

**IMPORTANT NEWS** from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

# E-Newsletter March 2025



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Picture courtesy Vern Whitten Aerial Photography

# *You Are Invited*

**[Registration Is Now Open](#)**

The Otter Tail County Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force and the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations (OTC COLA) are sponsoring the Lake Stewardship Symposium on May 31, 2025.

Minnesota lakes are a vital component for enjoyable living in America's northwest. Value of this resource is measured in recreational opportunities, family bonding, lake property value appreciation and tourism. The Lake Stewardship Symposium is for Minnesota lake property owners to learn how to engage in best practices for the protection and preservation of Minnesota lakes.

The Symposium will feature prominent speakers addressing Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention, Minnesota legislation updates, vacation lake home rentals (VRBOs), shoreline restoration opportunities, Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) updates and presentations from Minnesota lake organizations and regional Coalitions of Lake Associations.

The one-day event will be held at Thumper Pond Resort in Ottertail City from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on May 31, 2025. There is no cost for the event including a free lunch.

Though walk-ins at the event are welcome to attend, registration is greatly appreciated to help in capacity planning.

Register **[HERE](#)**

**[Stewardship Symposium Flyer](#)**

**[Stewardship Symposium Speakers](#)**

**[Stewardship Symposium Attendee Agenda Handout](#)**



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

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## **Water Program Kick Off April 17**

The distribution of the sample coolers, bottles and data sheets to sampler volunteers will take place Thursday, April 17 from 5:00 to 7:00 at the Ottertail Community Center parking lot.

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

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## **OTC COLA Water Quality Analysis Program 2025**

Invoices to Lake Associations for OTC COLA Membership dues and water

monitoring fees include the discounted annual per site analysis rate of \$335 (same as 2024) for the five monthly samples.

If samplers are still using the grab method of collecting samples they are encouraged to look at using the integrated depth sample device method. The grab method collects samples from only the top six to eight inches of water. It is preferable to get a representative sample that is taken from a larger portion of the water column. Most samplers use an integrated depth sampling device.

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

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## Lake Sample Collection Equipment

One component of a good water quality monitoring program is the collection of representative water samples. The water in our lakes is not homogenous but varies with season, location and depth. The grab method collects samples from only the top six to eight inches of water. It is preferable to get a representative sample that is taken from a larger portion of the water column. Most samplers use an integrated depth sampling device.

[MORE](#)

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**Low Level Mercury Testing in Fish  
Soon Available**



Mercury contamination is a serious concern for both aquatic ecosystems and human health, as it can accumulate in fish and pose risks to those who consume them. Our certified testing methods at our new and expanded laboratories are moving environmental testing forward to provide accurate, reliable results to monitor mercury levels and help you make informed decisions.

Protecting our waters and community starts with quality data. Contact Shawn Witherspoon today to learn more about our mercury testing services at 612-258-4130.

## [RMB Environmental Laboratories](#)

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## **OTC COLA Speaker Dates Are Being Scheduled**

Lake Association meetings are a great opportunity to promote awareness of protecting good water quality, combating threats of aquatic invasive species and other important issues confronting lake property owners. OTC COLA's mission over its 33-year history continues with activities like its Speaker Team Program of providing speakers at Lake Association meetings.

Please consider scheduling an OTC COLA Speaker Team Member to speak at your summer meeting. Coordinating Team Members with desired meeting dates and times is a challenge but we will do the best we can to accommodate requests. There is no cost. Early submissions are the best way to help secure a desired place on the schedule.

To request an OTC COLA speaker at your meeting email John Kruse, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant, at [otccola2@gmail.com](mailto:otccola2@gmail.com).

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## **A Decade of Starry Stonewort - Part 5**

### **Starry Stonewort Management**

The ability to control only the upper biomass of starry stonewort mats presents some interesting aquatic plant management opportunities. Many of the lakes where starry stonewort has been found have historically been challenged by the spread, proliferation, and domination of milfoil species and hybrids. Starry stonewort is a superior competitor and will eliminate nuisance milfoil growth from the deeper parts of some lakes. And, if the water is clear, starry stonewort will not grow as tall in the water column. Riparian property owners, recreational water users, and some lake managers have been very pleased with this outcome. If starry stonewort grows taller, the height of the starry stonewort can be reduced with low level algaecide treatments. This is referred to as a “hair cut treatment” and is used to suppress plants like milfoil through competition and still keep boat lanes open. The wisdom of such a treatment strategy may be debatable, but the utility of the approach has been very effective

[MORE](#)

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- MN COLA membership is on the rise with Pine County COLA and 11 new Lake Association and LID members in 2024.
- Current projects include development of an AIS education program focused on kids.
- New Boater Operator's Permits in effect July 1, 2025, implementation. Be on the lookout for an education flyer with information and guidance.

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

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## **Invasive Phragmites Management in Minnesota**

The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) is excited to launch a [new website](#) that highlights the unique, multi-agency effort to manage invasive *Phragmites* (frag-MYT-ees) in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) collaborated with MAISRC on developing the StoryMap.

