questions and I will be happy to help.

Kayla Hanke, *Program Manager/Civic Organizer*

Boat Wake and Prop-Wash Impacts on Lakes Research

Boat wakes and prop-wash can erode shoreline and stir up lake bottoms. Soil and lake sediments contain phosphorus as well as other contaminants that can drive algae growth once they are mixed into the water column.

MLR identified a real need to understand the impacts of boat wakes and prop thrust, and what best practices boat operators can deploy to prevent these impacts. **Then pass a Boat Operators Training and Certification requirement in Minnesota.**

So when Jeff Marr, a researcher at St. Anthony Falls Lab at the University of Minnesota, submitted a proposal to the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for funding to study the wake dynamics and prop thrust characteristics of various watercraft, MLR worked to support their application. We were not successful.

But when the University of Minnesota began a CrowdFunding effort to raise the necessary research funds, MLR joined with MN COLA, SafeWakes for Small Lakes, Gull Chain of Lakes Association and Tonka Bay Marina to promote the campaign. Funds came in from across the state and country.



The first phase of the research has been completed and written up. We expect the peer reviewed product to be released early in 2022 and will use this data and conclusions to create Best Management Practices to educate boaters.

MN has almost 900,000 registered watercraft and many hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. During the pandemic use is up an estimated 30%. That is the good news. The bad news is that problems associated with boating, including safety, user conflicts, and ecological damage have also increased dramatically in the last two years.

MN is one of the few states in the US that does not have a mandatory watercraft operators training and certification requirement. Minnesota does have a program for young boaters and the content is provided by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NABLA) and while it provides a good safety instruction, it is not well suited to the freshwater lakes of Minnesota. There is very little information on lake ecology, best practices for preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species, or managing boat wakes and prop thrust.

MLR and a broad coalition of groups including the USA Waterski and Wakesports, Conservation Minnesota, Greenhead Strategies, Inc. and dozens of Lake Associations and COLAs have asked the MN DNR to convene stakeholders and outline not only the content that will be included in a watercraft operators certification, but the requirements of certification.

MLR knows that an open and transparent public process is the best way to answer the inevitable questions like; "At what age will the certification be required, how much will it be funded, what will be the impact on out of state boaters, how should we manage for boat renters and so forth. The best way to vet and resolve these and other questions is to bring in citizens from these various groups in an organized and transparent process.

Only after a thorough public process where all the aspects of a training and certification program have been resolved will MLR support passage of a boaters operators certification requirement in Minnesota. With science-driven best practices and a broad base of civic input MN can improve safety, reduce conflicts between user groups, eliminate negative ecological impacts to shoreline and water quality and support the tourism economy dependent on lake recreation.



MLR Programs

Up The Creek Meats

For the last year our family has bought our meat from Hollister Family Farms, a participant in MLR's Up the Creek Meats Program. We committed to only eating meat from producers that protect water quality by committing to the Five Soil Health principles as laid out by the Sustainable Farming Association's criteria.

It was hot and dry. I drove north from the Twin Cities to Brainerd past fields of drought stunted corn and dun colored prairie. But the Hollister Family Farm was green. Wildflowers bloomed. The reason was that healthy soil holds rain on the land when it falls. One inch of rain equals 25,000 gallons of water per acre. Farms riddled with drain tile and lifeless soil send this bounty to the drainage ditch. But farms with living soil retain this water, banking it against drought.

Hollister Family Farms focuses their operation on building soil health instead of increasing yields. Known broadly as "regenerative agriculture," they are finding that over time their yields rise even as input costs fall. An added benefit is water stays on their fields instead of flushing into our lakes and rivers.

Abe Holister, his wife Brea and their five children run Hollister Family Farms. Abe noted one other benefit of his farming practices, safety. He noted, pointedly, that his children could have the run of the place. Farms, with chemicals and machinery, can be dangerous places. But Abe has no chemicals on the place, no large machinery with Power Transfer Outlets or augers. "There is nothing on this place that can harm the kids," he said.

In 2020, working with Pine River Watershed, Happy Dancing Turtle and the Association of Cass County Lakes, MLR identified farmers within the Pine River Watershed who practice regenerative agriculture and then connected them with lake associations. By expanding the markets and demonstrating the profitability of regenerative agriculture, more farmers will be convinced to make the change and more water will be protected. So if you want to improve water quality, eat a hamburger. Just make sure it is from one of the Up the Creek Meats farmers.



