



Newsletter

May 2015

Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations Presents:

Seminar on Lakes, Lakeshore Issues and Plants

Noon to 4:30 p.m.

May 23rd, 2015 - Thumper Pond Resort's Lakes Room

We welcome you to participate in a unique lakes country event which brings together experts to explore issues of concern and opportunity for you our members and our neighbors. The attendance fee of \$10 payable at the door goes to COLA activities. Here is the program:

- 12:00 pm Exhibits Open
- 1:00 pm Welcome: Jerry Horgen
- 1:10 pm **Darby Nelson**, Author of "For Love of Lakes"
- 1:50 pm Break
- 2:00 pm Questions/Answers/Panel Discussion:
Panel of experts to answer your questions:
 - General lake questions:**
Darby Nelson, author of "For Love of Lakes"
 - Buffer/Shoreline issues:**
Gabe Dretsch, East Otter Tail County SWCD
 - Aquatic Invasive Species Issues:**
Moriya Rufer, RMB Labs
 - Buffers, Aesthetics and Wildlife Habitat:**
Craig Johnson, Landscape Architect
- 4:00 pm Exhibits Close

Sponsors include the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations,
East Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District and Lake Region Electric.

Please join us for our May monthly COLA meeting this Thursday, May 21st at 7:00 p.m. at the Ottertail Community Center.

Featured Speaker: Jeff Forester, Minnesota Lakes & Rivers

Our COLA is dependent on groups like MNCOLA and Minnesota Lakes & Rivers to represent our interests in legislative and general governmental matters. Jeff will be providing highlights of efforts in the AIS fight in addition to other issues of interest to lakes country. He will be providing us with insight into moves through the Governors' office and the MNDNR to sidetrack funding of counties to battle AIS spread.

President's Letter

Here's hoping you fisherman out there had a satisfactory opening day last weekend. Weather was certainly advantageous for Saturday, and reports I hear suggest it was one of the better openers in recent years.

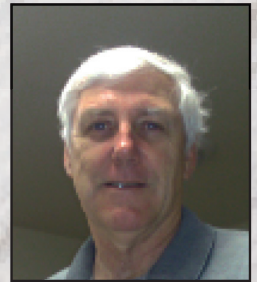
I see the Clean Drain and Dry banners were out at many public accesses. I also hope we are all draining our bait buckets before moving on to another lake. And don't forget to flush your bilges and live wells to remove the lake water always trapped in the plumbing.

That requires us to carry clean water from home to replace/displace water which might be contaminated. Please pass this message on to those fishermen you know and maybe even assist in providing jugs of clean water for your own family fishermen.

Some of us may not know this, but as we get into June, the levels of zebra mussel veligers is on the increase in contaminated waters. The density of these nymphs or hatchlings from adult zebra mussel eggs peak around July 4th and then gradually disappear over the next month or so. We must be exceptionally diligent to Clean, Drain and Dry during this period when we are on infested waters. And, by the way, like a gun, assume the lake you are on is always loaded (or infested). We cannot always detect newly infested waters as quickly as desirable.

So have a happy lake summer. Look for one or more of the 10 county AIS inspectors at the boat ramps soon. Hope to see you at our May 21st monthly meeting in Ottertail. Jeff Forester from Minnesota Lakes and Rivers will be giving us a report (from the last days of the Legislature) on legislation/happenings related to our lakes and rivers.

Dave Sethre



*Dave Sethre is President
of the OTC COLA
for 2014 & 2015*



Mr. Otter relaxes eating the fish caught on the Dead River outlet on Ottertail Lake.



Unfortunately the activity attracts the attention of a fish stealer.



An escape is made just in time with fish in mouth.

Photos by Dave Bope

There's an App for that!

By Joe Courneya and Spencer McGrew

In the early days of mobile smartphones it was common to hear the phrase “there's an App for that”. We have crossed a threshold where more than 85% of mobile phone users are using a mobile phone capable of accessing mobile applications. This will result in more than 100 billion apps being downloaded in 2015.

