



Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance

Our Vision

The Crow Wing County LARA will work to preserve and enhance the quality of Crow Wing County's lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater.

Our Mission

Our mission is to:

- Represent the interests of our members to the county, regional, state, and federal levels of government.
- Promote educational opportunities for member associations.
- Provide organizational support to existing and emerging lake and river associations.

The Crow Wing County LARA represents the interests of over twenty dues-paying lake and river associations in Crow Wing County. Because of the work we do in support of water quality throughout our county, we also represent the interests of those lake and river groups that are not members of LARA. We especially try to give a voice to those smaller lake associations with little money and little political power.

We work with local residents on planning and zoning and development issues; advocate on lake issues to local lawmakers and county commissioners; support the state-wide advocacy organization Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MLR); and manage the CWEPA Fund and award grants from the fund for worthy projects in Crow Wing County.

Above all, our goal is to represent the interests of our members at the county and local levels of government to have a positive impact on the water quality in Crow Wing County.



Crow Wing County Lakes and Rivers Alliance

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CWEPA Fund

A major responsibility of the Crow Wing LARA board is to administer the CWEPA (Crow Wing Environment Protection Advised) Fund. Approximately \$3,000 per year is available to nonprofit or local government organizations wishing to complete an environmental project in Crow Wing County. Proposals must align with the mission of the fund.

The purpose of the CWEPA Fund is to provide operational support to projects, programs and activities that lead to the protection, restoration, and preservation of natural resources and environmental assets within Crow Wing County.

Projects Funded by CWEPF Grants

2021 – Northland Arboretum in Brainerd awarded \$3,000 to purchase seed to restore native prairie on their property that will also serve as a food source for pollinators like bees and butterflies. It will also be an education resource for visitors of the Arboretum.

2019 – National Loon Center Foundation awarded \$3,400 for the development of learning curriculum for the National Loon Center developed by the University of Minnesota.

2016 – East Twin Lake Association awarded \$3,000 to replace trees and stabilize shoreline impacted by the Highway 371 expansion project.

2015 – Crow Wing County SWCD awarded \$2,500 to help fund the creation of a vegetated catch basin for stormwater control between the west end of Round Lake and Highway 371.



Other Recent Accomplishments

- Donated \$2,000 to The University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Research Lab for the next phase in their study of the impacts of wake boats on lakes.
- In 2021, a LARA Board member with experience on a local planning commission worked with residents of Bass Lake (aka. Ray Lake) to successfully oppose a zoning change sought by a developer so he could put in a residential PUD with the maximum density increases on sensitive shoreline of a very shallow, small lake.
- LARA board members have met several times over the past few years with Crow Wing County commissioners to stress the need for a county-wide Short-Term Rental Ordinance and urged them to write and enact such an ordinance. It took some time, but the county now has such an ordinance that governs cities as well as townships.
- Developed a new web site for Crow Wing County LARA: www.crowwinglakesanddrivers.org
- LARA board members continue to attend meetings with Crow Wing County officials concerning the county's AIS Prevention Plan.
- In September 2020, the LARA board met with John Sumption of the Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLT) to better understand their conservation priorities, especially with regards to lakeshore properties. This has led to quarterly meetings with NWLT and representatives from other regional COLAs from the counties of Cass, Aitkin, and Hubbard to help coordinate land conservation efforts.
- In November 2020, LARA partnered with the Brainerd Lakes Area Audubon Society and BLUE to host a virtual Environmental Forum with candidates running for public office.
- In June 2021, LARA submitted the paperwork to request that Governor Walz proclaim July 2021 as "Lakes Appreciation Month." Our request was successful.

Board Members Needed!

If you are passionate about Crow Wing County's lakes and rivers and like meeting with others who share the same passion, please let us know! We'd love to have you on the join our board.

Email us to apply!

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