MLR has long been a leader in education and advocacy. We now lead in developing and promoting on the ground programs that will protect and improve lake and river water quality and support Lake Association efforts.

Lake Steward Program

Last summer over 10 Lake Associations had active Lake Steward programs, and over 50 Lake Steward awards were given across the state. For many landowners, receiving Lake Steward recognition was the culmination of years of effort.

Kim and Nicolas David are a great example. Kim's father, Clarence Adams Jr., purchased the cabin over 60 years ago. The site was originally homesteaded in the 1860's and the existing log cabin was built in the early 1930's.

For many years Kim and Nicolas lived in France but traveled back to the cabin in the summers, and eventually took over management a few years ago.

Much of the shoreline was significantly ice damaged. Ice heave intensity varies from from year to year but a few years ago the ice created berms over 5 feet high. On most of their 1400 feet of natural shoreline they left the ice ridges, but excavated the area they use to access the lake.



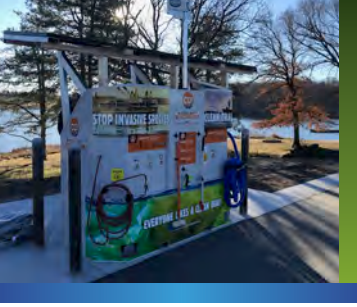
As a first option they investigated using riprap to protect the shore from further erosion. *They learned that ice action will drive rocks into the soil and cause the surface layer of soil to curl back over the top of the rocks and often fall into the lake. This undercutting erodes the bank at a rapid pace.*

So instead of riprap, they staked Coir logs in place with biodegradable stakes, then planted native plants with long roots among and behind this retaining wall. Further sedimentation is filling in and stabilizing their shoreline.

The Davids have arrested erosion problems. Their native planting filters runoff into the lake and provides habitat for native birds and insects. With the work completed, they see a "calm space." They intend to place more coir logs and plant additional native plants in phases.

Photo credit: Wayne Suoja, Vermilion Lake Association

MLR Programs



Stop Starry Program Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Awards MLR \$1m to implement "Shielding Strategy"



About five years ago Cornell University released a study of boaters in the upper midwest reporting that over 90% of anglers were well informed about Aquatic Invasive Species, believed it to be a significant threat, and took at least some action to prevent the spread.

But most boaters did not take all of the actions required to safely move a watercraft from an infested lake to another waterbody. The reason they gave was lack of equipment *when and where* they needed it.

A few years ago the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) found that aquatic invasions followed a predictable path. Once a species had "parachuted" into a lake from out of state, it spread quickly within a 50 mile radius of the infestation.

In 2020 the MN DNR had listed 17 lakes with a combined 28 water accesses as infested with starry stonewort, a highly destructive algae unknown in MN until 2015 when it was discovered in Lake Koronis.

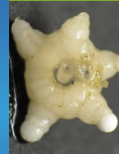
Using this data, MLR submitted a grant proposal to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) which makes recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature on how to allocate proceeds from the MN Lottery through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF).

Our idea was to install boat cleaning stations at every access on every lake infested with starry stonewort and then conduct a disciplined and rigorous local civic engagement process to create a norm to use this equipment everytime a boater exits a lake. A Minnesota company based out of Proctor, MN makes the best on the market, the CD3. It is solar powered, and so does not need to be hard wired. It has a wet-dry vacuum, grabbing tools, scraping tools, scrub brush, high pressure air hose, and overhead and undercarriage lights. A study by the Wisconsin DNR found that a citizen using a CD3 did as good a job cleaning an infested boat as a trained AIS Inspector without a CD3 station. Each unit is connected to a web page via IoT and provides data on time of tool use, when the holding tank is full and if a tool is broken or malfunctioning. This summer CD3 stations nationwide surpassed one million uses.

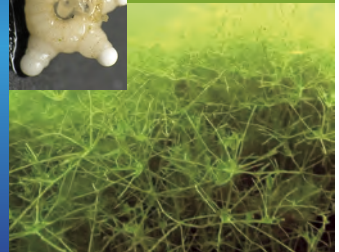
On July 28, 2021 the Legislature passed and Governor Walz awarded the Stop Starry effort \$1m to install this equipment. Unfortunately, later this summer three more lakes were confirmed to have starry stonewort. MLR will be working to raise the additional funding needed to cover the additional access sites.

By providing boat cleaning equipment where people need it and encouraging its use MLR is creating a powerful shielding strategy to slow or perhaps stop the spread of Starry Stonewort in Minnesota.

