

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter June 2023

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From The President

Can you believe we're this far into summer? The COLA member meetings we look forward to are at the half-way point. One member commented after the June meeting how much she's learning at COLA. That is one of our main goals. "Before we can care, first we have to know." I always say Education, Education, Education! At any time, Jim Wolters shares his wealth of knowledge about fisheries in OTC. He could have been there answering questions all night.

Equally important to COLA is the water testing program ongoing for 25 years. Do you wonder what becomes of the information? Why do Lake Associations want to test? Jeff Vansteenburgh coordinates the water testers with RMB Lab. Jeff's background of 33 years of experience during his career in Iowa, before he retired to Silver Lake, is invaluable to the COLA Board and it will be to you, too, when he speaks on July 20. He can interpret the data.

We have revived a popular item on the agenda from pre-pandemic meetings to feature a Lake Association. Jeff told about Silver Lake in May and Dave Helgersen about West McDonald in June. Both generated many questions and success stories. It's a time for sharing how a Lake Association works. Hear about Spitzer Lake at the July meeting.

A frequently asked question of me: Are we having brownies? You have to be there to see :)

[Sylvia Soeth, President](#)



Upcoming Events 2023

Otter Tail County lake property owner meetings are scheduled for the third Thursdays of May, June, July and August. A bus tour of rain gardens and shoreland restoration sites is planned for September. Watch future OTC COLA E-Newsletters for updates.

- **Lake Property Owner Meetings and Events**

- **July 20, 2023**





- Jeff Vansteenburgh, OTC COLA Environmental Director.
OTC COLA Water Monitoring Program
- Featured Lake Association- Gary Olson, Spitzer Lake

- **August 17, 2023**

- OTC COLA Annual Meeting
- Featured Speaker- East Otter Tail Soil & Water
Conservation District- Darren Newville

- **September, 2023**

- Bus Tour- rain gardens and shoreland restoration

Lake / Site	Year	Phosphorus Ave	Chlorophyll a Ave	Secchi Ft	TSI Ave
Dead 56-0383-00 211	2013	19.6	5.2	45.0	45.8
	2014	26.2	15.3	51.8	54.5
	2015	28.0	7.4	48.4	49.8
	2016	25.6	5.0	49.8	48.5
	2017	23.4	5.0	50.0	48.2
	2018	30.4	10.1	54.2	52.6
	2019	22.2	6.1	50.4	49.0
	2020	21.6	4.7	48.0	47.4
	2021	22.4	5.4	46.0	46.6
	2022	27.1	8.0	52.2	48.8
Dead 56-0383-00 211 Total		24.7	7.1	49.6	49.0
					

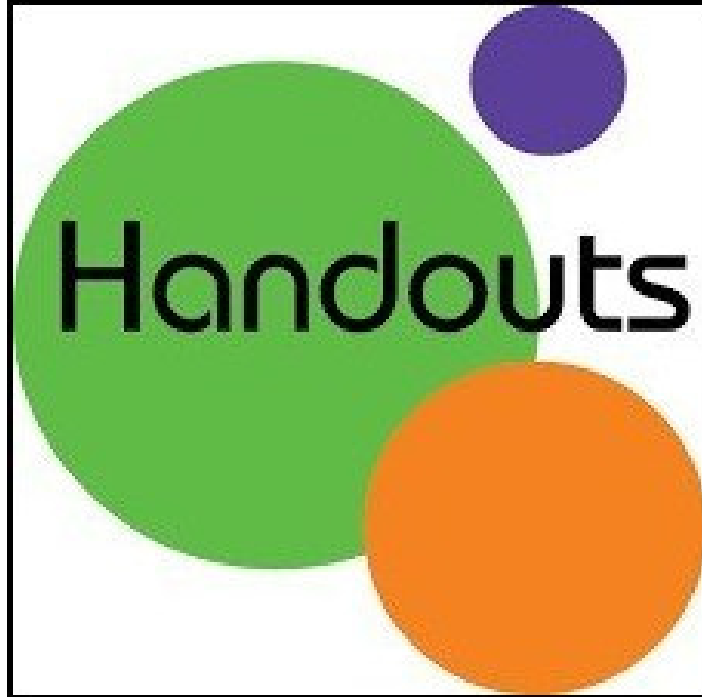
Vansteenburgh To Speak At OTC COLA July Meeting

The July 2023 Otter Tail County Lake Property Owner meeting will be held July 20, 2023 at the Ottertail Community Center, 93 Lake Ave S, Ottertail, MN 56571. The meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to arrive early for a time of socializing and networking.

The featured speaker will be Jeff Vansteenburgh, OTC COLA Environmental Director. Jeff will talk on the history of the OTC COLA water monitoring program as well as the distribution and uses of the data by lake associations, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR).

