

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter January 2025



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A Decade of Starry Stonewort - Part 3 Plant Community Interactions

Starry stonewort directly impacts fish spawning habitat by the formation of a thick mat that serves as a physical barrier effectively impeding access to substrates for nest creation resulting in (1) reduction in nesting area and density of nests and (2) complete elimination of spawning activity in the area of infestation. In lakes supporting a mature and/or expanding infestation of starry stonewort, spawning fish must compete for remaining spawning habitat in areas that are suboptimal for spawning.

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Click on image for Ron Schara video

Keep It Clean 2.0

Keep It Clean MN 2.0 is working hard to get an updated new bill passed in the Minnesota legislature in 2025. The original bill made it illegal to place garbage and human/other waste on or under the ice on Minnesota's lakes and rivers. Garbage, rubbish, cigarette filters, debris from fireworks, offal, the body of a dead animal, litter, sewage and any other waste needs to be stored inside your shelter, motor vehicle or any other conveyance or inside a container that is secured to your shelter, motor vehicle or conveyance.

Watch for updates in this OTC COLA monthly E-Newsletter for instructions on how to contact Minnesota legislators in support of Keep It Clean MN 2.0.

[Keep It Clean Newsletter](#)

[Ron Schara Keep It Clean MN Video](#)

Website: Keepitcleanmn.org

Robyn Dwight Upper Red Lake Area Association/ Keep it Clean Coalition robbyndwight1@gmail.com



Thank You For Donating to OTC COLA

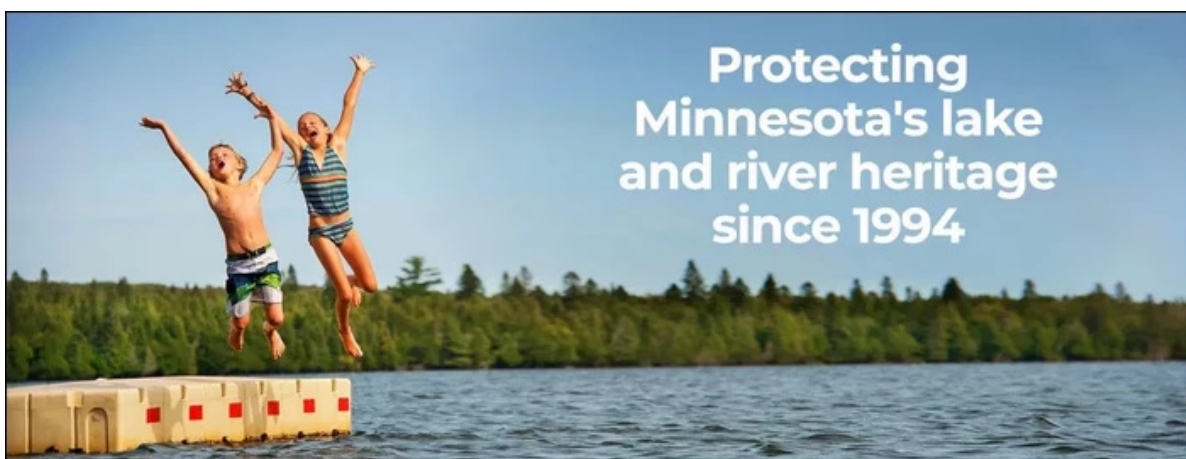
OTC COLA appreciates the donations it has received from foundations, Member Lake Organizations and individual lake property owners. It is also very grateful for support from the Otter Tail County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force.

OTC COLA's 32-year history has proven it to be a major advocate for the protection and preservation of Ottertail Tail County lakes. It serves to inform and educate lake property owners promoting best practices of lake stewardship.

For more information about OTC COLA see our www.otccola.org website.

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 otccola2@gmail.com



****Urgent Request****
Your Assistance Is Vitrally Important!
[View in browser](#)

Governor Walz's Proposed Budget Cuts AIS Prevention Funding In Half

Dateline 4:26 p.m. January 16, 2025

I am writing to you today with an urgent request. A few hours ago Governor Walz released his proposed budget recommendations. In it he proposes cutting the County AIS Prevention Aid formula by 50%.

