



BECKER COUNTY COLA 2015 POSITIONS AND POLICIES

Minnesota, “The Land of 10,000 Lakes” *The State’s lakes are its most important asset and essential to its economy, and to the heritage and culture and quality of life of its residents. Becker County values these resources for recreational enjoyment, tourism, and local economy.*

COLA BY-LAWS - Article II Purpose

Section 1. *The Becker County Coalition of lake associations hereafter referred to as Becker County COLA is organized for the purpose of facilitating cooperation among member lake associations to protect and enhance the quality of lakes and their shore areas.*

Section 2. *Becker County COLA will sponsor a water quality monitoring program, assist in the identification of environmental impacts to lakes, communicate information to association members and the public regarding the preservation of lakes as an important natural resource, develop and present recommendations related to shoreland development, coordinate and cooperate with County and State agencies in maintaining and improving water quality.*

General (not in priority ranking)

1. COLA is organized for the purpose of facilitating cooperation among member lake associations.
2. COLA aims to protect and enhance the quality of Becker County lakes and their shore areas.
3. COLA seeks to influence state, county, township, and city public officials and agencies in accordance with positions and policies adopted by its Board of Directors.
4. COLA will collaborate with neighboring COLA’s and other organizations that advocate similar goals.
5. COLA recognizes education of lake association members, non-association lake residents, businesses, and the general public are important vehicles for achieving COLA goals.

Environment/Zoning (not in priority ranking)

1. COLA, in support of lake associations and lakeshore property owners, urges the Planning and Zoning Administrator, County Commissioners and County Attorney to consistently investigate reported violations and aggressively enforce the provisions of Becker County Ordinance and Minnesota Shoreland Standards.
2. COLA will inform its member lake associations of proposed amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance and Minnesota Shoreland Rules. In addition, COLA will notify and consult with member lake associations about land subdivision or variance requests in cooperation with Becker County Zoning.
3. COLA will notify and consult with lake association officials and members about land subdivision or variance applications to include arranging a conference with the Zoning office on the matter.
4. COLA supports the strict and consistent application of Becker County’s Non-Conformities Ordinance provisions. Further, in cases where deviation from a standard is granted by Variance, COLA urges the Board of Adjustment to require mitigation as a condition of approval and the Planning and Zoning Office to assure that mitigation has been implemented and if not, issue an enforcement statement to the property owner.
5. COLA urges Becker County to identify those shorelands unsuitable for traditional lot/block development and confer upon them “special protection zone” status. Further development of these areas would require conservation design, restrictive measures and/or mitigation features to protect the lake and its shoreland.
6. COLA requests Becker County improve the Shoreland Septic System program by: implementing an Ordinance provision covering Point of Sale re-certification, establishing a Septic System Inspector audit procedure, timely enforcement on those cases where property owners fail to comply with the program, formulating a sewage Pumper/Hauler policy that restricts disposal on land that drains to a lake, and implement an Ordinance provision covering sewage disposal from Recreational Vehicles located on shoreland.
7. COLA encourages each lake association to establish a Lake Management Plan either by use of a model program or custom approach that leads to documentation and a community commitment to preservation of the natural resource. COLA will serve as a resource to a lake association undertaking a Lake Management Plan.

8. COLA urges Becker County officials establish publicly announced, open application process for appointments to the Board of Adjustment, Planning Commission, Ordinance Advisory Committee, and other Becker County appointments. Further, COLA urges that term limits be placed on membership of Boards, Commissions, and committees involved with shoreland regulation.
9. COLA urges local government officials to encourage public participation in decision-making by including representatives of COLA and lake associations in the process of formulating policies and programs that have an impact on the management of lakes and lake-related issues.
10. COLA supports the proposed Minnesota Buffer Zone program to protect the public waters in Becker County.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) (not in priority ranking)

1. Existing Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) allocation of resources, regulations, administrative structures and programs are insufficient to prevent, manage, and contain the spread of AIS.
2. COLA advocates for state-level changes, including preparation and execution of an effective and efficient statewide AIS plan to stop the spread, early-intervention plans, AIS research, increased funding for local partners, more aggressive treatment efforts, and education about AIS which threaten Minnesota lakes.
3. COLA encourages increased AIS cooperative efforts between State and Federal agencies, including consistent AIS policies, water related equipment border inspections, increased enforcement/fines, and cooperative/complimentary AIS research.
4. COLA supports the DNR to identify program deficiencies and actively engage in efforts for legislative change.
5. COLA supports local government role and authority in preventing the introduction of AIS to County lakes with county AIS Prevention Aid funding. This should include establishing partnerships with state agencies to enhanced protection that may include increased decontamination facilities, enhanced enforcement, centralized inspection/decontamination areas, enhanced training and identification of Lake Service Providers, education, rapid response, and enhanced programs for special events and resorts/hotels/campgrounds.
6. COLA will encourage and assist lake associations to engage their members and lake property owners in AIS issues along with the risks they pose and to utilize all prevention and control methods.
7. COLA places a high priority on education of lake association members, other lake residents, businesses, the general public, and especially youth, as an important mechanism for achieving COLAS's goals.

Communications (not in priority ranking)

1. COLA places a high priority on timely communications between COLA and member lake associations. It is the responsibility of the lake association officers and COLA representatives to facilitate communication between COLA and lake association members.
2. COLA will explore new ways to provide expertise to lake associations.
3. COLA recognizes member contact information as an asset and maintains strict protection of that data.
4. COLA seeks to broaden its means of delivering COLA's messages to the general public.
5. COLA strives to enhance communications with local governments, officials, agencies, businesses and organizations with common missions and goals.

Monitoring (not in priority ranking)

1. COLA understands that transparency (clarity) measurements are the most important component of a lake water quality monitoring program. COLA asks lake associations to recruit volunteers to participate in the Minnesota Citizen Lake Monitoring Program (CLMP) by taking and reporting 12 secchi disk readings each year.
2. COLA urges lake associations to facilitate monitoring to ascertain the trophic condition of their lake(s). It is understood that this involves obtaining sufficient paired chlorophyll (chl-a) and phosphorus samples; for most lakes this requires 5 samples for each season for three years. The process should be repeated if there is a significant change in transparency.
3. COLA will assist lake associations in interpreting data from their monitoring programs
4. COLA will help lake associations to employ additional lake-specific monitoring programs to supplement monitoring activities described above.
5. COLA will provide information on remedial actions needed to respond to problems identified by monitoring programs.