Otter Tail COLA is a leader in AIS efforts working with the Otter Tail AIS Task Force, local businesses and other partners like the Red River Basin Commission to actively provide education and activities to prevent the spread of invasive species in the lakes and rivers of the county. This summer lake users are invited to test out a new Aquatic Invasive Species App, AQUA.MN.

AQUA.MN uses the camera and GPS technology in your smartphone to geotag suspected AIS. Imagine the possibility of thousands of citizens in Otter Tail County using their smartphones to provide early detection of aquatic invasive species. The importance of early detection of AIS was proven when Christmas Lake was successfully treated for zebra mussels last winter. AQUA.MN makes early detection even easier.

The app can be accessed through the phones web browser by either scanning the associated bar code or entering the address: <http://aqua.mn>

Below is the promotional card for the app, “clip, copy and share” the more residents we can get using this tool, the greater the chances we will prevent the spread of AIS in the county.



Local Input Needed- Take the AIS Survey

Otter Tail County is taking a lead role in supporting the surveying local lake property owners and recreational lake users. Property owners from three area lakes Rose, Six and Seven are among the first group to be sent the Red River Basin Commissions AIS survey. The survey is also being administered electronically with Lakeland General Store in Dnvilla, volunteering to host a mobile tablet and promote to customers of their store, participating in the survey. Their leadership on this effort is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of the survey is to help determine the current level of attitude, knowledge and interest users of our area lakes have regarding aquatic invasive species. Information from the survey will be used to help Otter Tail County fight AIS and keep the lakes and rivers. The Red River Basin Commission is looking for additional partners to work with on the survey and is available to attend lake association meetings, work directly with local lake association boards and explore additional businesses where the mobile tablet survey effort can be set up. Information on taking the survey electronically on a smartphone, tablet or home computer is attached. For more information or contact Spencer McGrew, RRBC AIS Specialist (701) - 212- 0265

Water Quality: A Battle Lost?

By Dave Sethre

Our lakes and rivers are being attacked in so many ways, as articles in this edition of the COLA Newsletter note. For some of us, we are fighting a major battle to reclaim damaged shorelines after battles with ice push up. Hopefully, the property owners with damage will not push phosphorus laden disturbed topsoil into the water to create algae and general water quality degradation.

Yet, in the course of a couple weeks of dry weather, we see the potential undoing of millions of dollars of sewage treatment improvements. Even the removal of phosphorus from our fertilizers maybe for naught. In a series of events, the April winds did their best to dislodge dry and unprotected field soils and carry tons of it about.

One of the repositories of this topsoil included the center of Otter Tail Lake after the NW windstorm on April 12th. The source of the soil was a potato field within 1/8 mile of the lakeshore. Assuming losses of the topsoil amounted to 10 to 20 tons per acre per hour, any of this soil falling into the lake carried massive doses of phosphorus and nitrogen with it. It will be interesting to see the outcomes of water quality testing this summer on Otter Tail Lake and measure the impact of this event.



A large potato field is unprotected when 25 to 40 mile per hour winds blew on the afternoon of April 12th. Topsoil loss rates were estimated at 10 to 20 tons per acre per hour. Lakehome owners downwind reported significant soil covering decks, driveways and patios.



Blowing topsoil from a one half square mile of dry and unprotected potato field covers a significant portion of Otter Tail Lake. Fertilizers including phosphorus, a major contributor to water quality degradation, are routinely carried with the topsoil. Here, the wind-blown topsoil is so dense, the north point on Otter Tail Lake is barely visible.

GARDENING...

Time to plant your late spring garden? Check out the CoCoRaHS "Climate Resources Guide for Master Gardeners"! CoCoRaHS has an on-line guide for gardeners out there on our master gardeners: Climate Resources for Master Gardeners Page. The HTML version of this "Guide", introduces elements of large scale and local climate important to gardeners. An overview of climate patterns and differences are shown. Links to local climate information are provided. Topics include: Climate & Gardening, Sunshine, Temperature, Humidity and Dew Point, Precipitation, Wind, Evapo-transpiration, Climate Resources, Climate Change and CoCoRaHS.

