

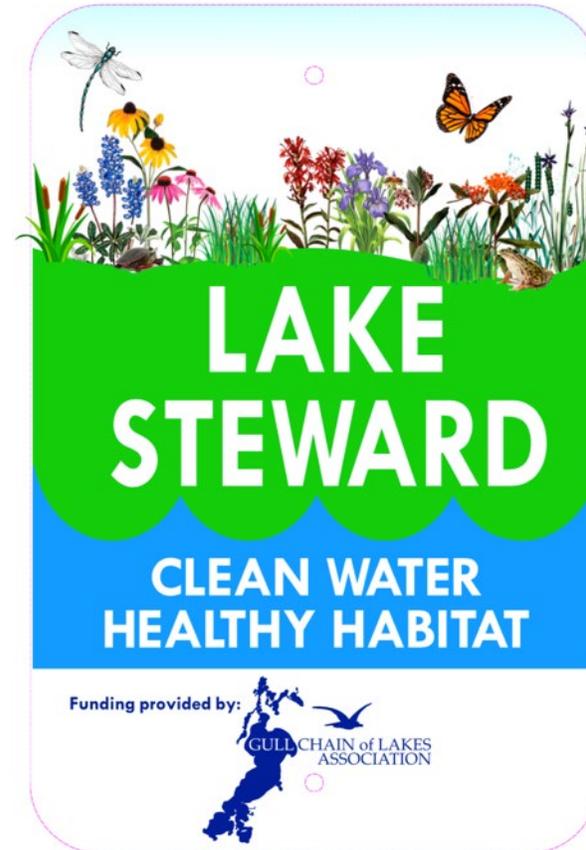
Lake Steward

of the Gull Chain of Lakes Association, gcola.org

The Origin of Lake Steward
throughout Minnesota

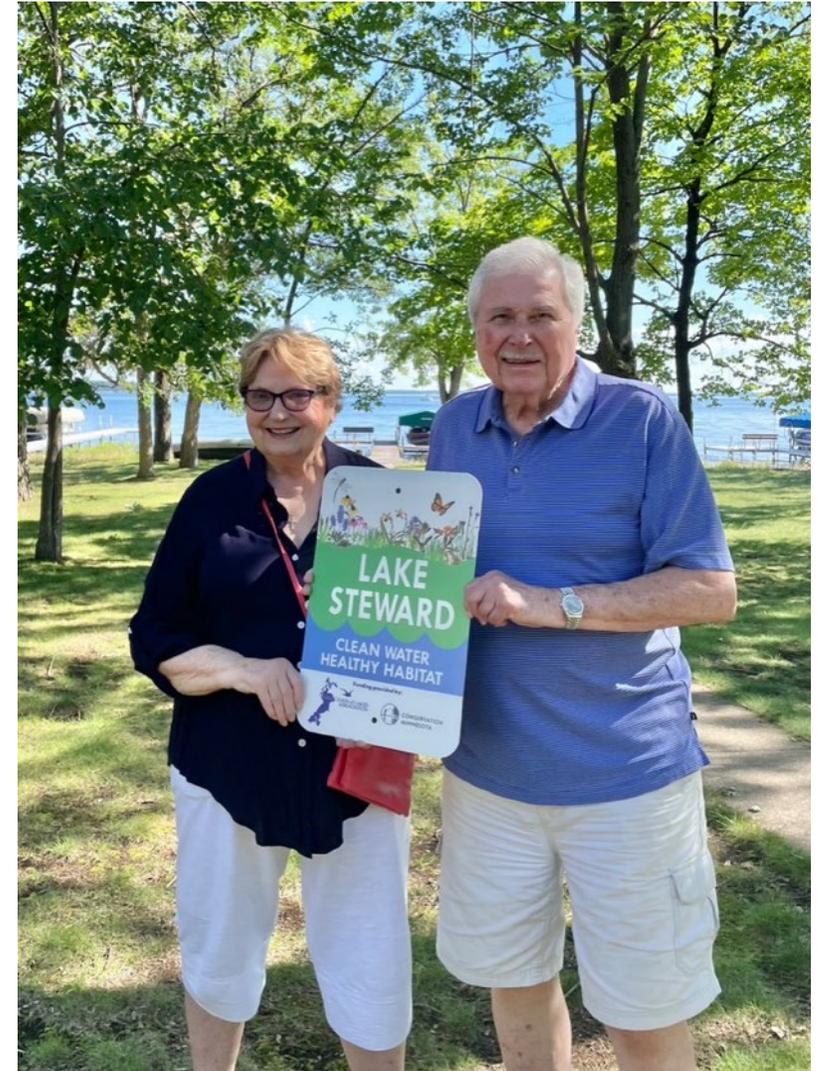
Dorothy Whitmer MD, Chair
Kris Driessen, Naturalist
Sheila Johnston, Naturalist

