



Wabana Warbler

The Wabana Township Newsletter

Township Meetings

*** All meetings are held at the Wabana Town Hall unless noted.**

Wabana Township Meetings are held the 1st Wed/month @ 7pm at the Wabana Town Hall.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Board meetings are held in person at the Township Hall & via Zoom.

*Meetings via [Zoom](#) and are open to the public.

MEETING ID: 841 1114 6136

PASSWORD: WabanaMtg2

Township Meeting Dates:

(Meets the 1st Wed./month)

September 3rd @ 7pm

October 1st @ 7pm

November 5th @ 7pm

December 3rd @ 7pm

Planning Commission Meeting Dates:

(Meets quarterly in person & Zoom)

October 27th @ 7pm

January 26th, 2026 @ 7pm

Community Fund Meetings & Events:

September 29th @ 6:30 pm- meeting

October 27th @ 6:30 pm- meeting

*November 8th- Hunter Supper

November 24th @ 6:30 pm- meeting

WCOLA (Lake Association) Meetings:

(Meet 2nd Mon./month)

September 8th @ 4pm- meeting

*September 28th- Roadside Cleanup

October 13th @ 4pm- meeting

Note: Any changes to meetings & events will be posted on the website and at the Town Hall.

Recreation Project Update

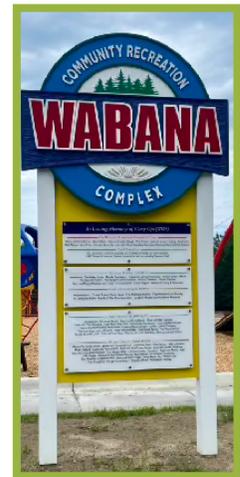
By Kim Oja

Several people, much smarter than me, have been working very hard on the recreation project for the last 4 years, and now we get to see the fruits of our labor! But first, I must thank Steve Bjerke & Wayne Speedling for all the extra hours they've put into this project. Without their expert knowledge we'd still be in the planning phase. So, thank you, thank you to Steve & Wayne!!

Have you noticed the "Donor Board"? What a nice way to recognize the businesses and families that supported this project. (Ed) Eck Designs from Marbel did a wonderful job making the sign, and we appreciate Donna Hartung's help for checking, then double, and triple checking everything to 'get it all right'.

The town hall walking path now has a crushed asphalt walking path and the large area in the middle of the field has two pickleball courts and a tennis court (with 'ghost lines' for pickleball). The blacktop needed to set for a month before the surface could be painted, and fencing installed. The nets will go up this week and we hope the courts will be ready for use by mid- September. The other blacktop area is for the half-court basketball area. There was a drainage issue at that location, so project managers (Steve & Wayne) worked out a solution for that. The basketball court also has a painted surface (with lines) and a fence on 3 sides. An ADA picnic table and a wheelchair accessible porta-potty will be added to the picnic area as well.

The baseball backstop placement will be coming soon. It will be in the northeast corner of the field and will be great for a friendly game of softball, or T-ball. There's also talk of adding a golf net against the backstop for those who like to practice their golf swing.



Our awesome volunteers!

In the beginning of July, we added another a semi-truck load of wood chips around the playground & swing set areas. A big thank you to Koltin Wagner (Wabana Excavating) and to all of the awesome volunteers who came out on a hot day to help spread the wood chips. This project relied heavily on our amazing volunteers, who worked hard to make this a beautiful place for the community to enjoy for many years!

(Recreation Project Update continued from page 1)

You may have noticed that we've expanded the swing set area too. We are looking at different options to fill the empty space next to the swing set. Speaking of expanding, it was brought up at the last township meeting that the 'kiddy ice rink' needs to be bigger, so that has been expanded too. We also added a sandbox for kids to play in with shovels & pails.



We ask that you please stay away from the recreation area construction zone until it's safe to be on. We've already had a dirt bike cut in large ruts and damage the area. These types of vehicles are NOT allowed on park property. Parking is allowed in the parking lot, and only authorized vehicles can be inside the park. The recreation area was made for everyone to enjoy, and we need your help in keeping it nice for years to come.



