



President's Message



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

We want to invite you to our Annual Meeting this Thursday. Of most importance, we will be asking the members to vote to provide changes to our Bylaws. But also, we will announce our Awardees. The awards for Volunteer of the Year and the Lake Association of the Year reflect our commitment to our members and the people who take on the task of preserving our lakes and environment. This being the end of our two year leadership cycle, we also will be asking you to approve the move of Dave Majkrzak from Vice President to President. Plus, the whole Executive Committee will be reappointed.

This is the most important meeting of the year, so please send your designated COLA representatives. We are looking for your input to make COLA more effective in our fight against AIS and preservation of our lakes for the future.

I want to thank all who made our mission to make COLA effective - these last two years in particular. We are only starting to get our legs on the great mission to fully develop the power of our group. We have our start with the important job of water testing. But through new effort, we will ensure that our lakes country has representation, whether political or through local action. So, we invite all lakes and their associations to join the 40 who already are members in our mission. Together we will carry our combined effort for good - for citizen awareness and education - especially here in Otter Tail lakes country.

**REMINDER: 2015 COLA ANNUAL MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 27TH
OTTERTAIL COMMUNITY CENTER – 7:00 P.M.**

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING THIS COMING THURSDAY.
THE AGENDA WILL INCLUDE ANNOUNCING OUR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AND
LAKE ASSOCIATION OF THE YEAR AWARDS RECIPIENTS, AND OUR BUSINESS MEETING
WHERE BYLAW CHANGES WILL BE
CONSIDERED. LOOK FOR REPORTS FROM OUR LEGISLATORS AND CONGRESSMEN INCLUDING
COLLIN PETERSON AND BUD NORNES.
OUR FEATURED PRESENTATION IS BY DAVE MAJKZCEK ENTITLED,
“NEW FINDINGS FROM PELICAN LAKE – ZEBRA MUSSEL UPDATE”.**

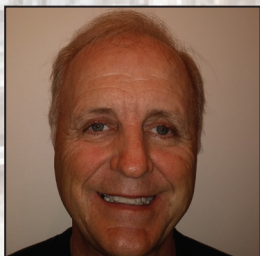
Leadership

COLA Welcomes Executive Leadership

We wish everyone the opportunity to meet our new Executive Leadership team. Jon Anderson and Leigh Shebeck have taken on the task to bring COLA to the level of performance that all expect. Some of the priorities we have established include the task to expand the contact list for all lakes associations in the county, especially non-member groups. As a follow-up, we hope they will join COLA. We are also prepared to extend assistance to any lake who would like to establish a lake association, if they have none now. We will develop information sheets to document why a group should be a part of COLA, and generate contacts and meetings with interested parties. Other tasks will include membership directories, website improvements and general extension of the capabilities of the core Executive Group of COLA. Please welcome Jon and Leigh, who are also lake home owners in our county.



Leigh Shebeck and Jon Anderson are providing Executive Leadership duties for the COLA



Meet Dave Majkrzak.

Dave is currently Vice President of COLA and will assume the President's position of COLA this Thursday. Dave has been very active in the Pelican Lake Association and LID over the years, and comes with a broad knowledge of issues including AIS, muskie stocking and water quality. He is an engineer by training and employment and the holder of numerous patents of various mechanical devices. Dave is now retired, and hopes to carry the momentum of COLA into the future. Please welcome Dave at the upcoming Annual Meeting on Thursday.

More Minnesota Lakes

In July alone, zebra mussels were confirmed in six lakes – Clearwater, Ruth, Big Cormorant, Forest, Fish Trap, and Eunice – along with the Red River. Just last week, they were also confirmed in Lake Stella.

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Many of these new infestations are undoubtedly human-caused and should serve as a reminder that it's as important as ever to be extremely diligent when recreating on our Minnesota waters. One aquatic invasive species violation is still too many – and is still enough to infest a new body of water.

Researchers at MAISRC are working across several fronts to address aquatic invasive species prevention and control, but research is just one piece of the puzzle. The human element will always be a crucial factor.

And just as these newly infested water bodies highlight what we are up against, what's happening in Lake Mille Lacs underscores why it matters. There are many factors at play in the case of Mille Lacs, including aquatic invasive species such as zebra mussels, spiny

waterflea, and Eurasian watermilfoil. Lake Mille Lacs is one of the only lakes in the state where all three of these destructive species are present.

Although there is much yet to learn about the specific effects of these AIS, it's likely they have dramatically altered the base of the lake's food web – the foundation upon which walleye and other top predators depend. We know that the amount of "energy" now stored in zebra mussels and spiny waterfleas can't be ignored when trying to understand the ecology of Mille Lacs. Ultimately, one has to wonder about the cumulative effect of these invasions – especially when coupled with warming waters.

It's important now that we view the Mille Lacs experience as a reality check: an example of what is at stake for our natural resources and for our economy. Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and streams must be protected, and it's up to all of us to do our part.