[MORE](#)

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



Lake Association Handouts

OTC COLA and the Otter Tail County AIS Task Force have items and literature available for lake associations to distribute to lake property owners at meetings and events. Quantities of handouts will be available at OTC COLA lake property owners meetings July 20 and August 17. To reserve a quantity to be picked up at a future meeting, send an email to me with the approximate number of handout sets you are requesting.

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

Water Sampling 2023

Remaining 2023 sample drop-off dates are:

June 26

July 17

August 21

September 18

Samples can be hand-delivered to the RMB Detroit Lakes laboratory, 22796 County Highway 6, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501, 218-846-1465 or dropped off at the following locations:

Perham Area:

Duane Lysne

218-346-5378

40810 North Marion Drive

Perham, MN 56573

Clitherall / Battle Lake Area:

KC Lawn

Mike Allman

218-864-5318

21443 380th Ave

DNR Water Transport Permit

The [Transport Water for Water Quality Sampling Permit](#) is required to collect and transport surface water for water quality sampling in Minnesota. If you want to transport water for any other purpose, you may need to apply for an [Infested Waters Permit](#).

[Water Quality Sample Transfer Permit](#)

[Infested Waters Permit](#)

[2023 RMB Lakes Monitoring Program](#)

[Jeff Vansteenburgh](#), OTC COLA Environmental Director
641-420-0928



June 2023 OTC COLA Meeting

The June, 2023 Otter Tail County Lake Property Owner meeting was held June 15, 2023 at the Ottertail Community Center.

The featured speaker for the evening was Jim Wolters, DNR Area Fisheries Supervisor, Fergus Falls Fisheries. Jim's presentation focused on fish populations in Otter Tail County lakes. He talked on the Fisheries Surveys



program and how they contribute to lake management plans. He also addressed the fish winter kill experienced this year and what Fisheries were doing to reestablish populations.

Jim Wolters, DNR Area Fisheries

218-671-7954

Lake Associations Work Closely With State DNR

By Tom Hintgen
Otter Tail County Correspondent

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides county anglers and lakes associations with information before fish stocking plans move forward in Otter Tail County.

“Before anything is implemented, we first collect public input on fish management,” said DNR Area Fisheries Supervisor Jim Wolters to members of the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) Thursday evening, June 15, at the COLA gathering in the community center in the town of Ottertail.

MORE



See You At The Fair

Come to the East Otter Tail County Fair and visit the OTC COLA booth! The fair will be Thursday - Sunday July 20- 23. Watch for updates and more information in future E-Newsletters.

John Kruse, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant

Make a Difference! **DONATE**

OTC COLA Receives Donations Again in 2023

Otter Tail County Coalition Of Lake Associations (OTC COLA) continues to receive unsolicited donations. Donations are "in recognition of the excellent work of OTC COLA". OTC COLA enjoys support from the Otter Tail County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force. It also receives support from foundations, Member Lake Organizations and donations from individual lake property owners. Donations are invited to not only enable OTC COLA to continue its current programs and services but also to expand them.

OTC COLA is a 501 (c)(3) allowing donations to qualify for tax deductions.

To donate to OTC COLA please send your check to:

OTC COLA
4302 13th Ave S, Suite 4-333
Fargo, ND 58103

Please direct questions to:

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



Find A Sober Ride Home

Minnesota's lakes will be very busy this July 4th holiday weekend. That's why it's important to use extra caution when boating. Boating while intoxicated is not only a problem during holidays, but every day in the summer. One of the leading factors in boating accidents and fatalities is boating while intoxicated. In Minnesota, nearly half of fatal boating accidents involved alcohol.

Throughout the summer, and always, Otter Tail County Safe Communities Coalition is encouraging boaters to Find a Sober Ride Home. We are dedicated to making our roadways and lakes safer. The coalition has created signage that will be displayed at various lake access points. Be on the lookout for the signage at a lake near you.

Although we hope that everyone makes the right decision, we know there will be individuals who choose to drive after drinking. Below are practical steps to take if you spot an impaired driver:

- **Step one:** Stay as far away from the other vehicle as possible. Don't try to pass the vehicle or get the driver's attention
- **Step two:** Try to look at the license plate number and other distinguishing details of the vehicle—the make, model, and color. Do not compromise your own safety while getting this information.
- **Step three:** Call 911. Minnesota hands-free law states that hand-held phone use *IS allowed* to obtain emergency assistance if there is an immediate threat to life and safety.
- **Step four:** Give information to the operator about location, direction of travel, vehicle description, and why you suspect the driver may be impaired.

We hope this simple message, to find a sober ride home, will spark change in decision making for boaters who have been drinking and boating. Together we can reduce the number of impaired drivers on our roads.

[How to Spot an Impaired Driver Card](#)

[Emily Frustol](#)

OTC Health Educator, Public Health



MN COLA Introduces New Website!

