

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter February 2023



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Upcoming Events 2023

OTC COLA is in the process of planning events and activities for the 2023 season. The Water Sampling Program Kickoff where samplers pick up their sample coolers will be held on April 20 at the Ottertail Community Center. Otter Tail County lake property owner meetings are scheduled for the third Thursdays of May, June, July and August. Watch future OTC COLA E-Newsletters for Updates.

- April 20, 2023
 - Water Sampling Kickoff
 - Lake Property Owner Meetings
 - May 18, 2023
 - Otter Tail County Ditch Inspection
 - Featured Lake Association- First Silver
 - June 15, 2023
 - DNR Fisheries
 - Featured Lake Association- West McDonald
 - July 20, 2023
 - Lake property owner property taxes
 - Kevin Scheidecker, OTC Assessor
 - Featured Lake Association- Spitzer
 - August 17, 2023
 - OTC COLA Annual Meeting
 - Featured Speaker- East Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District
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Please Clean Up After Ice Fishing

Ice fishing is increasing in popularity in Minnesota. No longer your grandfather's winter escape with old wooden shacks and kerosene heaters, available now are comfortable ice castles with modern equipment and comfortable creature comforts. The MN DNR has also promoted ice fishing as an activity for everyone to enjoy.

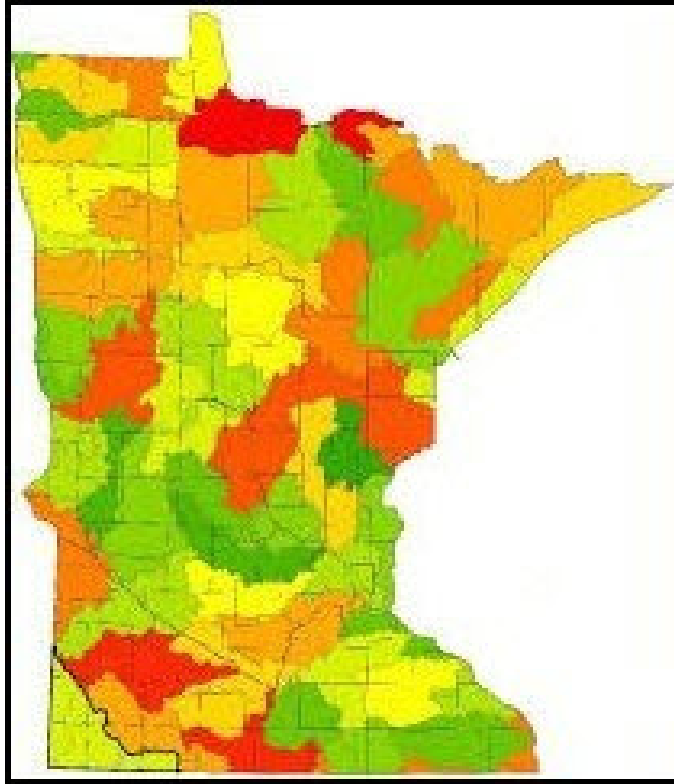
There is, however, a problem. There is a considerable amount of debris being left on the lakes at the end of the season. This debris can include old propane cylinders, gas cans, wood, plastic material, and all categories of garbage including food and beer cans. It's not an out-of-sight, out-of-mind situation. When the ice melts this debris and garbage doesn't just sink out of sight. It is carried on the water surface to the beaches of property owners.

There have been gallant efforts by county sponsored programs, lake associations and groups of lake property owners to clean lakes at the end of ice fishing season. Some have been successful, to a point, but hampered by concerns about ice safety.

Please support the cause of encouraging the clean up after ice fishing.

Thank you

[OTC COLA](#)



New Tool For Lake Health Information

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) has recently announced the creation of a new online tool that provides access to water quality and health information for thousands of Minnesota lakes. The new tool, [Watershed Health Assessment Framework \(WHAF for lakes\)](#), is easily accessed and navigated to give comprehensive information on virtually any Minnesota lake.