Clean Water
Healthy Habitat



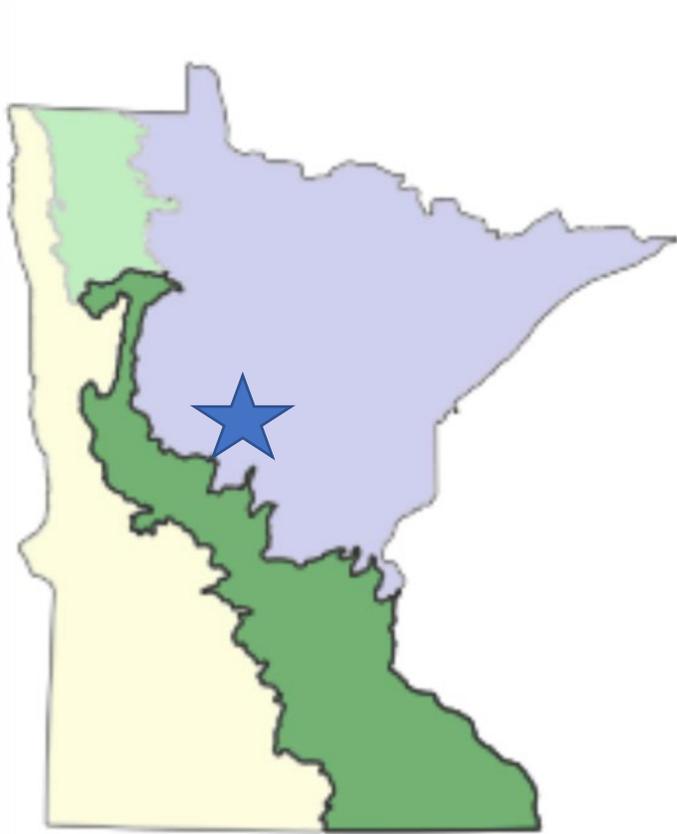
Acknowledgements

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- Melissa Barrick, Crow Wing Soil and Water
- Rita Albrecht, former Mayor of Bemidji
- Rob Mason and Laura Christensen, City of East Gull Lake
- Teri Hastings, City of Lake Shore
- Tom Karas, Minnesota Native Landscapes



Gull Chain of Lakes Association (GCOLA)

gcola.org



Forested Lakeshore

Gull Chain of Lakes

Pillsbury State Forest



Lake Steward property



Gull Chain of Lakes Association (GCOLA)

1,000 Members



- Gull Lake 10,000 acres
- 6 smaller upstream lakes
- 4 Cities and a Township; properties are sewerred
- Cass and Crow Wing Counties
- Famous Resorts: Madden's, Grandview, Cragun's

What is Lake Steward?

- Award
- Lakeshore Owners
- Lake Protection



Two Extremes of Lakeshore Management

“Wild and Free” vs. “Neat and Tidy”