You may now be asking yourself, "How did we get the money to pay for all of this?" Well, we received money through generous donations, grants, and special fund raisers. And let's clear this up right now... **NO tax dollars** went towards funding this project! We are applying for another IRRR (Iron Range Resource & Rehabilitation)

grant this fall, and if successful, well let's just say, we've got a list of extra equipment for the playground and swing set areas, as well as more picnic tables and benches.

So that's the update! I just have to say how happy it makes me to see all the kids using the playground. I didn't even know we had so many kids around! Just think of how much fun we'll have next summer when the recreation project is complete!

Amazing Wabana Township Organizations:

The Community Fund



There's a lot happening in our township every day. Did you know that the Community Fund, a Wabana Township non-profit, has volunteers that provide not only lunches for local funerals, but it raises scholarship money through hosting the local Hunter's Supper in November? A lot of work goes into planning and preparing funeral lunches and cooking dinner for a hundred plus hunters and community members every year.

The Community Fund also hosted the annual Ice Cream Social in August, which was a big hit with the kids, both young and old! Several community members came with their families to socialized over a bowl of ice cream. It was great to hear the sounds of happy children playing on the new playground equipment afterwards.



A big thank you to Jean Koewler, Carol Speedling and Anne Johnson for being not only the bakers, but also the hosts of the ice cream social this year.

The Community Fund is always looking for people willing to help. If you're interested in joining a great group that does a lot for the community, contact Jean Koewler— djkoewler@paulbuyon.net

WCOLA (Wabana Chain of Lakes Association)

The Wabana Lake Association is another non-profit that supports the Wabana Township. WCOLA is dedicated to the care and preservation of our lakes for the enjoyment of all. This group is about educating people about our water and shorelines and how we can help our lakes stay beautiful for years to come.

It's your lake association that helps pay for level II inspectors to check boats for invasive species at both boat landings on Wabana to help control what comes into our waters. WCOLA also purchased a decontamination unit for boaters to use if invasive species, such as zebra muscles, are found on their watercraft.



WCOLA volunteers monitor lake water quality, clean up our water and road sides, and count loons. They also host fun social events, such as the Spring Social and Summer Picnic, which are open to all township members.

WCOLA would love to have you join their efforts! If you are interested in helping keep the lakes beautiful, and would like to meet some great people, contact Scott Hutter— scottandmary1981@gmail.com

Groups you can join:

SAIL (Women’s Exercise):

Looking for something fun & active to do? Check out the Women’s SAIL (Stay Active & Independent for Life) exercise group! This exercise group focuses on low-impact stretching, strengthening, and balance exercises, with a little cardio added in too. Trained volunteers lead the group. It’s a good workout with a great group of women!

The SAIL exercise group meets every Tuesday & Friday from 10-11:30 am at the Wabana Town Hall. It’s free to attend. We hope you join us in staying fit for life! Contact Anne Johnson if you have questions about the group.—markannejohnson@paulbunyan.net



Cribbage:



Have you noticed how full the town hall parking lot is on Tuesday afternoons? Every week people from all over the area join in on a game of cribbage. If you are looking for a competitive, yet friendly game of cribbage, the Wabana cribbage group would love to have you come play! This group is open to the public and meets at the Wabana Town Hall every Tuesday from 1-3 pm. The cost is \$3 to play with prizes given out. Each week players bring snacks to share during play. If you want to learn more about the cribbage group contact Pearl Muskar—perliron@live.com, or Carol Speedling—cjspeedling@yahoo.com

Upcoming Community Events:

Roadside Cleanup

The next roadside clean up will be Saturday, September 27th @ 10 am. **We’d love to have more volunteers help!** The township roadways are divided into 1 mile zones and it takes about an hour to clean up each area. Consider giving an hour of your time to help keep our community looking great! Twenty volunteers are needed each spring and fall to pick-up trash along our main roads.