SHORTCUT for Otter Tail County Lakes

Go [HERE](#) to go directly to lakes in **Otter Tail County**. Shown on the page is the Lake ID, Health Score, Water Quality Score, Biology Score and Hydrology Score for each lake scored in the County. Selection of a lake will bring up tabs for Summary and tabs for description and detail of each of the scoring categories, explicitly for the lake selected.

[Tool For MN Lake Health Information](#)

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

MN Budget Includes Funding For The DNR

Outdoor recreation, which contributes more than \$9.9 billion annually to Minnesota's economy and supports 91,000 jobs, depends on Minnesota's well-managed outdoor recreation system. Many DNR-managed facilities, from state park buildings to fish hatcheries, are 60 to 90 years old. For example, the state's largest cool-water hatchery in Waterville, which keeps waters across the state stocked with walleye, northern pike, muskie, and channel catfish, is more than 70 years old. This budget invests in those facilities to ensure fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, and paddling opportunities will remain available to all Minnesotans, and have the capacity to serve expanding uses.



James Wooton, AIS Dectector

Starry Trek 2023

As we move out of Winter and into Spring and Summer the lakes will be loaded with fishermen, swimmers, divers, etc. With all this activity coming to our beloved lakes, we all need to step back and think of how we should be defending the lakes against AIS and protecting the underwater habitats. With recent invasions of various AIS, most notably, Zebra Mussels, and even worse, Starry Stonewort we need to really step up our game and do what we must to thwart the arrival of these aquatic offenders.

The topic of early detection brings to mind, a yearly event across the state of Minnesota. The event is Starry Trek. While the main goal of Starry Trek is to search and hopefully “NOT” find Starry Stonewort. It is also an event that has found numerous cool things, such as bryozoans, that many of us would never

have heard of or seen outside of a text book or magazine. The date for Starry Trek 2023 has been set for August 19th.

[James Wooton](#), AIS Detector

[MAISRC Detector Course](#)

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MAISRC Announces Six New Projects

The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota announces the launch of [six new research projects](#). These projects were selected as part of a competitive proposal process following a comprehensive research needs assessment conducted by MAISRC. The results of these projects will lead to better prevention of aquatic invasive species and improved management of Minnesota's resources, including the species impacted by AIS. The projects include:

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RMB January 2023 Newsletter

- **2023 Summer Internships**

- Getting lead out of fishing tackle
- What is shelf ice?

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[Emelia Thielman](#), Lakes Program Coordinator



MLR Takes Lake Steward Program State-Wide

MLR learned of the Gull Lakes [Lake Steward](#) program and recognized an opportunity to have a statewide impact in reducing nutrient pollution in our lakes and rivers. MLR took the Gull Lakes Lake Steward program statewide. Lake Steward helps a lake association volunteer learn how to assess how excessive amounts of Phosphorus is contributing to adverse lake quality.

Lake Steward is a partial solution to reducing nutrient loading, particularly phosphorus, into our lakes and rivers. Reducing phosphorus will reduce excessive aquatic plant growth and algae blooms

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[Jeff Forester](#), MLR Executive Director



2022 PROGRAM SUMMARY

[AIS Prevention Aid Program Snapshot 2022](#)
[AIS Prevention 2022 Report](#)

AIS Task Force Update February 2023

- **Hiring of seasonal Watercraft Inspectors**
- **Otter Tail's innovative Self-Service Watercraft Rinse Station**

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[Spencer McGrew, Otter Tail County AIS Specialist](#)



[AIS * Water Quality * Administration * Regulation](#)

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- [UMN Lake Browser](#)
- [Shoreline Management & Development](#)

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- [Water Quality Analysis Reports \(2022 samples- Individual reports for 60 OTC COLA Lakes](#)
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[John Kruse](#), OTC COLA Administrative Assistant