Please write Governor Walz a letter today and urge him to protect the County Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid.

If you are part of a Coalition of Lake Associations, COLA, or on a Chain of Lakes, please forward this email to other lake associations in your area and urge them to write a letter.

The most powerful way to contact the Governor's office is to take out a pen and paper, or typewriter, write him a letter urging him to reconsider this budget recommendation, sign it, put it in an envelope and mail it to him.

Handwritten letters are the gold standard in political discourse. As a lake association leader, you have an authentic stake in this AIS funding. It pays for inspections, decontamination, education, outreach and support of local volunteers.

You can address your letter to:

Office of Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Some things you might want to include:

- State in your letter that you are opposed to cutting the County AIS Prevention Aid Formula,
- Let him know how this funding supports your efforts to protect the public waters,
- Remind him that prevention is far more efficient and cost effective than treatment after the fact,
- Tell him what the lake means to you and why you are so engaged in protecting it.

We have just learned of this budget cut. MLR staff and lobbyist are already working to lay out a strategy, develop communications and promotional materials. You will be hearing more from us in the days and weeks to come. We are starting with you and other lake association leaders first, and will broaden and widen our advocacy efforts in the weeks to come.

Thank you for all you do. Please do take a moment to write a letter - if the Governor's office receives a few hundred letters from civic organizations representing literally hundreds of thousands of concerned and engaged citizens, this will have an impact.

[Jeff Forester](#), MLR Executive Director



Water Connects Us All Newsletter - January 2025

2024 was a landmark year for MLR, marked by several legislative and programmatic achievements. As we look ahead to 2025, MLR remains focused on building upon these successes with new initiatives:

[MORE](#)



MAISRC Newsletter January 2025

Explore the Latest in Aquatic Invasive Species Research

Happy New Year! Start 2025 informed and inspired with the latest issue of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center newsletter. Here's a sneak peek at what's inside:

- **Spotlight on the Center Advisory Board:** Meet the dedicated new members helping guide our efforts to tackle aquatic invasive species across Minnesota.
- **Event Highlights:** Discover insights from the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference and explore our upcoming lab tours and webinars.
- **Research Highlights:** Learn about the effects of invasive zebra mussels on mercury levels in fish and how MAISRC researchers are addressing these challenges.
- **Project Updates:** See how we're partnering with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to combat starry stonewort while protecting wild rice, a cultural and ecological treasure.

Don't miss out on these stories and other important updates. Click below to read the full newsletter and stay engaged in protecting Minnesota's waters.

[MAISRC Newsletter January 2025](#)



MN COLA Update January 2025

We encourage you to check out MN COLA's excellent newsletter - <https://mncola.org/current-waters/>

Go [HERE](#) for a review of the benefits of joining MN COLA

[MNCOLA.ORG](https://mncola.org)

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[David Helgerson](#), OTC COLA Director Liaison with MN COLA



Ryan Bjerke, DNR Area Hydrologist

Introducing Ryan Bjerke, DNR Area Hydrologist.

Ryan Bjerke is a DNR contact person covering Otter Tail, Traverse and Wilkin counties. Ryan offers to be available for discussion about public waters and permitting for work therein, shoreland and floodplain issues, water resource restoration projects, and general water-related topics.

Ryan Bjerke, Bio

My name is Ryan Bjerke, and I've been the DNR Area Hydrologist based out of the Fergus Falls office since late 2023, coming into the position after the retirement of my predecessor, Julie Aadland. The past year has been spent familiarizing myself with an expansive new work area—Otter Tail, Traverse, and Wilkin counties—and the key issues and stakeholders involved in administering work in public waters

across a very diverse landscape. Through this learning process, I've come to appreciate the exceptional value that the majority of people in this part of the world place on protecting and sustaining our high quality water resources.

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Minnesota DNR Celebrates Major 2024 Accomplishments

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has released a summary of significant 2024 accomplishments that advanced the DNR's mission of working with Minnesotans to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, providing outdoor recreation opportunities, and providing for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

While not an exhaustive list, this year's overview offers information and insight into a number of the DNR's high-level accomplishments from the past year. To download a copy of the DNR's Accomplishments Overview document, visit the [DNR website](http://mndnr.gov) (mndnr.gov).