We hope that you'll take a look at it, use it for your own gardening needs and pass along the URL link to other gardeners you know who may be interested in gaining a better understanding of climate and how climate might effect their local gardening efforts . . . it won't be long now before your seeds (here in Colorado we are just starting to plant) will start to yield those early summer vegetables.

Water Quality: Everyone needs to get on board.

Recently, Governor Mark Dayton and Pollution Control Commissioner John L. Stine released the results of a new study, analyzing the water quality of many of the state's watersheds. The report concluded that agricultural and urban runoff is contributing significantly to the impairment of Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams. This comes as Governor Dayton continues his push to enact new policies to prevent pollution from entering our waters, and to improve water quality for future generations of Minnesotans. But we all need to be part of the solution.

In Governor Dayton's words:

"This report underscores that water quality is a widespread problem. There are many different sources of the problem, and there are many different solutions, and they vary from one part of the state to another. But, everyone has to be part of the solution. The solution really has to be to engage Minnesotans in this undertaking and see this as part of our responsibility as citizens, and as stewards of our state. "

Here is what is apparent:.

- **Money Alone Won't Solve the Problem** – According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), it is unlikely that current or new clean water funding can significantly improve the deteriorating conditions of many of the state's waters – unless the state employs new strategies to prevent the pollution from happening in the first place.
- **Urban and Agricultural Impact** – Areas of Minnesota with larger human and livestock populations are struggling the most with water-quality. According to the MPCA study, runoff from land under intense urban or agricultural uses has left half or less of the lakes in those areas clean enough for healthy aquatic life and enjoyable swimming.
- **High Levels of Nitrogen and Phosphorus** – The MPCA study also found that watersheds that are heavily farmed or developed tend to have high levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and suspended solids in their waters. Nitrogen and phosphorus can cause algal blooms while suspended solids make the water murky. These pollutants hurt aquatic life and recreational opportunities.
- **Bacteria Levels** – Higher levels of bacteria were discovered in many Minnesota waters. Generally, higher levels of bacteria indicate feedlot runoff or human waste in a water body, indicating it may be unsafe for swimming and other recreation.

(Information was collected from a front page article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune)

COLA Awards Volunteer of the Year Award and Lake Association of the Year Award

Presented on August 20, 2015 at the COLA Meeting
Dear Otter Tail County COLA General Directors and Friends:

Please pass along this notice to the Officers of your Lake Association and others that may find it of interest. As we approach the August 1, 2015 deadline for acceptance of Nominations for Volunteer and Lake Association of the year, we ask that you honor your volunteers who tirelessly share their time and talent, either individually or as a group.

The OTC COLA's Volunteer of the Year and Lake Association of the Year is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging volunteers to assist in protecting and preserving the lakes they love. Self-nominations are accepted. Do not pass up this opportunity to inspire, recognize, encourage and engage your volunteers who have demonstrated that they have the fortitude to meet challenges and accomplish goals.

The Volunteer of the Year nominee criteria:

- Can be a past or present volunteer; and
- Has made a significant investment of their time and talent to protect and preserve their lake; or
- Has demonstrated an ability to bring people together and engage them in activities that protect and preserve the lake; or
- Has demonstrated an ability to bring about positive change.

The Lake Association of the Year nominee criteria:

- Must be a present member of the OTC COLA; and
- Successfully implemented a lake improvement project; or
- Successfully implemented an educational or outreach program; or
- Has substantially increased membership or participation of members; or
- Has successfully partnered with the local/county/state or federal government or agencies.