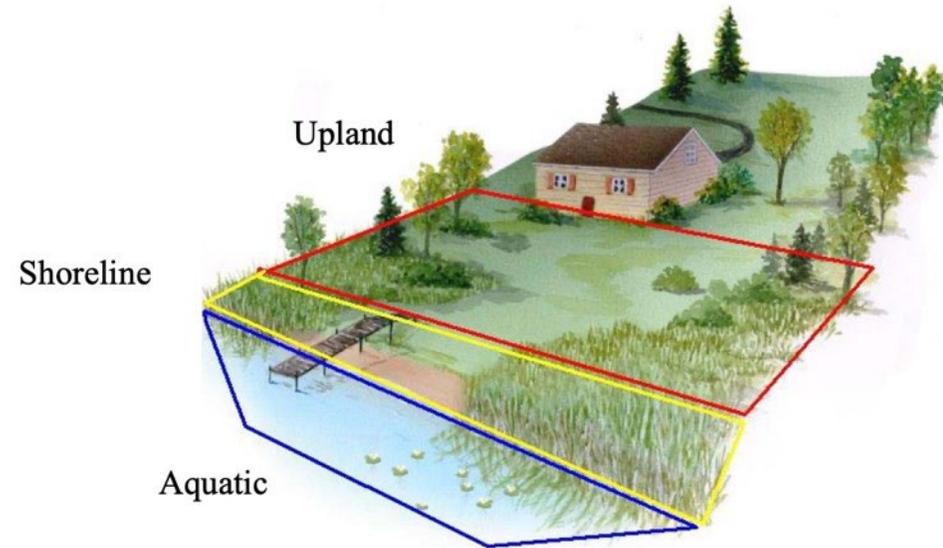
The Origin of Lake Steward: The Quiz

- A Quiz popped into my email in 2018
- “Rate Your Shoreland!”
- I was sure I would do well
- I did not.

Conclusion:

1. There must be other owners
2. A Quiz is an effective tool

Graphic (right) courtesy of Minnesota DNR Score Your Shore



Shoreland Management Act of 1969

- Cities and Counties can enforce:

25% Max. Impervious

- But not

“The Other 75%”

No Intensive clearing of trees

No clearing Shore Impact Zone SIZ

No Fertilizer and pesticides in SIZ.

A GCOLA Lake Steward property, shoreline untouched so that house is hidden by trees



The 3 Steps of Lake Steward



- The Quiz is the Crucial First Step
- Publicity from the Award Brings More Quiz Takers

The 4-Question GCOLA Lake Steward Quiz

3 Minutes to Complete

1. Unmowed Buffer Zone 25-50 ft deep (10 ft free)
over 75% of shoreline
2. No riprap at shoreline or
allow plants in riprap
3. Tree canopy or native plants
over at least 50% of Upland
4. No broadcast lawn fertilizer or pesticides;
no mosquito spray. Spot treatment OK.



The Vision and Goals of GCOLA Lake Steward

- CHANGE THE CULTURE to lake protection
- 15% OF OUR MEMBERSHIP will be Lake Stewards within 5 years. Reach critical mass; idea takes off.

See Gull Estates, first Association Awardees



GCOLA Lake Steward Launch

May 2019

Emailed the Quiz to 640 members

Within 3 days...

100 Responses!

150 Responses for the 2019 season



Steady Decrease in % Awarded Lake Steward: Owners with Lower Scores Interested

- 2019: Awards were **82%** of Site Visits
(23/28)
- 2020: Awards were **72%** of Site Visits
(29/39)
- 2021: Awards were **29%** of Site Visits
(12/41)





What Will Success Look Like?

- **Lake Stewards Cluster**

- Ambassadors In each Neighborhood
- Quiz Responses increased from 62 (2021) to 115 (2022)

- 2021 Map of Gull Chain. Lake Stewards in blue, visited candidates in red

Upper Gull 360 Project Amplify Responses in 2023

- Gull Lake = 10,000 acres
- Upper Gull Lake = 421 acres
8.6 miles of lakeshore
10 Lake Stewards
231 properties
- Blanket all properties with flyers,
“Take the Quiz”



Accomplishments

GCOLA Lake Steward First 4 Years

- 83 GCOLA Lake Steward Awards, 9.2%
- 152 site visits to unique properties
- 69 candidates visited and working toward the Award, and 60 others yet to be visited
- 212 participating; 23.5% of membership
- 400 quiz responses to date
- Free to nonmembers



Accomplishments (2) GCOLA Lake Steward First 4 Years

- **83** GCOLA Lake Steward Awards
- **2.9 miles** of Gull Lake Chain lakeshore under Lake Steward protection
- **1.0 mile of lakeshore improved:**
 - 7 shoreline restorations
 - 15 stopped broadcast fertilizer or pesticides, or both
 - 7 reduced mowing to increase buffer zones
 - 12 removed invasive plants
 - **OVER 1.6 TONS OF ALGAE PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE LAKE CHAIN, PER YEAR**



The Mission of GCOLA Lake Steward

To make
Gull Lake Chain
water quality
sustainable
for future generations.