The roadside clean ups are sponsored by WCOLA (Wabana Chain of Lakes Association) If you are interested in volunteering, or learning more about our Lake Association and all that it does for our community, you can contact Scott Hutter— scottandmary1981@gmail.com



Deer Hunter’s Supper

The Deer Hunter’s Supper will be Saturday, November 8th, from 5:00 -7:30 pm at the Wabana Town Hall. There will be raffle drawings, a silent auction, and a baked goods sale. The proceeds from the Hunter’s Supper go towards the Wabana Scholarship. This year they give out a \$750 scholarship to a local graduate. **Volunteers are needed!** Please email Jean Koewler with questions about donations, or serving as a volunteer for this community event. Jean’s email is— djkoewler@paulbunyan.net



Art & Crafts Shows

Wabana Northwoods Creations will offer a variety of art & craft items for sale at the annual Arts & Crafts shows at the Wabana Town Hall on Saturday, October 11th & Saturday, December 6th from 9 to 3 pm. Don’t miss this opportunity to support local and area artists, including wood carvings, metal works, jewelry, and many more handmade and homemade goods. If you are interested in being a vendor at a show, contact Janeen Gueltzow— jgueltzow@gmail.com

Community Interest:

Boat Washing Station- OPEN

The Boat Washing Station at the Town Hall is open during construction. This FREE service provided by WCOLA is available to all boaters with the hope that we can help keep our lakes invasive species free.

Cemetery News

We ask that flowers & decorations be removed by October 15th. If you have questions please contact Kim Oja — MRSO@MSN.com

Articles & Photos

If you have a news story, idea, or photo that you'd like to see in the Warbler, send them to the Warbler Editor, Lynne Pernsteiner — setofsteins@msn.com

Wabana Scholarship Recipient

Ethan Wenzel is this year's Wabana Community Fund scholarship recipient. Ethan graduated from Grand Rapids High School in May and plans to attend Minnesota North in Hibbing this year. We wish Ethan the best as he pursues his dream of becoming an aerospace engineer!

Funding for the Wabana Township scholarship program comes from the Community Fund's annual Deer Hunter's Supper. Thanks to everyone for supporting our community by donating to this great nonprofit.

Township Road Signs



Our local road signs will be updated over the next year as several signs are worn, damaged, or missing. There will also be 35 mph speed limit signs posted on some of the township roads. Several residents complained about the high rate of speed cars are traveling on some of the local roads and we are hoping the new signs remind drivers to slow down for safety, and to help control the dust.

Logging

You may have noticed that trees have been logged on some of the residential and township owned land this summer. Property owners have the right to sell the timber on their own property, and the Township Board decided this year to sell timber on the township owned land behind the cemetery. The sale of timber on the township land was discussed at township meetings for several years, and after reviewing several estimates a contract was signed.



Forestry is responsible forest management and the areas logged will look better in time. Logging crews will repair any damage done to the roads. The money the township earned through the sale of timber will be put in the recreation equipment maintenance fund, and the general fund to defray the costs of the road signs that need to be repaired or replaced.

The Weather

It's been the weather, not the bugs, that's been "buzz" of most of our conversations this summer. We've been either talking about the amount of rain fallen, or the quality of the air we're breathing. In July we received 8.6 inches of rain, which exceeds the 30 year average of 4.06 inches of rain.



(Photo credit Joanne Henrickson)

The DNR (Grand Rapids Forestry Lab) recorded our year-to-date precipitation at 15.84 inches. (at time of publication) Our wettest year-to-date was in 1953 when we received 30.88 inches of precipitation. Our driest year-to-date was in 1929 when we only received 8.35 inches of precipitation. With all the rain we received in mid-July several homes and yards flooded, and roads, driveways, and beaches washed out.

The wildfires in Canada also brought air quality alerts to our area for most of the summer. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency began recording air quality alerts in 2008, and this summer was a record for the longest air quality alert given in our area.

Waking to foggy skies and a musty campfire smell is not something we are used to. Having our activities restricted is not something we liked, but the rain did fill our lakes, ponds, and streams with much needed water. And, the flowers and sunsets were absolutely beautiful!

