E-Newsletter March 2020

OTC COLA WEBSITE

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From The President

The worst of the winter is over. There is always snow in March, but it won't last long when it comes. We certainly are used to the wind this year. Fishermen that were looking for ice are now waiting for open water, especially after the disappointing condition of the ice this season.

With COLA we look forward to the water testing season! Results from past years are on the website and can be accessed from the COLA E-Newsletter. More lake associations have become involved and we continue with COLA's biggest project. Testers can pick up the supplies in water coolers from RMB Labs on April 16. Monthly Member meetings will begin May 21.

The COLA Board lost a long time, valuable member this past week. Sadly, we heard that Pat Prunty passed away. After a hip injury this winter Pat recently

texted he was being treated for cancer. He was knowledgeable about by-laws, budgets and water issues on many levels; a thoughtful man who considered and shared his opinions. The OTC County Commission called Pat and I the "dynamic duo" when we brought the proposed survey to the Commission meeting for their approval last year. He spoke many times at COLA Member Meetings and was Vice Chair of the COLA Board. Pat will be missed by so many.

Sylvia Soeth, President OTC COLA



OTC To Host MN Governor's Fishing Opener

Otter Tail County is hosting the 73rd Annual Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener (MN GFO) May 7-9, 2020. This is the third time Otter Tail County has hosted the event (1980 & 1997). The MN GFO brings statewide media attention to our communities. In recent year's the combined media coverage was valued at over one million dollars. We believe this a fantastic opportunity to show people what a great area this is to visit, live, work and play.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener is a collaboration between Explore Minnesota, the Governor's office, the Minnesota DNR and the local planning committee. Explore Minnesota is the lead organization and works closely with the local planning committee to ensure a successful event that follows the guidelines set forth by the state. While this is mostly an invitation only media event, there will be several opportunities for the general public to participate beyond volunteering.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The 2020 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener will showcase Otter Tail County's diverse outdoor recreation opportunities, our numerous lakes and our welcoming communities.

MN GFO 2020 Information Flyer



Win a \$50,000 Lund Boat!

Lund Boat Raffle Flyer

Volunteers Needed For The GFO Event

We will need roughly 500-600 volunteers for this event. A sign up is available for volunteers to sign up and email reminders will be sent. Committee members will organize the volunteers associated with the committee's tasks. Register **HERE** to volunteer for the GFO Event.



Get Ready For The 2020 Water Sampling Kick Off

The 2020 water quality sampling and analysis season is almost here. The Kick Off is currently scheduled for April 16, 2020, from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Ottertail Community Center in Ottertail, MN. Ellie Kriese of RMB Labs will be available to answer any questions.

The OTC COLA water quality analysis program has gained prominence in Otter Tail County and in Minnesota for being the premier program of its kind and for the dedication of the volunteers who make it all happen.

The annual Membership notices will be sent out soon. Please let me know of any changes in contact information at your Association. The fees for COLA Membership have not changed from 2019. The discounted rate for water sample analysis will be \$245 for the season.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

John Kruse, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant



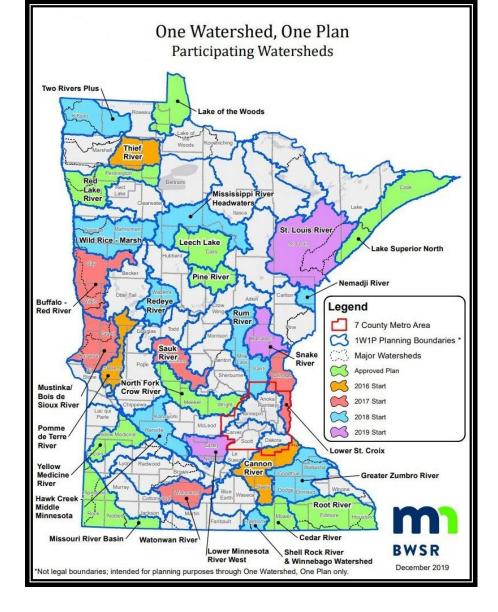
Koep farm certified for water quality practices

Mike Koep and his son, Kevin, practice conservation on their farmland, and they know the importance of protecting our water and soil.