Invasive *Phragmites*, also known as European common reed, is a robust wetland grass that can grow up to 18' tall and spread rapidly via seeds and growth of roots, leaves, and stems. It can transform wetlands and reduce plant diversity, wildlife habitat, and recreational access. It affects ecosystems and infrastructure from shorelines and wetlands to roadside ditches and stormwater ponds. In 2017, the DNR outlined a series of knowledge gaps for invasive *Phragmites* and a need for management options. In response, MAISRC launched a multi-year research effort to better understand the species, its impact, and best practices for management. The result was the development of the state's first statewide management plan for *Phragmites*.

[MORE](#)

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## Public Input Needed on Fisheries Management Plans

March is the month to connect with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fisheries offices across Minnesota about 151 lakes in 40 counties that will have their fisheries lake management plans updated in 2025.

The DNR encourages people with thoughts on the future management of a lake scheduled for a 2025 plan update to call or email the area fisheries office listed for that lake before March 31. Area fisheries teams will consider the observations and comments obtained during this step of the process as they begin developing updates for each lake fisheries management plan.

Otter Tail Lakes scheduled for plan updates:

Clitheral, Dead, North Lida, Otter Tail, Pelican, South Lida, South Ten Mile, Star, West Battle

[MORE](#)

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### **AIS Task Force Update March 2025**

- Seasonal watercraft inspector hires for 2025 season
- AIS tool station installations are being scheduled
- Erhard Self Service Watercraft Rinse Station installation
- Lake Stewardship Symposium preparations in progress

[MORE](#)

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

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2022

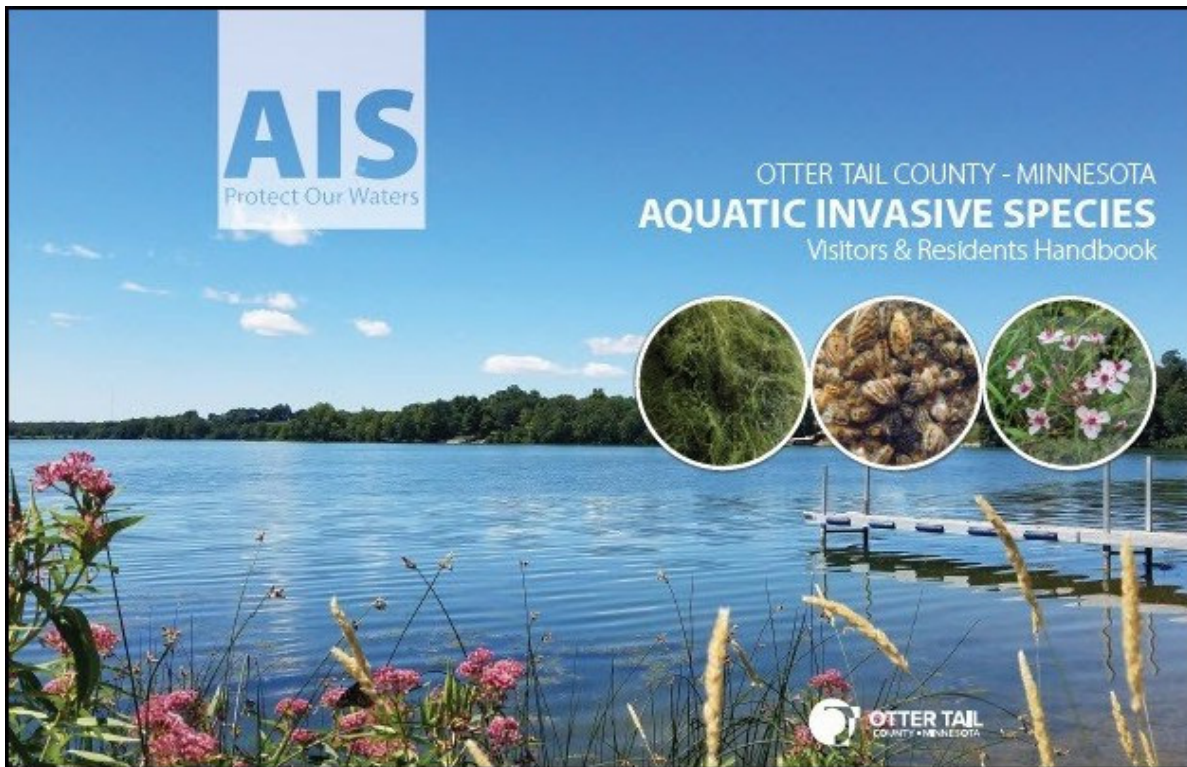
# PROGRAM SUMMARY

## **AIS Prevention Aid Program Snapshot 2024**

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](#)

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### **OTC AIS Task Force Minutes**

- [February 13, 2025](#)
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### **OTC Board Of Commissioner Minutes**

- [February 11, 2025](#)
  - [February 25, 2025](#)
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[AIS \\* Water Quality \\* Administration \\* Regulation](#)

### **Featured Posts - March 2025**

- [MN Lake Organizations and Agencies](#)
- [Lakes Illimitable Are Lakes Lost](#)
- [What's So Bad About AIS](#)

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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 \(2024 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**