Fair Days

By Lynne Pernsteiner

Several Wabana Township kids participated in this year's county fair at the Itasca County Fairgrounds August 13th through the 17th. A lot of work and dedication goes into showing at the fair. These kids train for months for events that can be over in seconds. This year's fair participants were excited to talk about their experience at this year's fair.



Rebecca Brocinsky & Diesel

Rebecca Bocinsky was back for her fourth year competing at the fair. She brought her new horse, Diesel, and was excited to see how he'd do. Rebecca & Diesel placed top three in their Western Games class for Speed Dash, Jumping Figure-8, Barrels and Pole Weaving to earn a trip to Champ Show. Rebecca, a recent high school graduate, loves riding at the fair because family and friends get to come watch. Rebecca loves the team spirit the fair instills and appreciates how far she has come as a rider, "When I start doubting myself, I think of how far I have come... I used to be the little girl at the fence watching the older kid's ride, and now I'm the one they are watching."

All four Aultman kids participated at the fair this year. Packing suitcases and planning meals for four kids and two horses to stay at the fair for five days is no easy task! This was Arielle Aultman's twelfth year at the fair and she did well competing in Western Games with her new horse, Patriot. Arielle (14 years) also participated in the Friday Open Show Class, where she dressed up as a football player and painted her horse as a football. Arielle loves, "the energy and excitement the fair brings." She also mentioned all the training and practice that goes into competing with your horse.



Arielle Aultman & Patriot



Solomon Aultman (11 years) tried many new things at the fair this year. He enjoyed the "Farm Olympics," where he was timed to milk a cow, and competed in other fun relay events, such as competing with others to dress up as a farmer. Solomon showed goats this year too. He said, "It's more challenging than you'd think, because sometimes goats don't do what you want them to!"



Solomon Aultman

Avenly Aultman (9 years) participated in several of the 4-H games and "Sunday-Fun Day" events. Avenly loved camping at the fair and getting to do so many things. Avenly's favorite event was the "Candy Grab," where she ran her horse to a bin of candy at the end of the arena, grabbed pieces of candy from a bowl, then race her horse back to the judge. She was able to keep all the candy she was able to carry, which according to Avenly, "was at least 31 pieces!"



Avenly Aultman

Aelynn (3 years) was the youngest Aultman competing at the fair. She rode her pony, Buster, in lead line events, where she was led by her sister Arielle through several Western Game patterns. She also participated in the "Candy Grab." Aelynn loved seeing all the animals at the fair and enjoyed eating the "Shuck for a Buck!" (corn on the cob)



Evenly, Aelynn, Arielle & Buster

The Johnson sisters, Kendall (11 years) and Kaelyn (10 years) brought their horses to the fair to participate in Western Games and perform in the 4H Drill Team. The equestrian drill team is group of horses & riders performing to choreographed maneuvers with music. Kendall and Kaelyn worked with other drill team riders to come up with the patterns used in their performance. They also selected music from the movie, *Rio*, and chose matching uniforms to complete the *Rio* theme. Each drill team member has a whistle, and each rider had a part in starting a drill team pattern using their whistle.

Kendall, along with her horse, Sweet, and Kaelyn with her horse, Cheveyo, did a great job performing. It was Kaelyn's first year on drill team, and she liked it because, "it's fun and people are there for you if you need." This was Kendall's second year on drill team, and she likes that, "everyone works together and supports each other."



Kendall (blue shirt) & Kaelyn (pink shirt)

If you missed seeing these local athletes perform at the fair this year, be sure to look for them at the fairgrounds next year!

Tax-Forfeit Land Bill

By Spencer Igo

As the representative for a district rich in natural beauty and public resources, I introduced HF 2030 to give Itasca County a practical tool to better manage its land while continuing to protect our shared outdoor heritage. This bill allows the county to conduct private sales of select tax-forfeited lands bordering public waters, under strict limitations and oversight. Currently, Minnesota law generally prohibits the private sale of tax-forfeited lands adjacent to public waters unless through a public auction process. While that's a sound principle for transparency and fairness, it doesn't always reflect the real-world needs of local governments trying to return land to productive use or improve land management strategies. With HF 2030, we're granting Itasca County the temporary authority to privately sell up to 10% of such lands, allowing the county to address long-standing issues like land fragmentation, management inefficiencies, and tax base erosion.