To better serve our members MN COLA developed its new website. Our goal was a clean, modern, and inviting website with up-to-date information useful to members and other visitors. We organized our areas of focus and put them in one place (Our Focus Areas). We provide a list of water-oriented events and webinars for professionals from Minnesota and surrounding states. We also provide current news from around the region and beyond, and there's a quick reference page for links to organizations, government and private. Take a look

at mncola.org and let us know what you think!

MNCOLA.ORG

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Zebra Mussels Detected in Otter Tail Lakes

Tamarac Lake

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has discovered zebra mussels in Tamarac Lake, near Pelican Rapids in Otter Tail County.

DNR staff doing maintenance work on the Tamarac Lake public access found six zebra mussels attached to a concrete plank.

Wall Lake

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has discovered zebra mussels in Wall Lake, near Fergus Falls in Otter Tail County. A lake user reported finding two zebra mussels attached to an object in the lake. During a dive search, a DNR invasive species specialist found half-inch zebra mussels on the lakebed and rocks about one-third mile from the area of the initial report.

[MORE](#)



MAISRC JUNE 2023 Newsletter

Check out the recent news coming out of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) in our [June newsletter](#). A few highlights:

- University of Minnesota Extension educators and MAISRC researchers [Megan Weber and Dan Larkin win an award](#) for their Aquatic Invasive

Species Management 101 course

- Registration is open for our [Aquatic Plant Identification workshop](#)
- [Legislative update](#)
- An interview with outgoing Research Outreach Specialist [Meg Duhr](#)

[June 2023 Newsletter](#)



Starry Trek Scheduled August 19, 2023

Starry Trek volunteers have been responsible for the discovery of 4 previously unknown populations of starry stonewort, 1 new zebra mussel population, 2 newly reported Eurasian watermilfoil infestations, the discovery of [Corbicula fluminea in an Sherburne County lake](#), and much more.

[MORE](#)



AIS Public Service Video Series Launched

A creative series of three PSAs in :30 and :15' lengths, have been professionally produced to gain attention on aquatic invasive species while sharing actions people can take to stop the spread.

This video series is presented by Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates and produced by LB Video Productions. Funding to make the series possible as a free resource to the public has come from the counties of Wabasha as a Gold sponsor, Goodhue, Otter Tail, Yellow Medicine, Cook, and Washington as Silver sponsors, Benton, Lake, Polk, Stearns, Douglas, Chippewa, Cass as

Bronze sponsors, and Kanabec as a Supporter.

"I'm pleased to share the AIS public awareness ads we partnered in producing are complete and live!" In addition to being shown on TV, we will also be sharing them on social media."

[Spencer McGrew](#), AIS Task Force Aquatic Invasive Specialist

[AIS PSA News Release](#)



Phelps Mill Festival July 8-9

Come join us at the 39th annual Phelps Mill Festival. The Phelps Mill Festival is held annually on the 2nd full weekend of July. We provide two full days of art, food, entertainment, and kids' activities plus craft wine and beer tasting. If you haven't visited our Festival in the past or it has been a while, this is the year to make your way to the Phelps Mill County Park just north of Underwood. You can fill your day with kids' activities and art projects; listening to our top-notch entertainment, shopping a wide variety of artist booths; sampling craft beer and wine (Saturday 1:00 to 5:00) and eating at any number of food booths.

[MORE](#)



PHOTO: Back row: Commissioner Dan Bucholz, Commissioner Wayne Johnson, Commissioner Lee Rogness, Cliff Knutson (FOPM), Luke Kramer (Eagle Construction), Karen Aakre (FOPM), Phyllis Knutson (FOPM), Brandon Freudrich (Eagle Construction), Director of Parks and Trails Kevin Fellbaum. Left of stairs: Former Commissioner Betty Murphy, Matt Malone (BHH), Chris Schuelke (OTCHS), Jim Aakre (FOPM). Right of stairs: Deputy Administrator Nick Leonard, Commissioner Kurt Mortenson, Phelps Mill Park Caretaker Dave Boen, County Administrator Nicole Hansen.