Starry stonewort forms a dense, vertically thick mat that completely covers the lake bottom.



*Photo credit:
dnr.wisconsin.gov and
watershedcouncil.org*



MLR has long been a leader in education and advocacy. We now lead in developing and promoting on the ground programs that will protect and improve lake and river water quality and support Lake Association efforts.



project WET

WATER EDUCATION TODAY

**Training and Curriculum
Lake Association volunteers
can use to raise awareness
and understanding in their
communities.**

Forty years ago the Chesapeake Bay was a biological dead zone from pollution.

Today the Chesapeake Bay is the healthiest it has been in 33 years. Blue crab, striped bass and anchovy, the foundation of their fishing industry, have recovered.

One of the first and most successful strategies used to restore the Chesapeake was a structured aquatic science curriculum in schools, public meetings and events like street fairs, and Scouting and other youth groups.

In 2021 the MPCA reported that 56% of Minnesota's surface waters were impaired. The dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico is growing, largely due to runoff pollution from states that border the Mississippi.

A structured aquatic educational program for all of Minnesota's school children will be necessary to reversing the disturbing water quality trends we see in Minnesota today.

Project Wet is a detailed training that will provide training and curriculum lake association volunteers can use for any situation; for teachers in a classroom, for a lake advocate at a lake association meeting, for a street fair or festival booth, at a presentation for a group like 4-H, scouts, summer camp, resort or campground, nature center, or a school club.

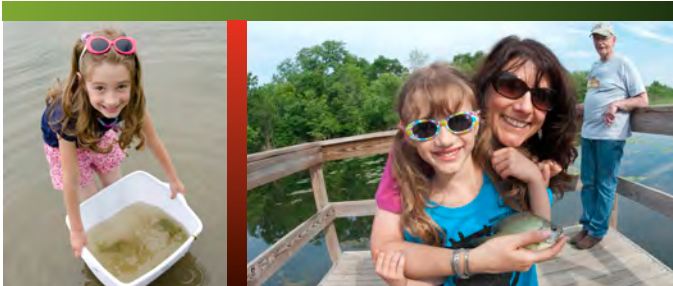


Photo credit: Deb Rose, DNR



Financial Statement 2021

Balance Sheet for Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2021

Assets	2020	2021
Cash	\$60,404.96	\$47,816.16
Fixed Assets	\$1,947.68	\$1,242.68
Total Assets	\$62,352.64	\$49,058.84

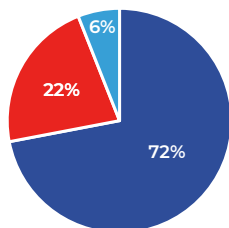
Liabilities & Equity

Net Assets	\$62,352.64	\$49,058.84
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$62,352.64	\$49,058.84

Expense Allocation

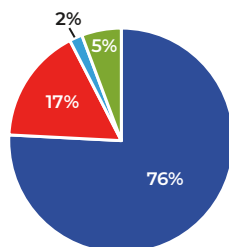
Program	\$206,834.43
Management & General Expenses	\$63,199.41
Fundraising	\$17,236.20
	\$287,270.04

Expense Allocation



■ Program ■ Mgmt & General Expenses ■ Fundraising

Revenue



■ Individuals ■ Lake Assn ■ Grants ■ Other

Revenue

Contributions from Individuals	\$208,239.62
Contributions from Lake Associations	\$43,944.75
Stop Starry ENTRF Grant	\$5,098.37
Other revenue	\$17,397.49
Total Revenue	\$274,680.23

Contributions from January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

Individuals

Gold \$501 - \$1,000

Paul Bugbee
Barbara Clark
Edward & Nancy Coppola
Roger & Betty Duinink
Sarah Fogderud
Jeff & Lucy Heegaard
John Henry
John & Thelma James
Tom Nelson & Mary Blickenderfer
Leah & Perry Rynders
Timothy Scanlan
Steve & Jill Shipley
Robert & Cherie Shreck
Jeff Stabnow
Dr. Dorothy Whitmer & Dr. Randy Johnson
Steve Yacyshyn