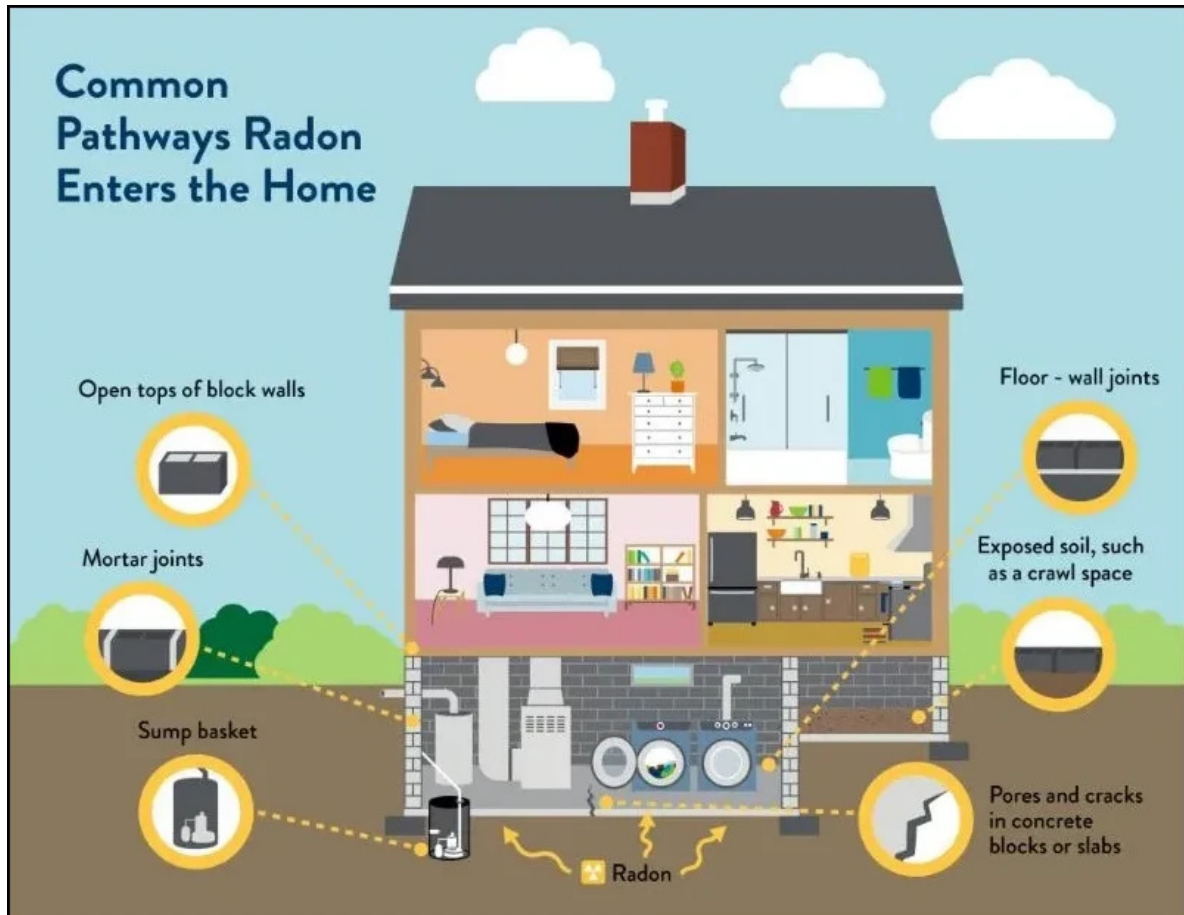
Otter Tail County **· AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES ·** T A S K F O R C E