Historic Phelps Mill Restored

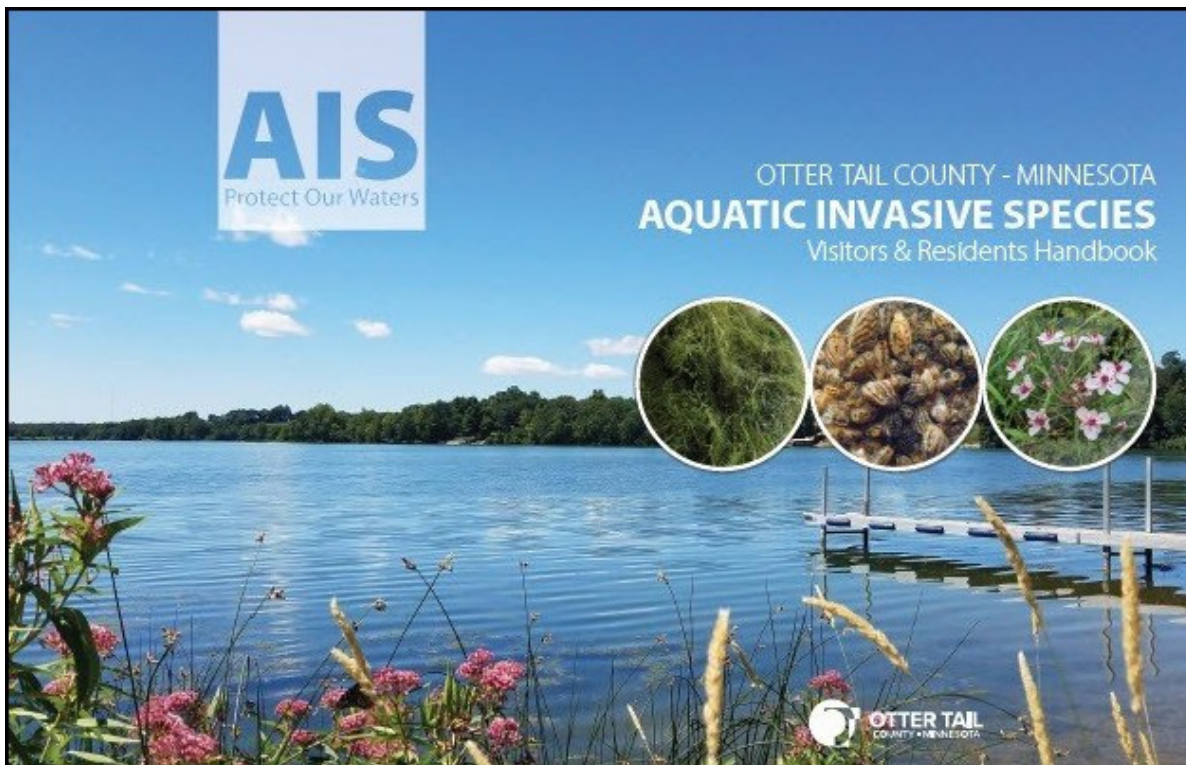
It's official the mill at Phelps Mill Park is open to the public once again. Over 150 people joined in celebrating the re-opening. The mill is a cherished place in Otter Tail County and with the support of dedicated stakeholders, the restored mill will continue to amaze visitors for many years to come.

Set on the mill's loading dock with the sounds of the Otter Tail River in the background, over 150 people celebrated the restoration efforts of the mill. Friends of Phelps Mill welcomed visitors to tour the mill. Otter Tail County thanked those who worked to restore the mill as the Friends of Phelps Mill presented Eagle Construction with a symbolic bag of Maine Rollermills flour in appreciation of their work. Chris Schuelke, Executive Director of the Otter Tail County Historical Society (OTCHS) shared an interesting history of the mill, and County Commissioner Bob Lahman ceremoniously cut the ribbon to mark the event.

[MORE](#)

2022 PROGRAM SUMMARY

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



Click on image for Handbook

AIS Handbook In Distribution

The recently produced AIS Handbook sponsored by the Otter Tail County AIS Task Force is being distributed to lake property owners by a number of means. Availability has been advertised in the OTC COLA E-Newsletter prompting receiving them directly from Otter Tail County Land & Resource 218-998-8095. Lake Associations have requested quantities directly for Association events and meetings. To date close to 500 Handbooks were collected by Lake Associations at OTC COLA lake property owner meetings for distribution to their Members. Besides disseminating AIS prevention best practices in the Handbooks, the information has also been published in area newspapers and included in social media posts.

To receive a quantity of Handbooks for distribution to lake property owners contact Spencer McGrew AIS Specialist 218-998-8113

[AIS Handbook for Visitors and Residents](#)

[AIS Handbook for Visitors and Residents Cover](#)

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

OTC AIS Task Force Minutes

- [May 11, 2023](#)
-

OTC Board Of Commissioner Minutes

- [May 23, 2023](#)
-



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

Featured Posts - June 2023

- [Lake Stewardship](#)
- [Total Phosphorus](#)
- [Valuing AIS Management](#)

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Instant Access Links

- [Newsletter Article Index](#)- Visually scan article titles from all OTC COLA E-Newsletters from 2018.
- [Water Quality Analysis Reports \(2022 samples- Individual reports for 60 OTC COLA Lakes](#)
- [Lake Property Owner Directories \(2019\)](#)- Directories by Street and Name for 100 OTC Lakes
- [OTC COLA Brochure](#)- View and/or download the OTC COLA

Brochure

- **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