Silver \$301 - 500

Roger Benjamin
Suzanne Boda
Art & Cynde Brookfield
Jean & John Charpentier
Jim Cook
Dan Costello
Laurie & David Dahl
Cyril Dehn
William & Patricia Eustice
Kit Ferber
Robert Fox
John Graber
Jim Gray
Amy Grider
Dale & Mary Harpstead
Gabriel Jabbour
Mark Jackson
Kathryn & Orville Jonsrud
Vaughn & Joyce Knapp
Cleo Kriesel
John & Karen Larsen
Howard Larson
Carol Mulheran
North Shore Marina, Inc
Carrie Ohly-Cusack
Art Peifer
Bob & Barb Pozner
Wanda Roden
Marie Schmid
Dick Schmoker
Holly Sharp
Tom Suerth
Greg Thrall
Cyrus White

Bronze \$250-\$300

3-N Investment Company LLC & John Nelson
Jennifer Anderson
Ann Bajari
Ron & Gay Baukol
Ronald & Margaret Berg
Larry & Linda Berger
Michael & Susan Blehert
John Broghammer
Earl Brunberg
Richard Burton
Steffen Christensen
Rita Christiansen
Allegra Dengler
Christine Depenthal
DHL Family LLLP
Chuck & Joan Diessner
Frazier & Heidi Eales
Gordon & Marilyn Eid
Terry Eidem
John & Mary Espenmiller
Nancy Fandel
Dave & Judy Felch
C. A. Furlong
Martin Garber
Rosemary Goff & Bob Toborg
Richard & Linda Gohn
Richard & Nancy Gongoll
Catherine Graham
Norman Hageboeck
Howard Hansen
Thomas Hansen
Lorie & Doyle Herman
Gerry Herringer
Ann & Chris Hilger
Bob Holman
Keaton Howe
Karen Janice Johnson
Karoline Lange
Curt Larson
James Losleben
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Mary & Paul Manns
Phillip Mason
Michael Mathias
John Middleton
Mark Miedtke
Jordan & Connie Moe
Laura Mosedale
Derek Oldenburger
Dorothy Ollmann
David Olson
Richard Perry
Nick & Judy Priadka
Glenn Purdue

Dennis & Dorene Richards
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Kenneth Ripp
RK Holdings LLP
James Roszak
Rob Saunders
Amy Scott
Roger & Phyllis Sherman
Joe Shneider
James Slade
Phil Stephens
Michael Sutley
Tony Tillemans
Jim & Marie Uhrich
Jerold Untiedt
Michael & Danielle Valley
Tom & Joan Van Sloun
Terry Voigt
Lori & Jeremy Wacker
Julia Wear-Jackson
William & Ruth Westhoff
Gloria Wrigley
Bruce & Michelle Zeman
Nyle Zikmund
James Zissler
Paul & Stephanie Zollinger

Gifts up to \$250

Thank you to the many contributions made at this level.

Lake Associations

Platinum \$1,001 & above

Gull Chain of Lakes Association
(GCOLA)

