COLA, Sawyer County Board, and Zoning Committee Reach Positive Outcome for Fleur De Lane Rezoning Request

Land Use Policy for Lac Courte Oreilles to Provide Direction for Future Requests

Hayward, WI (May 18, 2017) The Courte Oreilles Lakes Association (COLA) has reached a positive outcome with the Sawyer County Board and Zoning Committee regarding the Billings Family Trust request to rezone a property adjacent to Fleur de Lane. During the month between the Sawyer County Board remand and the Zoning Committee meeting on April 21, COLA worked with representatives from the Billings Family Trust, Fleur De Lane neighbors, the two lawyers involved, and Dale Olson—Zoning and Conservation Administrator—to find a solution to the rezone dilemma.

The rezoning request from the Billings Family Trust, see the Fleur de Lane Parcel Map, would have allowed this property that is currently zoned as agricultural to be rezoned as residential, opening it up to development that would directly impact water quality on Lac Courte Oreilles in the form of additional runoff from impervious surfaces and surrounding agricultural parcels.

COLA was able to help craft an agreement where the 270 feet of lake front would be divided into two lots and where the 3.4 acres that make up the back area west of Fleur de Lane would also be divided into two lots. The agreement also includes a convey on the back-lot deeds that they can never be sub-divided and that the most westerly 75 feet of the two lots must remain as natural forest to provide a buffer against runoff from surrounding agricultural fields.

This was all documented in deed restrictions and certified surveyor maps. The Sawyer County Board presented this completed proposal to the Zoning Committee for approval. COLA also addressed the Committee directly regarding COLA’s reasons for opposing the initial rezone request. The Lac Courte Orielles District Zone map was useful in showing the current zoning districts around the LCO lakes and explaining COLA’s Land Use Policy Statement.

Sawyer County now understands that COLA will oppose any future rezone requests that involve rezoning any of the 1,000 acres within 1,000 feet of the LCO lakes that are currently zoned A-1 (Agricultural) and F-1 (Forestry).

“There were a couple friendly questions from Zoning Committee members, and they thanked COLA for being part of the solution and clarifying our policy position,” said Gary Pulford, COLA vice-president. “The Zoning Committee voted unanimously to approve the rezone with the agreed-upon conditions and sent it on to the County Board for final approval. All in all, this was a great process and a good outcome for the lake.”

Learn more about COLA’s efforts to protect the water quality of Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO)—the fifth-largest natural lake in Wisconsin, an Outstanding Resource Water, and a rare, two-story cold-water fishery. As part of this goal, COLA is committed to helping provide the science and lead the way in reducing pollution, to serve not only the LCO Watershed but also other lakes and the organizations that support them. Visit www.cola-wi.org. For questions and interviews, contact Jim Coors at colacommunications@gmail.com or call 608-628-0694.