
IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter September 2016



[OTC COLA WEBSITE](#)

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2016 CALENDAR of OTC COLA Member Meeting
September 15 Pelican Lake AIS Education Boat Cruise
(Special Location: Fair Hills, Pelican Lake)

From the OTC COLA President- David Majkrzak

I hope you all had a good Labor Day, with school back on, and the shorter cooler days, there is no denying the end of summer. And unfortunately an increase in AIS reports are coming in from across the state. Locally we have 2 more lakes (West Battle and Ottertail) reporting zebra mussels, and statewide additional starry stonewort findings are being reported. If you are interested in learning more about statewide efforts against the spread of AIS the University of Minnesota is holding an open house next week, and Minnesota Lakes and Rivers (MLR) is hosting an AIS conference in October, details below.

Locally our OTC AIS Task force continues to work hard on inspections, education and plans to stop the spread of all AIS. While reports of new AIS being found in any lake is a disappointment, reducing the rate of spread is critical for existing and new AIS species. Gaining time also allows research into better methods of control, and the effects on an ecosystem of any AIS.

I also participated in a bus tour of OTC Soil and Water projects this past week. This interesting and informative tour was sponsored by the East and West OTC Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and pointed out the many effective and important steps they are taking to preserve and promote clean water in Otter Tail County. Otter Tail County continues to be a leader in water quality issues from buffer strips to AIS issues, let's all help do our part to pass on the very best natural resources to future generations.

David Majkrzak

OTC COLA Member Awards Meeting August 18, 2016

COLA Awards Program

August 18, 2016 @ 7 p.m.

Ottertail Community Room, City of Ottertail

By

Jerry Horgen, Education Person, COLA

Guests present:

Darren Newville, District Manager of East Otter Tail County, Soil and Water Conservation District

Bud Nornes, State Representative District 8

OTC COLA Awards

The COLA awards program has been created to recognize good stewards of our lakes. Good stewards are volunteers who give back by their service to keep our lakes healthy and clean. Someone once said, "Service to others is the rent we pay for living." The people COLA has recognized pay a great deal of rent! However, we need to recognize those special people who have done exceptional volunteering. "You Know You're a Volunteer" when:

- You don't get paid!
- On a regular basis, your significant other looks at you and says, "Another meeting tonight?" And rolls her/his eyes?
- Your significant other says, "Why don't you go to your meetings and live there...you're never home anymore? I'm going to sell this place by the time you get back home!"
- Friends call you and say things like, "We know you'll say yes to anything, so we thought we'd exploit your time and energy just one more time to serve on the "Friends of Endangered Carp Committee?"

- Finally, (to each of you) at night when you go to sleep, and in the morning when you wake up, you know in your heart that-whatever evils and problems afflict our lakes-you're doing all you can to try and makes our lakes better for now and future generations. You are the reason we can all have faith in the human spirit.

In attendance at the Awards event was, Darren Newville, District Manager of East Otter Tail County, Soil and Water Conservation District, who assisted Jerry Horgen with the selection of the "Volunteer of the Year" and "Lake Association of the Year."

Also attending was State Representative Bud Nornes. MN Representative Norness was recognized for his continued support of our concerns on lakeshore issues and his attendance at meetings in winter or summer. We wish to thank MN Representative Nornes and State Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen for their support at the October 29, 2015 at the Community Rooms in Fergus Falls with the DNR-I'll bet he would have liked to hand out some tickets for behavior? Also recognized were our County Commissioners (Doug Huebsch & Wayne Johnson) for their financial support, but more important for being good listeners to our concerns.