It is doable!



Lakes of Phosphorus Sensitivity Significance

MPCA (chemistry) and DNR (biology) Joint Study

- How best to direct resources for health of Minnesota lakes
- Valuable and Vulnerable
 - Value: Sum Lakeshore properties
 - Vulnerable: most likely to become impaired (30 mcg/l Phosphorus)
- Top 2800 lakes ranked
- Gull Lake 16A, about #95 in MN



2020 Gull Lake Phosphorus Levels and Load

“Lakes of Phosphorus Sensitivity Significance”

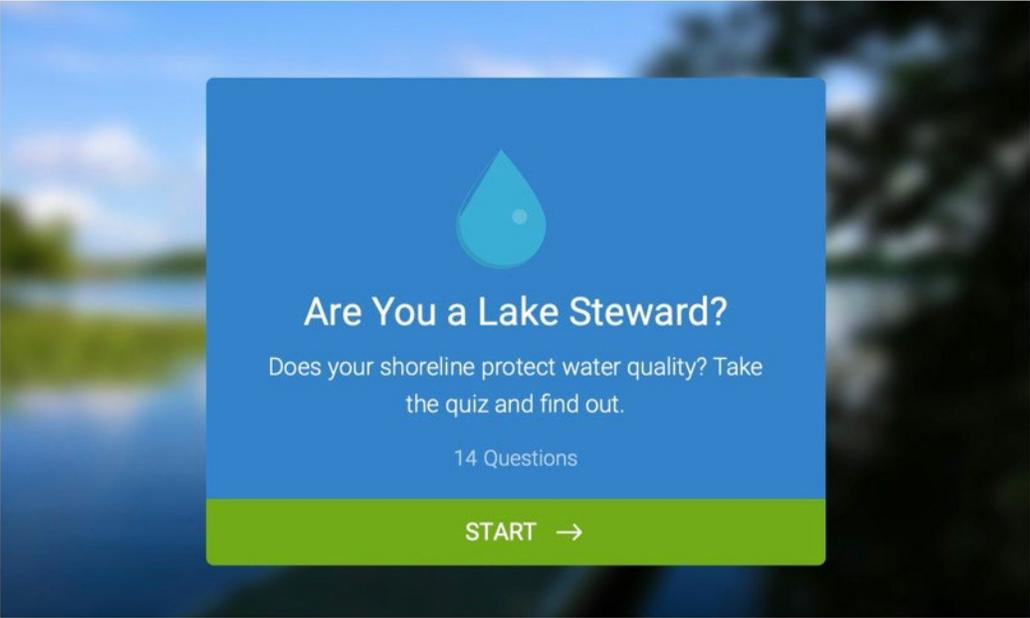
Valuable and Vulnerable

- **22 mcg/liter** phosphorus level
(19 originally, 30 impaired)
- **16,296 lbs** phosphorus
input load per year
- **815 lbs** EXCESS PHOSPHORUS