Inter-County Lake Stewardship Symposium
May 31 at Thumper Pond

The Inter-County Lake Stewardship Symposium will be held at Thumper Pond Resort in Ottertail city, May 31, 2025. Lake property owners and all interested lake stakeholders from regional counties will be invited to

attend. Scientists and field specialists will present on topics including shoreland restoration, aquatic invasive species prevention, septic systems and activities of state agencies, universities and regional coalitions of lake associations. Watch for more news about the event in newsletters, publications, social media and other sources. Invitations for registrations will appear in this monthly OTC COLA E-Newsletter, websites and other media outlets. For more information contact:

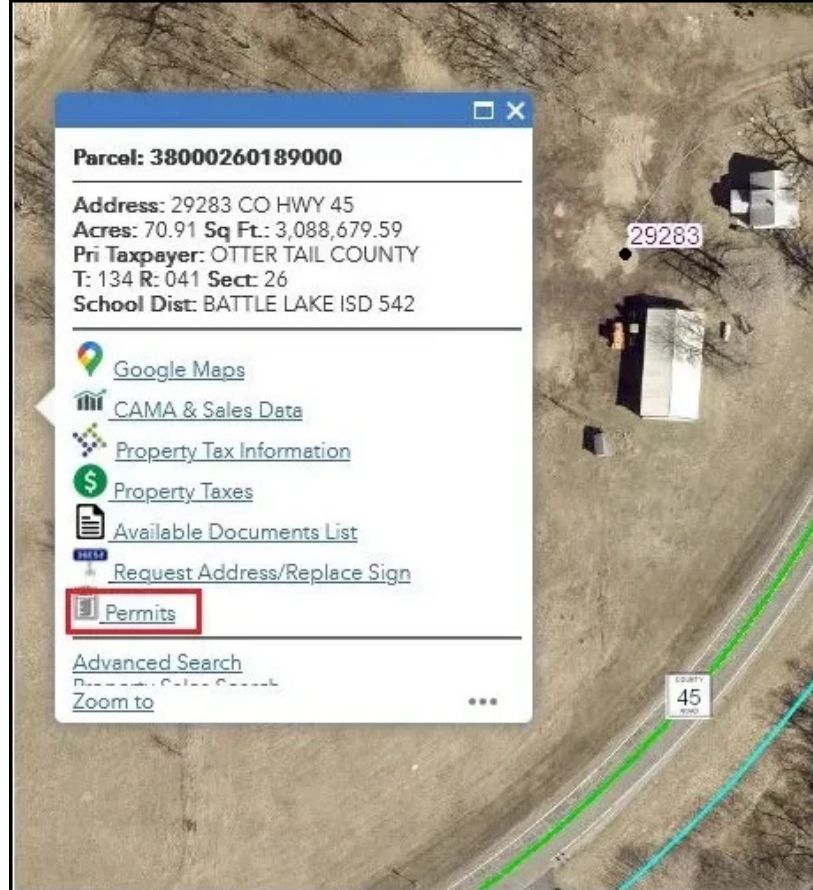
[Spencer McGrew, AIS Specialist](#)



Otter Tail County Urges Residents To Test For Radon

Radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas, is the leading environmental cause of cancer deaths in the United States and the primary cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Each year, more than 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. are attributed to radon exposure. Alarmingly, about 2 in 5 homes in Minnesota have elevated radon levels. Otter Tail County Public Health urges residents to test their homes for radon to ensure their families' safety.

[MORE](#)



OTC Releases Permit View Feature On GIS Map

Otter Tail County has enhanced its [Geographic Information System \(GIS\) map](#), introducing a permit view feature to make accessing and reviewing permits faster and more convenient. Past permits issued in the 1970s and all current permits are now accessible directly on the map. The links will take users to the actual permit.

The updated function allows for easy access to view the permits. Users can quickly locate permits associated with any parcel in Otter Tail County, including shoreland permits, variance permits, septic permits, and more. The permit view function ensures professionals and residents can easily search by address, parcel number, or permit type, making the process efficient.