The executive board of COLA sets the direction of the group and then the president leads. Our President, Dave Marjczak (the engineer from Pelican Lake that can leap tall buildings with a single bound and make things happen at the legislature) deserves thanks for all the hard work he has put into COLA and for moving the organization forward to better serve/help the lake organizations in Otter Tail County. The executive board members, Jeff Stabnow, past president (Volunteer of the Year 2015) who is an engineer by trade that "when he talks, we listen," Bernie Steeves, provides leadership as the AIS Chair of Otter Tail County and was "Volunteer of the Year in 2013 and Roger Neitzke, (Mr. Hockey from Winona) and Volunteer of the Year in 2014, Pat Prunty who provides the executive board with quality input through dissecting proposed ordinances for us to evaluate. Chuck Olson our assistant treasurer who always stops us in our tracks when it comes to where our monies are spent, Fred Manual, treasurer who gives exceptional guidance on all finance matters...even when he's on a beach in Bonaire. Carolyn Herron our environmental chair with great knowledge that we will certainly miss and Dave Sethre our past president who has done a great job of marketing COLA through his newsletters and Jerry Horgen, the young kid of the group?

Volunteer Awards

Secchi Disc Achievement Award: Duane Lysne



Duane Lysne, Darren Newville, Jerry Horgen

The Citizen Lake Monitoring Program (CLMP) is run by the Minnesota Pollution Control Association (MPCA). The procedure includes the volunteer going to designated locations on a lake and measuring the water clarity. A disk is lowered into the water until it is no longer visible. The depth is noted from the markings on the rope. The disc is then lowered a little further and then raised back up until it is just visible. The second depth reading is averaged with the first, and the final number is recorded on a data sheet. At the end of the summer, volunteers send their data to MPCA CLMP Program and the lake receives a report the following year. The reading indicates the amount of light penetration into a lake. Secchi transparency provides an indirect measure of the amount of suspended material in the water, which in many cases is an indication of the amount of algae in the water. Long term monitoring by CLMP volunteers helps scientists detect signs of degradation to a lake.

Duane Lysne of Marion Lake received the Secchi Disc Achievement Award. Laurie Sovell of MPCA reports that Duane has done the secchi disc readings for 27 years on Marion Lake.

The Water Sampling Achievement Award is recorded by RMB Labs in Detroit Lakes and run by Moriya Rufer. COLA supports lake monitoring as an excellent strategy for understanding your lake and protecting it from decline. It is also helpful for getting association members involved, and caring about their lake. Many COLA lakes have been monitored for almost 20 years, and that is an excellent data set for determining the state of the lakes in the county. This data is included in the county's water plan, administered by Otter Tail Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD). This data is also used by the MPCA and DNR in statewide reports. Committing the time and money to yearly monitoring will mean that you can catch and document any water quality problems before they get too big and expensive to fix. If abrupt changes in water quality occur, you're able to investigate potential causes and respond accordingly. After 8-10 years of consecutive data you can statistically determine through the use of trend analysis if the water quality is improving or declining. The volunteers committed to this monitoring are helping their lake associations, county and state keep an eye on the lake so it can be enjoyed by future generations (Moriya Rufer, RMB Labs). COLA is proud to recognize Bryan Zepper for this achievement award for water sampling for 19 years on Big Pine Lake.

Volunteer of the Year: John McMillen



Darren Newville, Peggy Peterson, John McMillen, Jerry Horgen

The criteria for Volunteer of the Year are as follows:

- 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 recipient of the OTC COLA Volunteer of the Year Award is John McMillen. John was recommended for the award by Peggy Peterson of Lake Lida.

John is a past president of the Lake Lida Property Owners Association (LLPOA). As a retired educator he has dedicated a significant amount of time and energy in educating the LLPOA, and the general public, about the many ways we can protect and preserve our Lake Lida. He has shown the fortitude it takes to meet and accomplish goals.

John has spent over 200 hours at the public boat access distributing AIS information. He also spearheaded an effort that resulted in the training of six volunteer boat inspectors. These volunteers in turn helped to educate the public about cleaning, draining, and drying their boats or other watercraft to prevent the transfer of AIS.

John was also instrumental in seeing that the 5 year water quality plan was updated. Lake Lida has now achieved Star Lake status with the completion of this plan. In connection with the Healthy Lakes Initiative, specific priorities for Lake Lida have been identified. These focus areas will be woven into this existing plan to further protect and preserve the lake.

John has given presentations on how members can create buffers along their shoreline, and also how rainwater can be collected to prevent runoff. He has a passion for protecting the lake, and wants to educate others to see the benefits of native plantings as lakeshore buffers. John was instrumental in making available, to LLPOA members, lakescaping grants at \$500 each. He also partnered with the East Otter Tail Soil Water Conservation District (EOTSWCD) and had native plantings installed on his lakeshore property as an example and encouragement to others to do the same.

John has personally walked the beaches around Lake Lida that do not have Beach Captains, passing out letters of introduction and listening to property owner concerns. These letters not only invited Lake Lida property owners to join the LLPOA, they also listed the benefits of membership and our stewardship goals. Because of John's efforts the LLPOA grew significantly.

John has demonstrated time and again an ability to bring people together and to engage them in activities that are protecting and preserving Lake Lida. The excellent water quality that Lake Lida property owners are now enjoying is due in part to John McMillen. He has certainly demonstrated an ability to bring about positive change and to inspire others to do the same.

Lake Association of the Year: Otter Tail County Pine Lakes Improvement District



Darren Newville, Bryan Zepper, Sylvia Soeth, Jerry Horgen

The criteria for Lake Association of the Year is as follows:

- Must be a present member of OTC COLA
- Has successfully implemented a lake improvement project; or
- Has 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:

The recipient of the Lake Association of the Year Award is the Otter Tail County Pine Lakes Improvement District, Sylvia Soeth, Chairperson. Also pictured above is Bryan Zepper who has been secchi disc testing on Big Pine Lake for 19 years.

The "Otter Tail County Pine Lakes Improvement District was approved by County Commissioners in 1999. The original boundaries include property owners on the Otter Tail and Toad Rivers, but was modified to cover only the properties on Big Pine and Little Pine Lakes in 2002. The original Pine and Little Pine Lake associations were formed in 1979 and began addressing water issues with a 1982 septic system survey by OTC. In 1991 a Lake Assessment Plan for Big Pine Lake Association (BPLA) was completed under the guidance of concerned BPLA members. As a result a water quality committee was formed that worked with many agencies, obtained funding through grants and addressed several issues including runoff into the lakes.

"As a result of the many volunteer hours by dedicated lake property owners, Big and Little Pine Lake have obtained grant funds, studied water quality issues, corrected problems, and educated the Lake Improvement District (LID) owners on best management practices. The legacy from those dedicated lake owners continues today with continuous water quality monitoring and testing..." as stated in the Sustainable Lake Management Plan adopted in 2004 and still a tool used in managing the LID.

"The Otter Tail county Pine Lakes Improvement District (LID) is committed to the protection and enhancement of the quality of our water, its surroundings, and its fisheries for now and future generations."

Grants from various agencies, including a Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) grant and in-kind hours from volunteers, United States Geological Survey (USGS), Land and Resources Management, Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Perham High School made it possible to hire a consultant to develop the Plan and purchase water testing

equipment and moved the LID along. As part of the data collection and Aerial Flyover analysis for Septic Compliance was shared with property owners and the County. A citizen survey showed the concern and support of residents. From this beginning the LID has continued.

Cooperation with various agencies remains vital. Shoreland restorations are possible through grants obtained with East Otter Tail Soil Water Conservation District (EOTSWCD) and an additional \$1000 offered by the LID. Members on both lakes have taken on the responsibility of maintain projects.

Fisheries are important to our residents and visitors. With MN DNR, a slot limit was tested for 10 years and became permanent to enhance walleye fishing. In addition to DNR signage the LID provided signs to 10 additional accesses on the lakes to remind visitors of the limit.

Water samples are regularly taken at Toad River into Big Pine and at Zorbas Bridge on Little Pine and delivered to RMB Labs to monitor phosphorus levels entering the lakes. It was determined early on that phosphorus was the major problem affecting aquatic vegetation growth, and ultimately, water quality and fisheries. As requested by concerned members an initial study showed no difference in water flowing from the Otter Tail River into Little Pine through the culvert or the original inlet. Diligence by LID founders found and ended severe pollution from Toad Lake through Toad River. Samples have identified E.coli and fecal coliform from streams and that needed action. With the Lake Associations and, consequently the LID itself, water testing is done by volunteers through the COLA and RMB Labs program. There is a long history of the lakes' water quality on record. It is the practice of the LID to pay fees for the two lakes to be members of COLA and state associations.