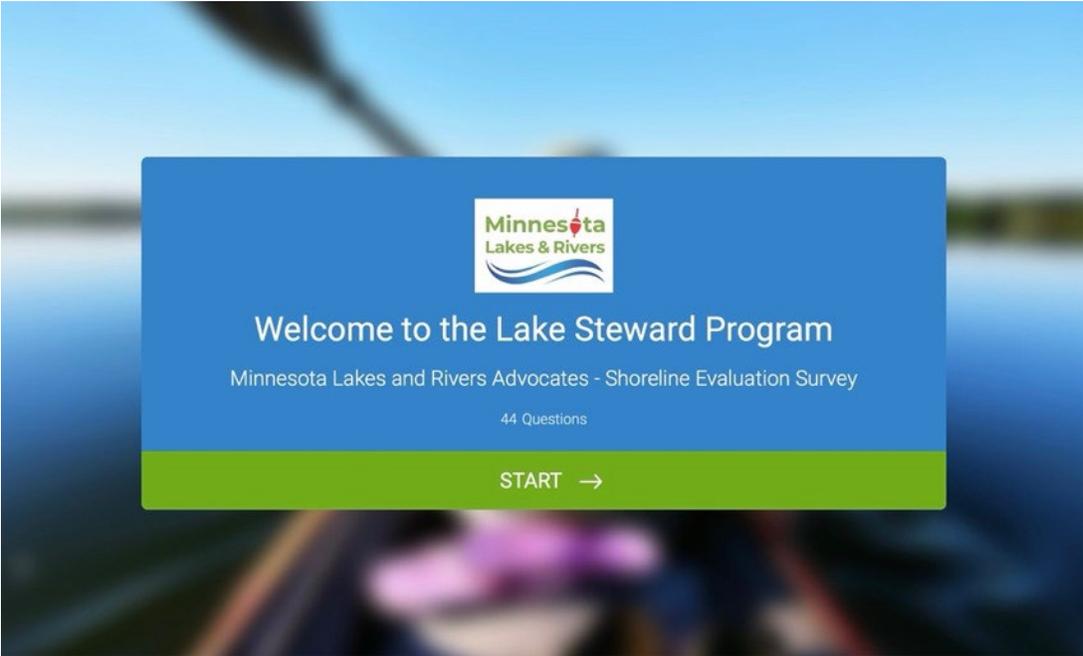


GCOLA Lake Steward and Minnesota Lakes and Rivers 2020 – 2022

MLR Lake Steward Quiz



MNL / MLR / GCOLA Property Evaluation

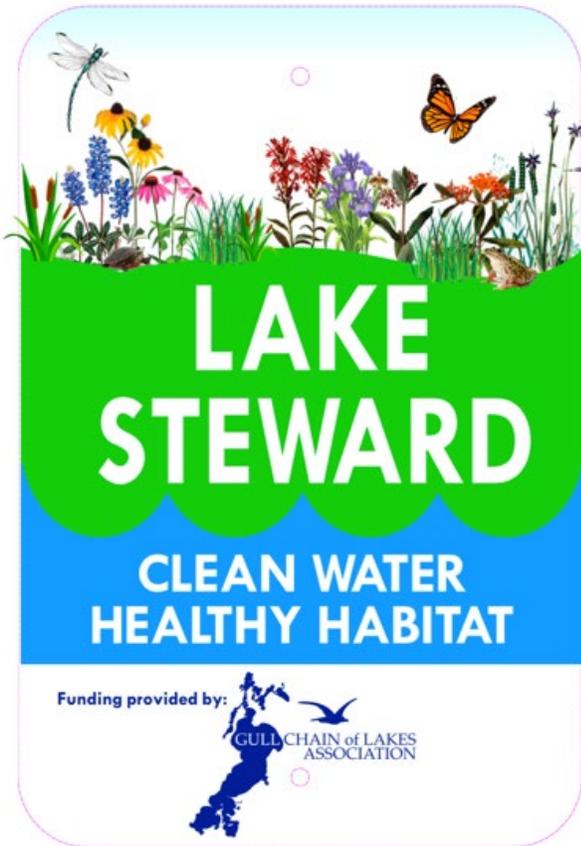


Why Will Lake Steward Work?

- Those involved will gain the most, both in financial well-being and personal enjoyment
- To DO MORE for our lakes,
DO LESS.
(Spend less money and effort)
- Pride in recognition from GCOLA
- Hunger to save our lakes.
Lake Steward fulfills that need.