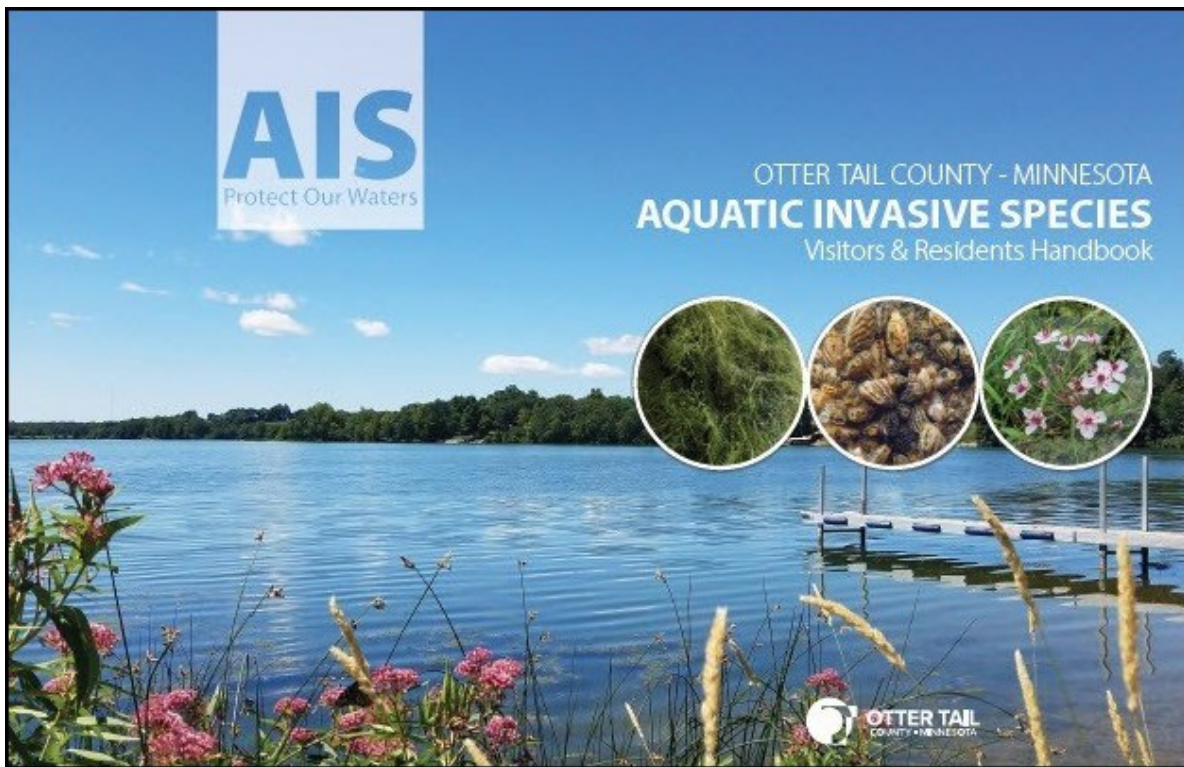
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The AIS Prevention Aid Program Snapshot is prepared annually for submission to the state of Minnesota outlining use of funds provided for control of aquatic invasive species in Minnesota lakes and rivers. The Snapshot for 2024 has been created and submitted to the state of Minnesota. Supporting details for the Snapshot will be published in the Annual AIS Prevention Report currently in the process of being compiled.

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

[AIS Prevention Aid Program Snapshot 2024](#) [AIS Prevention 2023 Report](#)



AIS Handbooks Now Available

The enthusiastically acclaimed AIS Handbook sponsored by the Otter Tail County AIS Task Force is now available. The Handbook will be distributed to lake property owners, resort owners, and civic organizations in Otter Tail County. Quantities can be reserved from Otter Tail County Land & Resource 218-998-8095. Besides disseminating AIS prevention best practices in the Handbooks, the AIS prevention information will also be published in area newspapers and included in social media posts.

[AIS Handbook for Visitors and Residents](#)

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

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

OTC Board Of Commissioner Minutes

• **December 3, 2024**

- December 17, 2024
 - January 7, 2025
-



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

Featured Posts - January 2025

- [Enhanced Lake Association Directories](#)
- [Am I At Risk - Radon](#)
- [Organization of Lake Property Owners](#)

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 - [Lake Property Owner Directories \(2019\)](#)- Directories by Street and Name for 100 OTC Lakes
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-

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

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