In no more than two (2) pages, describe the nominee's specific achievement (s). Please be sure to include the name and contact information for the person submitting the nomination, including e-mail address and phone number; the name of the Lake Association/Volunteer, their contact information, including e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

The letter of nomination should be emailed to: jhorgen@arivg.net and electronically dated by August 1, 2015. It may be mailed to: The COLA Selection Committee, C/O Jerry Horgen, 41708 Grace Etta Road, Henning, MN 56551 and postmarked by August 1, 2015. The awards presentations will be on August 20, 2015

Governor Dayton's Fishing Opener Press Release 2015



MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates



Protect Our Lake Legacy

www.mnlakesandrivers.org

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates' mission is protect Minnesota's lake and river heritage for current and future generations by forging powerful links between lakes, lake advocates, and policy makers.

Dear Dave,

Attached is a press release that you may use with your local papers, news outlets, or membership to promote Governor Dayton's CLEAN DRAIN DRY Proclamation:

[Click Here to Join or Renew Your Membership.](#)

Press Release

Minnesota Governor Proclaims: Clean Drain Dry Day

For Immediate Release

Launching the 2015 Fishing Opener, Governor Mark Dayton proclaimed Saturday, May 9th, as Clean Drain Dry Day in the great state of Minnesota. With over 1.6 million anglers, Saturday is the perfect opportunity to educate anglers and boaters across the state on the importance of stopping invasive species and to Clean, Drain, Dry all boats, trailers and equipment.

{Enter Your Name and Organization}

(NAME), (ORGANIZATION) recognizes that community engagement is critical in the fight against invasive species. Jeff Forester, Executive Director of Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates said: "By presenting the Proclamation at the 2015 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener boaters, anglers and all recreational users are reminded to take action and become responsible for protecting our lakes".

Offering help and materials to lake associations, counties, local citizens, community groups and partners, Wildlife Forever coordinates outreach and public education to promote stopping the spread of invasive species.

"We commend Governor Dayton for his leadership in bringing awareness of the threat of invasive species and the havoc they wreak on equipment, fisheries and the economy"; said Doug Grann, President & CEO of Wildlife Forever. "We are thankful for (ORGANIZATION) working to keep invasive species out of their lakes."

Minnesota is home to some of America's best fishing and boating waters. Clean Drain Dry is simple and easy to do, and as a national prevention message, visitors from other states are likely to have seen it and know how to help. Visual reminders are posted throughout the state on highway billboards, at gas stations, boat ramps and bait shops.

Do your part this fishing and boating season: Clean. Drain. Dry. all boats, trailers and gear.

And please stay in touch,

Jeff Forester



It is great that our lawmakers are aggressively looking for opportunities to protect our valuable water resources here in Minnesota. One of the latest efforts is to pass a 50 foot buffer zone where no cultivation can take place adjacent to lakes or streams. Our Otter Tail County Commissioners are leading the charge on buffers.

This is not wholly popular with those affected by the new rules, possibly for the right reasons of loss of control over their property. In any case, I wish to challenge our lake home renters and owners to do their part, also. We have opportunities to provide our own buffers at our lakeshores, preventing soil and fertilizer runoff. We can monitor and ensure our sewage systems are working properly and now allowing transient pollutants to enter our waters. And we can support the AIS and water quality advocates, agencies and monitors to assist in keeping our lakes clean and pristine. Let us be challenged to find new and effective ways to protect our quality lakes, along with mandated buffers, which we know can make an impact. We must stand together, or we will fail miserably. Join us for the Seminar on Saturday where buffer and planting options will be part of the discussion.

