

July 11, 2016

COLA statement to Town of Bass Lake Board of Supervisors concerning:

**Town of Bass Lake Township, Sawyer County
Ordinance Regarding All Public Accesses in Bass Lake including The Public Access
Strips Located in the Northwoods Beach Subdivision
NO.2016—XX-XX-4**

- COLA is the state recognized lake association that represents over 450 property owners/members on the Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) lakes.
- COLA applauds the Town Board efforts to address the longstanding issues associated with the use and infringement upon the public accesses and public access strips in Northwoods Beach as those efforts pertain to LCO. This is a tough issue given the history and COLA will support the Board in their deliberations to rectify the past and set out clear direction for the future.
- COLA first and foremost is concerned with the restoration and future protection of the water quality of the LCO lakes. Water quality is at the heart of the aesthetic value we all share for these truly Outstanding Resource Waters. COLA believes adoption of an ordinance that has at its root, continued public ownership and management of accesses and access strips **and** compliance with the minimum state and county shoreland standards for any granted uses, is ultimately in the best interest of the lake and provides a degree of fairness to all who reside on LCO. COLA generally supports the concepts and structure of the draft ordinance working version we have before us tonight.
- With regard to continued public ownership...as we all know there is precious little public land, managed for the use and enjoyment by all of us...on Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes. COLA believes that where there is public land on Wisconsin lakes it is appropriate to maintain public ownership because these are everyone's lakes as provided for by the Public Trust Doctrine of the Wisconsin State Constitution.
- COLA also believes holding and managing shoreland by state and local government entities is the best insurance against lake water quality degradation and loss of aesthetic value. Many thousands of Wisconsin's lakes are experiencing rapidly degrading water quality (WI Impaired Water List). That degradation is caused primarily by the type and density of development around lakes. Public ownership of shoreland with strict adherence to state and local shoreland regulations provides assurances that at least those public land are not contributing to the demise of a given water body.

- Again, COLA wants to thank the Town of Bass Lake for taking on the difficult issues surrounding the ownership and use of the accesses and public access strips in Northwoods Beach and will support the Town Board in reaching a successful outcome. Many mistakes have been made in the past by owners and by government....but that is partly what the future is for.....rectifying past mistakes.

Good luck