Dr. Susan Galatowitsch
Director, Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center

Minnesota Lakes & Rivers “Voice”

On Monday August 4th at 10:00 P.M. the MN DNR closed walleye fishing on Lake Mille Lacs in an effort to protect the resource.

The impact of the walleye fishery collapse on the resorts and related businesses from restaurants, gas stations, bait shops, and the impact on property values surrounding the lake are devastating. Gov. Mark Dayton is considering holding a special session during which he will ask the Minnesota Legislature to make \$20 million in low or no interest loans to help carry the businesses through the year.

Public discussion has focused on MN DNR management through slot limits, predation of zero to two year old walleye by muskies, northern, bass and cormorants; and tribal harvest (in a surprise move the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe will forego the remainder of their harvest this year and next in an effort to protect the resource).

What is missing from the discussion is the impacts of zebra mussels, introduced into the lake in 2005, and spiny waterflea in 2009. Both species remove different parts of the base of the food chain, food that young walleye need. The current biomass of walleye is estimated at 2 million pounds, the zebra mussel biomass is estimated at 2 BILLION pounds. The zebra mussels are filtering all of the water in Mille Lacs more than once a day.



The current discussion of \$20 million in aid to the area underscores the reality that preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species is far cheaper than coping with the impacts of these invaders after the fact. Spiny waterflea, which arrived in 2009, are predators removing another portion of the food chain, zooplankton, creating cascading effects in the aquatic food web (i.e., less food for perch, small walleyes, and other species and species life

stages). If the population and impacts are great enough, research suggests that young walleyes could grow more slowly, which could result in poorer overwinter survival in the first winter of life.

Jones said that he is seeing dramatic declines in zooplankton in Mille Lacs. “It is changing faster than we can detect changes.” There has been a rapid decline in walleye numbers from 2010, following spiny waterflea introduction to Mille Lacs. Said Jones, “It makes sense that zebra mussels and spiny waterflea are having an impact - they dynamically alter the food web.”

MN Senator Carrie Rudd, whose district includes the northern end of Mille Lacs, was recently quoted in an August 4th MPR story, “... you have to address the zebra mussels.”

Mille Lacs was one of the first inland lakes infested with zebra mussels. It was an early victim of spiny waterflea in 2009. It is the

only inland lake in Minnesota infested with both. While it is difficult to document a direct cause and effect in a dynamic and complex lake system, there is no doubt that the combination of these two aquatic invasive species are having a significant impact on the current collapse, and that these two species will make any recovery more difficult and less robust.

Dave Orrick, Pioneer Press, details the compound impacts Mille Lacs AIS are having on the walleye population. As this Star Tribune article points out, other walleye lakes like Vermilion are teetering. Walleye fishing on the west end of the lake is far below historic levels, Vermilion was also designated as infested with spiny waterflea this summer.

This raises the question, is Minnesota ready to bail out each lake that collapses due to the combined and interacting pressures, including aquatic invasive species? Are we willing to adjust our expectations and live with the negative impacts of zebra mussels, spiny waterflea and other aquatic invasive species, to switch from walleye fishing to bass fishing, muskie fishing or even cat fishing? Are we willing to watch out of state anglers tow boats (and recreation dollars) through the state, bound for areas that took the threat of AIS more seriously than Minnesota has, areas that chose to protect their resource and are able to enjoy the return on those investments. I think Minnesota is better than that.

MLR members are working across the State to stop the spread of AIS. We were the lead organization supporting the creation of Minnesota’s local, annual \$10 million County AIS Prevention Aid program, and one of the organizers and sponsors of last year’s Aquatic Invaders Summit that brought together over 400 stakeholders from 56 counties to develop a Local AIS Action Framework. MLR and partner MN COLA advocated and pushed for the creation of \$4.5 million to fund pilot projects for innovation in stopping the introduction and spread of AIS. Requests for Proposals for that grant program are now open with letters of initial inquiry due September 15th.

We will continue to advocate for stronger AIS laws at the State Legislature, and stronger and more urgent action from the MN DNR on the AIS issue. Thanks for all the work you do on behalf of our lakes, and please stay in touch,

Jeff Forester
Executive Director
Minnesota Lakes & Rivers Advocates (MLR)

Serving You

Executive Committee

President	David Sethre <i>dsethre@arvig.net</i>
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New OTC COLA Website Link!

Please note that we are implementing a new website.
Please access the website at <http://ottertailcountycola.org>.

Mission: COLA's mission is to protect and enhance the quality of our lakes and rivers, preserve the economic, recreational and natural environment values of our shorelands and promote the responsible use of our waters and related habitats. COLA's mission enhances, promotes, and protects the interests of lakeshore property owners, lake associations, the general public and future generations.

Otter Tail County



Contact Info for OTC COLA:

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

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