Because of their conservation decisions, the Koep farms near Urbank are now Water Quality Certified in the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP). The Koep farming operation joins over 800 Water Quality Certified farming operations in Minnesota's unique, 5-year old program that recognizes farmers' efforts to protect the state's water quality.

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OTC Involved In 1W1P Plans

Otter Tail County is involved in in several One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) plans. They in include Redeye River, Buffalo-Red River, Pomme de Terre Watershed and Bois de Sioux-Mustinka. Otter Tail River Watershed 1W1P is on deck to get started in 2021 if the East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District (EOT SWCD) gets funds to begin the process. Chris LeClair, Director of OTC Land and Resource Management attended the Long Prairie Watershed 1W1P meeting on March 6, 2020.

Plans created through BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan program are called comprehensive watershed management plans and are described in Minnesota Statutes §103B.801.

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Septic System Upgrade Loans Available

County Land and Resource Director Chris LeClair requested to county commissioners, on Feb. 25, approval to submit an application to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) for the Clean Water Partnership Loan Program.

His request was approved and an application for \$1 million will be made to

the PCA.

"This program allows county property owners to apply for a loan with the county to upgrade their septic systems," LeClair said. "Payback for the loan would be applied to the applicant's property taxes over a 10-year period."

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Microplastics Are Turning Up Everywhere

Scientists say "microplastics" are turning up everywhere in oceans, from the water itself to the guts of fish and the poop of sea otters and giant killer whales. Research into the impact of these tiny bits of broken-down plastic is just getting underway.

Tiny bits of broken-down plastic smaller than a fraction of a grain of rice are turning up everywhere in oceans, from the water to the guts of fish and the poop of sea otters and giant killer whales. Yet little is known about the effects of these "microplastics" — on sea creatures or humans.

"It's such a huge endeavor to know how bad it is," said Shawn Larson, curator of conservation research at the Seattle Aquarium. "We're just starting to get a finger on the pulse."

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News from the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center



Climate change and starry stonewort

A <u>new research project</u> is underway to explore how starry stonewort invades a lake in different locations and climate conditions. Factors like ice-out date, growing season length, and average water temperature may change how the invasive algae behaves.

The goal of the project is to develop a more specific understanding of how climate change will influence the invasion dynamics of the species and affect management strategies.

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Dam Projects Underway In Lizzie, Prairie Lakes Area

The heavy equipment and crews have mobilized on two dam projects, at Prairie Lake and Lake Lizzie. Construction started Feb. 10 on Lizzie, and work was underway last week at Prairie. Immense piles of rock and boulder have been unloaded at both sites, as the dams will be replaced by a rock rapids installation—which the Department of Natural Resources and conservationists have advocated in an effort to return the Pelican River to a more natural flow, and allow free passage of fish and other aquatic species.

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Time to buy new fishing, hunting licenses

<u>Sports News</u> | Published on March 4, 2020 at 12:09pm CST | Author: Pelican Rapids Press

It's the time of year when hunters and anglers need to buy new fishing and hunting licenses.

Minnesota fishing, hunting and trapping licenses for 2019 expired Saturday, Feb. 29.

Licenses for 2020 are now available wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold, online at **mndnr.gov/buyalicense** and by telephone at 888-665-4236.

All 2020 fishing licenses become effective Sunday, March 1. New licenses are required for 2020 hunting and fishing seasons that continue past Feb. 29. Ice shelter licenses, though, are valid through Thursday, April 30.

Anyone who wants to start fishing or hunting can visit the DNR's **learn to fish** and **learn to hunt** pages.

OTC AIS Task Force Minutes

• <u>February 3, 2020</u>

OTC Board Of Commissioner Minutes

- February 11, 2020
- February 25, 2020

Instant Access Links

- Newsletter Article Index Visually scan article titles from all 2018 and 2019 OTC COLA E-Newsletters. Click to access the entire issue.
- Water Quality Analysis Individual reports for 168 OTC Lakes
- <u>Lake Property Owner Directories</u> Directories by Street and Name for 100 OTC Lakes
- Interactive Access to OTC GIS- Find addresses, navigate the OTC County map
- <u>Lawmaker Hotline</u>-Comprehensive contact information for OTC Board of Commissioners to the MN Governor
- OTC COLA Brochure

 View and/or download the OTC COLA
 Brochure
- We want to hear from you! Go <u>HERE</u> to give OTC COLA your comments and suggestions

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John Kruse, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant