

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter October 2019



[OTC COLA WEBSITE](#)

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From The President - Sylvia Soeth

I don't know much about farming. I have learned quite a bit about water. I do know that both agriculture and water are so important in Otter Tail County. We talk about that at COLA meetings, Commission meetings, Soil And Water Conservation District events; it's so obvious.

My daughter forwarded an article from the September 27 NPR News that again made me think of this connection and cooperation. As many decades as I've been involved in water quality issues, Toad River Farms has been growing kidney beans a mile away from my lake home. I just learned a year ago that those fields were edible beans. Now I know Northwest MN is the international leader in growing kidney beans and 800 acres are right there! I wondered why they were putting them in "windrows" last month as I drove by. Learn about

beans in the [NPR News article](#).

Sandhill Dairy and Toad River Farms were named MN State Conservationist for 2017 and are certified through the MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program. The story was featured in the [February 2018 issue](#) of the OTC COLA E-Newsletter. The Dombeck family's farm is north of Big Pine and east of Little Pine Lake with the Toad River flowing through it. The Lake Associations and OTC Pine Lakes LID know them to be concerned and use best management practices that affect our mutual waters, even helping to control beavers that plague us in the river.

Just as farms receive technical assistance and program support from the East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District (EOT SWCD) we continue to benefit from cooperation with EOT SWCD. It's been 25 years since Big Pine Lake received a \$50,000 Board of Water And Soil Resources (BOWSR) grant for water quality solutions that would not have been likely without such cooperation.

We learned about cooperation on "Sesame Street" but we couldn't know then how useful it is to sustain the Lakes We Love!

[Sylvia Soeth, President](#)



OTC COLA Hosts MN COLA Meeting

The regular meeting of the Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations (MN COLA) was hosted by OTC COLA at Thumper Pond, Ottertail, MN on September 17, 2019. Over 30 were in attendance from Lake Associations across the State. The seven hour event included presentations and discussions on matters important to Minnesota lake property owners. Included was a presentation by Rita Champlin on Enbridge's proposed replacement Line 3 pipeline. Also discussed were various methods being implemented to encourage compliance with practices to prevent Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) cross-contamination between lakes. Patrick Prunty, OTC COLA Director, also gave a presentation spotlighting the activities and projects of OTC COLA.

Rita Champlin presented on the history and current status of the proposed Line 3 project. Enbridge proposes to build a new Line 3 to carry tar sands from Canada to Superior, WI for export. Rita brought us current on the outstanding legal and regulatory issues on this project. She talked about tar sands and the risk to our water, recreation and economies. She also highlighted how our voices

can be heard, individually and collectively, by writing to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and engaging in public hearings and comment periods as they are available.

Go to the [MN COLA website](#) to learn more about MN COLA



50 Years Of Shoreland Protection And Land Management

DNR commissioner celebrates benefits of three key measures from 1969 legislation

Fifty years ago, the Minnesota Legislature ensured better land management and conservation through three key conservation measures. The Shoreland Protection Act, Floodplain Management Act, and legislation authorizing scientific and natural areas were all signed into law in 1969 by Gov. Harold LeVander.

[50 Years Shoreland Protection](#)

DNR Wrapping Up Lake Surveys

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologists will be wrapping up the lake survey season in early September. Since June, DNR

biologists have completed 17 lake surveys. Lake surveys (fish population assessments) are the foundation of the DNR's lake management program. They are needed to collect biological information concerning habitat, water quality, and fish population characteristics. Data collected from lake surveys allow fisheries biologists to develop lake-specific management plans, evaluate management techniques, such as stocking and harvest regulations, and help monitor long term changes or trends in aquatic environments.

[DNR Wrapping Up Surveys](#)

Zebra Mussels Confirmed In Eagle Lake

A lake property owner removing equipment from the lake for the season contacted the DNR after finding what were confirmed to be adult zebra mussels on a dock and related equipment being removed for the season.

DNR staff conducted equipment searches and found seven juvenile zebra mussels in a second area of the lake, about three-quarters of a mile from the location of the original report.

Lake property owners should carefully check boats and trailers, docks and lifts, and all other water-related equipment for invasive species when removing equipment for seasonal storage.

People should [contact an area DNR aquatic invasive species specialist](#) if they think they have found zebra mussels or any other invasive species.

Minnesota law requires boaters and anglers to:

- Clean watercraft and trailers of aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species
- Drain all water by removing drain plugs and keeping them out during transport
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.
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More information is available on the [aquatic invasive species](#) page.



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News from the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center

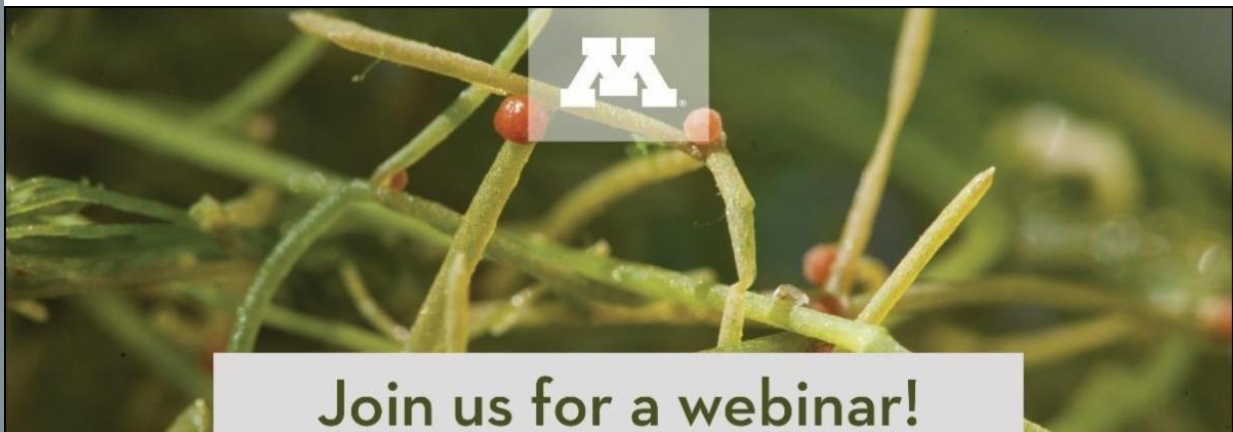
STARRY STONEWORT

Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC)

New Starry Stonewort Video Released

The invasive alga starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*) has become an increasing problem in Minnesota lakes since it was first identified here in 2015. In several lakes, starry stonewort is widely established and can grow abundant and dense. This growth certainly has recreational impacts, but the ecological effects of starry stonewort in Minnesota lakes are unknown. Potential impacts to native aquatic plants are of particular concern since they are an integral part of lake ecosystems.

[Starry Stonewort Video](#)



Join us for a webinar!

**Starry stonewort invasion in Minnesota lakes:
Spread and plant community impacts**

MAISRC Starry Stonewort Webinar

Mark your calendars of Thursday, October 17th at noon to tune into a webinar from MAISRC graduate student Carli Wagner. Carli will be presenting her graduate research on one of Minnesota's newest -- and least understood -- aquatic invasive species, starry stonewort. This was one of the most popular talks at the 2019 Aquatic Invasive Species Research and Management Showcase, so if you missed out, now's your opportunity to hear directly from



Valuing Aquatic Invasive Species Management

MAISRC researchers are working to quantify and analyze the ecological and economic value of AIS damages and AIS management as they relate to ecosystem services such as fishing, swimming, biodiversity, and navigability. With an accurate assessment of the costs and benefits of AIS management strategies, as well as information on public perception, resource managers will be better prepared to efficiently and effectively invest management resources. Learn more about this work in the video below.

[Valuing AIS Management Video](#)

Fish Dam Project Has Been Well Received

Area News | Published on September 25, 2019 at 2:07pm CDT | Author: Pelican Rapids Press

Perhaps the best testimony on river restoration and dam modification came during the holiday season—on a Christmas card from David Stene, Pelican Lake.

So pleased with the scenic, natural rapids construction that replaced the deteriorating Fish Lake dam, Stene staged a holiday greeting card photo on the boulders and flat stones that replaced the dam. The image is not unlike the famous rapids at the nationally known “headwaters” of the Mississippi at Itasca State Park.

At Fish Lake, Prairie, Lizzie and Pelican Rapids, there are widespread fears that “lake levels will drop to nothing,” noted Jay Elshaug, Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District.

“The key to success is maintaining proactive communications,” said Elshaug.

“We worked to explain that with the Fish Lake dam removal, nothing would happen to Pelican Lake. We found like-minded souls to disseminate the facts and the information,” said Dave Haarstad, Pelican Lake LID board

member. “By the time we got to the project, we had addressed about everything...Now that it’s done, the reaction has been overwhelming. Nobody has said ‘we want the dam back.’”

Elshaug views the free flow of the Pelican River as a “lifetime project,” because he feels dam modifications leave an environmental legacy of natural habitat and ecological improvements for generations to come.



Prairie, Lizzie Dam Projects Set For 2020

Dams are beginning to “drop like dominoes” on the Pelican River, from rural Detroit Lakes—all the way to Fergus Falls.

Two more will essentially vanish from the Lake Lizzie and Prairie Lake landscape by next summer.

Dam modifications are the easy part—a few hundred thousand bucks, some heavy equipment, and a dose of hydrology and river science is all it takes.

The hard part falls on Prairie Lakers Roger and Peggy Mayfield and Al and Carol Kuvaas—who will need to reassure skeptics that altering existing dams will not affect lake levels any more than Mother Nature does, in high and low water cycles.

[Dam Projects set for 2020](#)

Winter Is Best Time For Dam Mordication

Renovating a dam in icy Minnesota waters, in the coldest weeks of the year, seems on the surface to be an unwise endeavor.

Actually—it is the perfect time.

The Lizzie and Prairie dams are expected to be modified in winter 2020.

The two jobs are scheduled together, in large part because the combination should lower overall costs.

Frozen ground allows heavy equipment to roll with less disruption to the surface, and also less sediment stirred up and released into the waterway, said Howard Fulhart, Minnesota DNR, Fergus Falls.

[Winter Is Best Time For Dam Mordication](#)

Shoreland Regulation Survey

The Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners have asked OTC COLA to reach out to lake and river shore property owners in Otter Tail County to get their views on the Shoreland Management Ordinance.

The Ordinance impacts us as lake and river property owners in that it governs what we can do on our shoreland properties within 1,000 feet of the shore. The DNR requires Counties to have an ordinance that can't be less restrictive than the DNR minimum standards. The County Commissioners periodically review and revise the Ordinance with input from the public through one or more public hearings.

The Ordinance governs minimum lot sizes, setbacks, density, when permits are required, the process of obtaining variances and other requirements and regulations. The full ordinance can be found online at:

<https://ottertailcountymn.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/OTC-Shoreland-Management-Ordinance-SMO-01-15-2017.pdf>

OTC COLA is sending a post card to all lake and river property owners in Otter Tail County inviting them to participate in the survey. The survey is designed to be completed in 5 minutes or less. Participating in the survey involves going to the OTC COLA website, www.otccola.org where on the home page there is a link to the survey. Please consider providing your input on shoreland regulations either by following directions on the postcard or going directly to the COLA website from this E-Newsletter.

OTC AIS Task Force Board Minutes

- [September 9, 2019 Draft](#)
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OTC Board Of Commissioner Minutes

- [August 27, 2019](#)
 - [September 10, 2019](#)
 - [September 17, 2019](#)
 - [September 24, 2019](#)
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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 over 100 OTC Lakes
- [Lake Property Owner Directories](#)- Directories by Street and Name for 100 OTC Lakes
- [Interactive Access to OTC GIS](#)- Find addresses, navigate the OTC County map
- [Lawmaker Hotline](#)- Comprehensive contact information for OTC Board of Commissioners to the MN Governor
- [OTC COLA Brochure](#)- View and/or download the OTC COLA Brochure
- [OTC COLA Membership Application](#)- View and/or download the OTC COLA Membership Application for 2019
- **We want to hear from you!**- Go [HERE](#) to give OTC COLA your comments and suggestions

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[John Kruse](#), OTC COLA Administrative Assistant