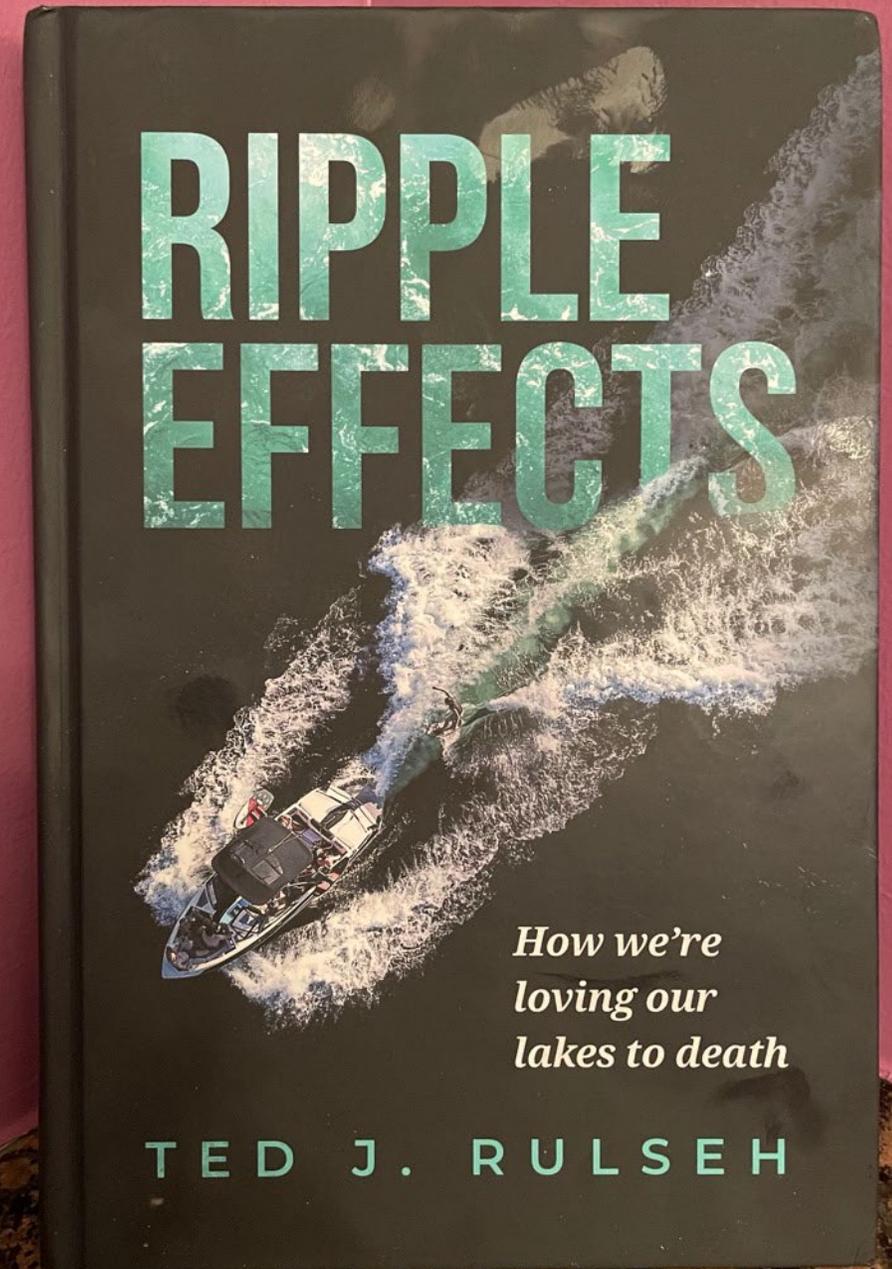
Owners Desire The Lake Steward Award



Ripple Effects, Ted Rulseh

September, 2022

“Encouraging property owners to act is a cherished aim of lake associations, state natural resource agencies, and other organizations across the Upper Midwest.”



How Can You Help Lake Steward?

- If Funding:

Contractors and labor for buffer zones of native plants, probably through Cass and Crow Wing Soil and Water Districts.

Jeff Forester: tax advantages for land kept natural



GCOLA Lake Steward

We connect with lakeshore owners,
their families
and beloved canine companions



GCOLA Lake Stewards

The power
of leaving a legacy
for lake protection.



Why Lake Steward?

Because we want our
young people
to have a future on our lakes.

Thank you!