Beyond *the Bait Box*

AIS and Visitors to Otter Tail County

The Red River Basin Commission is partnering with the Otter Tail COLA to support efforts to slow the spread of AIS in our region, for those of us working to educate the users of Otter Tails lakes and river resources, effective branding of messages to a targeted or specific user is critical. Visitors to our region create more than 2000 jobs for local residents and more than 70 million in gross sales for in the region. The University of Minnesota Extension & Center for Small Towns completed a “customer brand equity” study the results present a some interesting discussion items that our local lake associations and small town leadership should consider as we greet seasonal visitors and spread the message about Aquatic Invasives Species prevention education:

- * Median age of study respondents was 47
- * 63% of Otter Tail County visitors stay at resort or hotel
- * Statements relating to small town atmosphere, recreation and lakes were most noted as visitor image of Otter Tail County
- * Unpolluted environment was the highest positive attribute of the area
- * Friends and the Internet were highest source of information relating to building their opinion of Otter Tail County

Source: Customer Based Brand Equity for Otter Tail County, University of Minnesota, Morris 2013

<http://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/cst/65/>

A take away message I glean as a volunteer lake association board member and lake cabin owner in Otter Tail County is that we need to think more outside the box with outreach strategies as we distribute the “Stop AIS spread” message, educate about our lakes nesting loons and help lake users enjoy and appreciate Otter Tail Counties quality water resources. The efforts of volunteers leading the Otter Tail COLA, along with the Ottertail AIS Task Force and other partners are exploring how we more effectively work with local lake associations to educate all users of our public waters. Let’s challenge ourselves in 2015 to reach out and make extra efforts to spread the word to visitors as well as our active association members and share success stories through the COLA newsletter.

By Joe Courneya, Red River Basin Commission

Train the Teachers to Train the Kids

by Jerry Horgen

“Train the Teachers to Train the Kids” is a program funded by the Otter Tail County Commissioners and approved by the Otter Tail County Aquatic Invasive Task Force. The purpose of this program is to give accurate data on aquatic invasive species (AIS) to science teachers (in eleven school districts) in order that science teachers inform their kids and in turn “kids train other kids” on the prevention of aquatic invasive species-in a format that is unique to kids. A unique format, if you will, using perhaps some form of technology, then broadcasting the information to other students, in each school district, again, in a format that other kids will respond to-“kids training other kids.”

Moriya Rufer, a biologist from RMB Labs in Detroit Lakes is the content expert in this program and Jerry Horgen is the program developer. Thus far, three workshops have been provided for science teachers whereby school districts have been given aquatic invasive species curriculum materials that meet Minnesota Curriculum Standards; provided aquatic invasive species kits to each school district and last fall provided two Aquatic Invasive Species Workshops on an infested lake to students from Underwood, Fergus Falls and Perham.

Beginning in January of this year, Moriya and I have given presentations to seven school districts-Battle Lake, Parkers Prairie, Ashby, Henning, Rothsay, Perham and New York Mills. Underwood, Fergus Falls and the Alternative School of Perham have participated in Outdoor Workshop on an infested lake in Otter Tail County last fall. This May 25-28th, we will be providing three Outdoor Workshops on an infested lake to school districts based upon the school's availability. We have a four hour cruise on a lake with 45 students per workshop and each student is tested on their knowledge of aquatic invasive species upon their completion of the Outdoor Workshop.

The key to this program is an aquatic invasive species contest whereby “kids train other kids” on aquatic species invasive issues. In this contest, which ends May 22, 2015, students in the eleven school districts may submit a three minute video (You Tube/Vimeo) or another student friendly format that other kids will listen to and which spreads accurate information on aquatic invasive species from-“kids training other kids.” Moriya Rufer and I will announce the winners May 29, 2015. The first prize winner will receive \$100 in cash and the science teacher will receive \$900 for classroom use on aquatic invasive species. The second prize winner will receive an AIS Fighter T-Shirt and \$200 to the school district for science materials. The winning video/unique idea will then be disseminated to other school districts and highlighted at an Otter Tail County Commissioners Meeting.

One final component of the program is to “hook up” lake associations with the science teachers to give science kids/students “real world projects” to do as extra credit and to bring in speakers into the classrooms, from the lake associations, to make “real” what is being taught...applies to their lake locally.

jhorgen@arivg.net

Executive Committee

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Otter Tail County



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***Interested in joining COLA or
forming a Lake Association?
Contact the Membership Committee!***

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