The sales authorized under this bill will still follow a process, including using Attorney General-approved conveyance forms, that ensures legal integrity and public accountability. Importantly, this is not a permanent change. The authority expires on June 30, 2027, giving the county a limited window to act responsibly and demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. This is about empowering local government to make decisions that fit their unique geography and planning goals, not undermining public access or environmental protection. In fact, smart land policy, like this, supports conservation by ensuring that public lands are well-managed, contiguous, and not left in limbo due to bureaucratic constraints.

HF 2030 is a commonsense, locally-driven solution that respects both the land and the people who live on it. I'm proud to carry this legislation and advocate for practical stewardship of our public resources. I look forward to the collaboration, partnerships, and conversations to be had in the days ahead as this bill is in its early stages.

Spencer Igo is our District 07A Representative and the Co-Chair's the Housing Finance and Policy Ways and Means, and the Energy, Finance and Policy Committees. Mr. Igo will be speaking on this topic at the Wabana Township Meeting on November 5th at 7pm.

Wake Awareness- "Own your Wake!"

From the Minnesota DNR



Almost every motorboat can create a wake, which is why boaters must be aware of the danger wakes present and the damage they can do. While common courtesy dictates boaters should control their wakes, there are consequences beyond how wakes may affect people. So, what do boaters really need to know when it comes to owning their wake?

Under Minnesota law, the damage your wake causes is treated the same as damage caused by an actual collision. Personal watercraft (PWC) must stay at least 150 feet from shore. There is no required distance for boats, but by staying at least 200 feet from shore or other structures boaters can reduce the likelihood their wakes will cause damage. If you're engaged in an activity that creates artificially enhanced wakes, a greater distance from shore is necessary to prevent

damage. Be aware of your environment and what's going on around you – this applies to everyone on and around the water.

There are things you can do—

- Have a designated lookout to keep an eye out for other boats, objects, and swimmers.
- If crossing a wake, cross at low speeds and keep a close lookout for skiers and towables, such as tubes.
- Comply with all signs and respect barriers. This includes speed limits, no-wake zones, and underwater obstructions. Stay away from shorelines, docks, or other structures. Backing a boat up to a riverbank or lakeshore can damage the area and lead to erosion. Travel slowly in shallow waters.
- Travel slowly in shallow waters and avoid boating in water less than 2½ feet deep. High speeds near shorelines lead to large wakes that cause shoreline erosion.
- Check local ordinances, restrictions, closures, and permit requirements for the body of water you are on.
- Ask permission from the landowner(s) before crossing private property.
- Minimize repetitive passes. Once you've run a line, move on to another area.
- Respect the rights of others so everyone can enjoy their time on the water – keep the noise down, be courteous to other boaters, and show consideration to all recreationists on and around the water.

There are environmental impacts of wakes. Large wakes produced by watercraft can result in a variety of negative environmental consequences, including: Shoreline erosion; Impaired water quality resulting from increased sediment in the water; Loss of shoreline vegetation, which helps stabilize the shore and provides important habitat for fish and wildlife. These impacts are greater when water levels are high and shorelines are saturated. Boaters must be aware that their actions directly impact the environment. They should take steps to reduce their wake when operating near shore or when water levels are high.

Find more information at— <https://twin-cities.umn.edu/news-events/how-powerboats-impact-lakes-below-surface>

Tubby the Tugboat

By Lynne Pernsteiner

There is a new watercraft in town, and she goes by the name, "Tubby!" Residents on Little Wabana were surprised to see a tugboat cruising around the lake this summer. The miniature tugboat, affectionately called "Tubby," was built by Wabana resident, Sam Nelson, for his granddaughters to use on the lake. Tubby, the tugboat, is a nine-foot long, custom-made tugboat that comes equipped with a cabin for two, steering wheel, a stern mount trolling motor and nautical bell to announce her presence.



Sam became a tugboat builder after his son gave him a boat building kit for Christmas. The boat building kit consisted of a set of blueprints on how to build a tugboat. Sam wasn't sure about starting the project, but his school-aged granddaughters, Katie and Harper, convinced him that it would be fun having a tugboat they could use on the lake. So, for the past seven months Sam's garage became his boat building workshop. Tarps were laid out and new tools and boat building supplies were moved in. As Sam indulged in the world of custom boat building, his retirement plans quickly changed— A lot of time and detail work goes into building a custom boat!



The tugboat is built out of plywood that is stitched together with wire pieces, and then "glued" (i.e., with resin putty). This method is called "stitch and glue," and once the putty hardens the wire stitches are removed. When the boat is finally put together, it is sanded, and covered with pieces of fiberglass. After the fiberglass hardens, and the seams are sealed, it is sanded again before the final step of the project and things don't go quite right.

Sam came across several challenges while building his first tugboat. Working with fiberglass has a definite learning curve— "you are only able to work with it for so long before the fiberglass resin hardens, called 'pot time.'" Finding parts and paint were a challenge too. Sam had to search the internet for some of the boat building supplies he needed, and drove to Superior, Wi because that's the only place around that sells nautical paint. The biggest challenge, according to Sam, was pulling the stem together.



The stem is the bow of the boat and getting two pieces of plywood to bend and stay in place was not an easy task.

Several of Sam's neighbors helped Sam along the way, but his greatest motivators were his two granddaughters who let him know on more than one occasion that, "they couldn't wait for Tubby to be done so they could go for a ride!"



Jim Hanson, Jim Sig, Sam Nelson & Jim Rentas

Tubby was launched on Little Wabana on July 16th. Several neighbors and family members were there to assist. After months working and reworking Tubby in the shop, it was great to see her set sail. The only trouble with the first voyage was that the bow-mount trolling motor was attached to the stern of the tugboat, which caused the tugboat to move in the opposite direction the handheld remote indicated. There were several chuckles as Tubby's first voyage began in reverse, followed by a few circles, before "Captain Sam" was able to navigate Tubby smoothly along the lake shore.

Sam's wife, Sandra, became the tugboat's "project manager" along the way to ensure the boat would be finished in time for the grandkids arrival. Sandra added a walkie-talkie to Tubby's cabin, so when their grandchildren cruise around the lake, they're able to report back to "base camp."

Sam didn't say if he has future boat building projects in the works, but for now, he enjoys watching his granddaughter's independence grow as they maneuver tubby around the lake, and he has finally gotten in a game of golf or two!



Tugboat operators, Harper & Katie



Sam Nelson, tugboat builder

Reminder!

The Wabana Warbler Newsletter is no longer being mailed by USPS to residents. To keep current on local news & events, sign-up for e-News by going to the Wabana Township website and clicking on "Wabana e-News" on the top browser. Once you are signed up for e-news, you will receive the Wabana Warbler by email. **Remind your friends & neighbors to signup too!**

Wabana Township e-news link— <https://wabatanowship.com/wabana-warbler-newsletter/>

You can also contact Lynne Pernsteiner, setofsteins@msn.com, to be added to the e-news list.

Wabana Township Officers and Staff

Jane Moore, Chairperson (phone: 563-580-5253; email: jane.moore.wabana@gmail.com)

Mark Johnson, Supervisor (phone: 218-398-6959; email: mark.johnson.wabana@gmail.com)

Lloyd Adams, Supervisor (phone: 218-999-9749; email: lloyd.adams.wabana@gmail.com)

Deb Kee, Treasurer (phone: 218-326-2115; email: deb.kee.wabana@gmail.com)

Steve Melin, Clerk (phone: 218-256-5913; email: wabatanowshipclerk@gmail.com)

Carol Speedling, Deputy Clerk (text: 612-518-8992)

Ken Aho, Maintenance (phone: 218-256-7230)

Lynne Pernsteiner, Communications; email: setofsteins@msn.com