It was promised by the original LID Board that costs for the property owners would be kept at a minimum by use of grants and cooperation. Current Board of Directors are conscious of costs and keep ad valorem taxes in control. Members of the Annual Meeting have proposed and approved budget increases to continue the progress in water quality seen over the years. Board members continue to fulfill duties as chair of the standing committees established in the Plan: Land and Resources, Projects, Water Quality, Legislative, Communication & Education, Fisheries and Volunteers.

Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP), an invasive species appeared in Big Pine Lake in 2004, and after attending information sessions it was treated by the Big Pine Lake Association with a donation from Little Pine Lake Association the first year. The cost of the treatment then became part of the LID budget and continues to this day. An aquatic vegetation survey was completed on both lakes in the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016, showing no spread of CLP to Little Pine, but 20 species of aquatic vegetation appear in both lakes. In July, LID partnered with the AIS Task Force and Otter Tail County to place Internet Landing Installed Device Sensors (ILIDS) on the two lakes to monitor and educate on invasive species at public accesses.

"Education, education, education" has been a mantra of the LID since formation. The newsletter is published with that in mind. The Chair, Board members and the editor contribute with informative articles and reminders to property owners. It is also on the website, pinelakeslid.com, following printed copies mailed to all members and associates. Current property owners are verified with Otter Tail County.

Big Pine Lake Association and Little Pine Lake Association remain active in addition to the OTC Lake Improvement District. Each has its own agenda, whether it will be dealing with beavers in the river or boat parades and an Annual Meeting. LID Board members are active in the Lake Associations for communication and cooperation.

The Sustainable Lake Management Plan was created to be a living document that serves as a

guide to the Lake Management District to this day.

Our Motto: **"Before we can care, first we have to know"**

President's Award: Jerry Horgen



Bernie Steeves, Jerry Horgen, Dave Majkrzak

The OTC COLA Awards event included a new President's Award. The recipient is selected by the current President and given to a qualified candidate for exemplified contribution to OTC lake quality. This year's President's Award was presented to Jerry Horgen.

Jerry retired in 2003 and started volunteering with the West Battle Lakeshore Association in 2004 on the executive board addressing issues on West Battle Lake. He started doing the secchi disc readings from 2004 to 2014. During that time he served on the "Shoreline Rules and Management Committee" for the county. He later joined the AIS Task Force for the county and developed the "Train the Teachers to Train the Kids" program that offers an AIS program for eleven school districts in Otter Tail County along with a biologist from RMB Labs. During this same time he served as the education person for COLA.



Pelican Lake AIS Education Boat Cruise

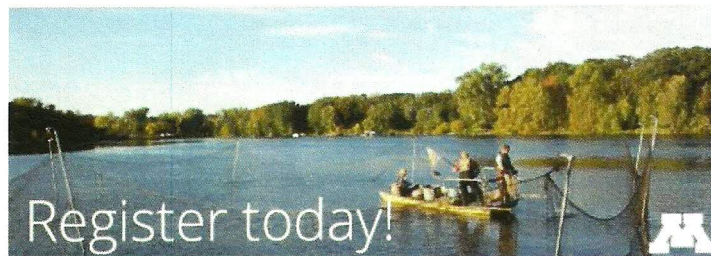
The September OTC COLA Member Meeting will be held on the Fair Hills boat on Pelican Lake, September 15, 2016. The boat will depart at 5:00 p.m. During the tour Jerry Horgen and Moriya Rufer will conduct the AIS training currently being presented at schools and for organizations in Otter Tail County. Snacks will be served and a cash bar will be available during the ride. In case of inclement weather the event will be moved indoors at Fair Hills.