Gold \$501-\$1,000

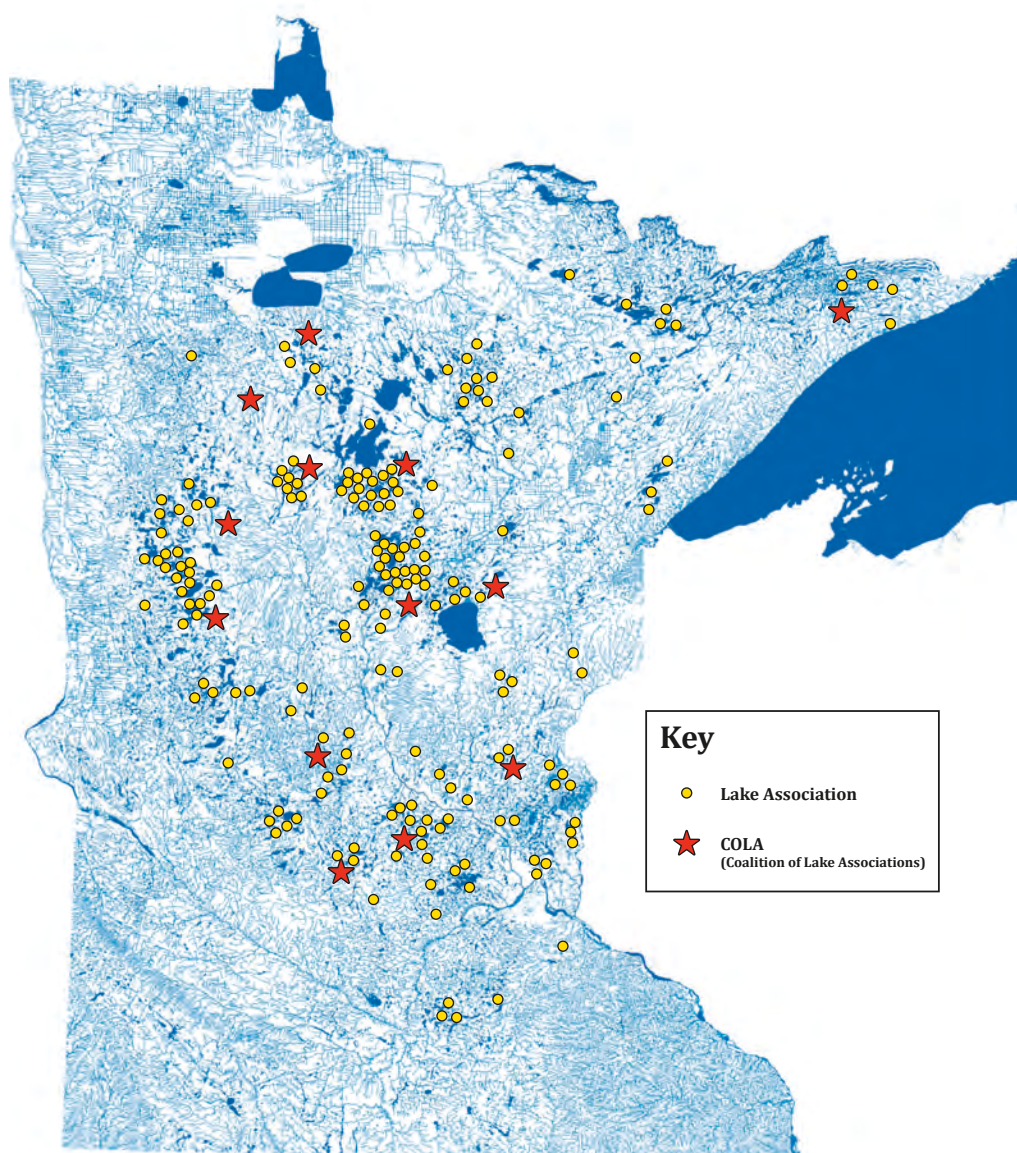
Becker COLA
Greater Lake Sylvia Association
Otter Tail County Coalition of
Lake Associations (OTC COLA)
Sylvan Lake Association
West McDonald Lake Association

Silver \$301-500

Big Marine Lake Association
Big Sugarbush Lake Association
Clamshell Bertha Lake Assn
(CBLA)
Hubbard County COLA
MN COLA
North Long Lake Association
Vermilion Lake Association

MLR Lake Association Members

Over 200 Lake Associations in 35 counties are members of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates.



Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

Identity and Mission Statement

“Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates protects Minnesota’s lake and river heritage for current and future generations by forging powerful links among lakes, lake advocates, and policy makers.”

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates was started in 1993 by a cabin owner who was concerned that rapidly escalating property taxes were putting a simple Minnesotan value out of reach, time spent with family and friends at a lake place.

Since the organization was founded, MLR has:

- Reduced the cabin property tax rate from 2.25% of value down to 1% to support MLR Lake Association and Individual Members
- Launched the Lake Steward Program, which incentivises shoreline rehabilitation projects and now protects over 2 miles of Minnesota lake shorelines
- Initiated the Up the Creek Meats Program in support of sustainable farming, promoting agriculturalists who reduce pesticide use and protect Minnesota groundwater supply
- Represented MLR members' concerns to state legislature in the topics of: shoreline protection from large wake boats; Aquatic Invasive Species prevention and management; lakeshore property tax rates and funds allocation; and much more

MLR works to connect lakeshore homeowners, their lake associations, and their communities with resources to maintain and protect water quality, while providing direct representation for their concerns to the state legislature and policy makers.

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates has found success through providing individuals and organizations with a network of knowledgeable agencies to assist in alleviating water quality concerns. We strive to provide excellence in member support, and take pride in our stance as a civic institution working to improve water conditions statewide.

We Govern Using Civic Standards

We work with key stakeholders to define the problem. We develop a solution with all partners contributing time, expertise, funding or constituents to that solution. By working with partners to solve issues at the local level, we can focus on advancing solutions at the legislature that already have a broad base of support. We actively serve the public good as we work to protect a lake and river heritage for current and future generations.



MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates

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Susan Henken Thielen
John P. James
Mary Manns

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Photo credit:
Wayne Suja