Come and see the actual impact of Zebra Mussels after 7 years, and learn about other new AIS concerns. For more details on the education session contact **Jerry Horgen** or **Moriya Rufer**. Space is limited to 40 persons. For reservations contact **John Kruse**

New Zebra Mussel Infestations Reported

Two OTC lakes have been listed as zebra mussel infested in the last month. They are Otter Tail and West Battle. Also reported were Detroit Lakes in Becker County, Signalness Lake in Pope County and Round Lake in Aitkin and Crow Wing Counties.

2016 Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research and Management Showcase



Last chance to register

Registration for the 2016 Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research and Management Showcase ends tomorrow

The University of Minnesota is home to the only cross-disciplinary Center in the country dedicated to researching aquatic invasive species, and now is your chance to get an inside-look at our cutting-edge research.

Featuring fifteen breakout sessions, this is an unparalleled opportunity to learn more from the state's top AIS researchers about the pressing AIS issues Minnesota is facing, including zebra mussels, starry stonewort, spiny waterflea, Eurasian watermilfoil, Asian carp, and more.

Attendees will also have the rare chance to interact directly with researchers over lunch as they share the latest about their work. Plus, hear opening remarks from DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr, and all are invited to enjoy beer, wine, and appetizers at a post-event reception with Dean Brian Buhr.

Click here to register. Ticket cost includes on-campus talks, lunch with researchers, and a post-conference reception. Space is limited and pre-registration for the Showcase is required!

Details:

Monday, September 12

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., with a reception to follow (included with registration)

University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Conference Center
1890 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108

Hosted by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center

Lake Association Newsletter Exchange

One of the primary goals of the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations (OTC COLA) is to assist lake associations to educate and inform their members, their elected officials, and the general public regarding the necessity of environmental concerns and policies that protect our lakes, rivers and streams. Communication is the key to accomplishing this goal.

A Newsletter Exchange database of lake association editors is being constructed so editors will be included on distribution lists for other lake association newsletters. The exchange will be very useful for editors to take appropriate copy from other lake association newsletters to use in their own newsletters. This process will provide the opportunity to disseminate valuable information like new regulations, AIS threats, etc. quickly and effectively throughout the County.

OTC COLA Newsletter editors desiring to be included in the exchange should contact **John Kruse**, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant,

Aquatic Invaders Summit II



The Aquatic Invaders Summit II will be October 5-6 at the River's Edge Convention Center, St Cloud, MN.

Click [HERE](#) for Information.

Click [HERE](#) for Minnesota Lakes and Rivers

Lake Association Issue Updates

Star Lake- Casino- After completion of the EAW and receipt of a conditional use permit, the County has an opportunity to require an EIS. The Star Lake Property Owners Assoc. and Star Lake Concerned Citizens Group are lobbying VERY strongly for this EIS.

STAR LAKE

Lake Six- Grant application

The effort is progressing along nicely. We have received our first \$1000 toward the \$5000 grant. Our action plan written by Sharyl Ogard, a member of the grant writing committee, created an action plan that was so well constructed that Jen Kader from Freshwater Society wants to use it as a template. We would be more than happy to share the template with anyone who wants to write a Lake Management Plan.

Also we sent out a list of 29 different volunteer opportunities to our lakeshore members and we have gotten some responses, all from younger people who we were trying to reach out

to, but weren't getting much response the traditional ways. How nice, that they want to give back! **LAKE SIX**

Pelican Lake Property Owners Association (PLPOA)-Golfcourse Conversion to RV Park- PLPOA is pursuing action to prevent the sale of a golf course to a new 150 unit RV Park, which would adjoin a 185 unit existing RV Park. Neither of the RV Parks own any lake frontage and use the public DNR access as the only access to the lake. **PLPOA**

Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District (PGOLID)- DNR dam on Pelican River- The Pelican River dam controlling water flow out of Pelican Lake is deteriorating and is becoming unsafe. PGOLID is encouraging the DNR to repair the dam. **PGOLID**

John Kruse OTC COLA Administrative Assistant

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