

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter June 2025



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From The President

It was a beautiful day at Thumper Pond when 73 lake property owners, presenters and vendors shared enthusiasm for water issues at the Lake Stewardship

Symposium. There are 68 lakes in the COLA water testing program for 2025 covering 70% of OTC water area; 27 of them were represented, 3 non member lakes and 3 additional COLAs from Becker, Douglas and Hubbard counties. That means the messages from our speakers are carried to many more property owners.

COLA partnered with the AIS Task Force to sponsor the day. COLA has 33 years in OTC, linked to AIS for 14 years since the Task Force was appointed. Spencer McGrew, AIS Specialist, and John Kruse, COLA Administrative Assistant, have planned with both Boards for this success! We all thank speakers, vendors and Thumper Pond - and all of you who attended!

For June 19, we go back to COLA member meetings at the Otter Tail Community Center at 7 p.m, when our speaker, Jeff Vansteenburgh, will share more specific information about Otter Tail County water quality. We are so lucky Jeff retired from Iowa to Silver Lake and keeps up to date on new information. COLA Board members all share their expertise that way!
See you Thursday, June 19!

[Sylvia Soeth, OTC COLA President](#)



Picture courtesy Vern Whitten Aerial Photography



Lake Steward Symposium A Great Success!

All reports from the Lake Property Owner Lake Stewardship Symposium on May 31 at the Thumper Pond Resort in Ottertail City are enthusiastically positive. Attendees were engaged by all of the speakers showing their interest by asking numerous questions.

Watch for detailed summaries of the presentations in future issues of the OTC COLA E-Newsletter.

[Stewardship Symposium Flyer](#)

[Stewardship Symposium Speakers](#)

[Stewardship Symposium Attendee Agenda Handout](#)

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



OTC COLA Upcoming Events 2025

Minnesota lake property owners are welcome to attend June, July and August meetings on the third Thursdays of June, July and August at the Ottertail Community Center, 93 Lake Avenue South, in Ottertail, Minnesota 56571. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to arrive early for coffee and cookies and a time of socializing and networking.

Thursday June 19, 2025 - OTC COLA Lake Property Owner June Meeting

Thursday July 17, 2025 - OTC COLA Lake Property Owner July Meeting

Thursday August 21, 2025 - OTC COLA Lake Property Owner August Meeting

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

Lake Property Owner Meetings 2025

Speakers for summer meetings normally held on 3rd Thursdays of May, June,

July and August at the Ottertail City Community Center have been announced. A variation for 2025 was the replacement of the May 15 meeting at the Community Center with the Lake Stewardship Symposium at Thumper Pond Resort on May 31, 2025

Featured presenters at June, July, August Ottertail Community Center meetings:

- **June 19 - Jeff Vansteenburgh**, OTC COLA Board Environmental Director. Jeff has an extensive background working with water quality and fisheries. He will cover the elements and benefits of Water Quality Reports.
- **July 17 - Ezri Farnum**, Ezri will give an update on Koronis Lake Association's 10-year fight against starry stonewort. She will report on initial and current funding opportunities, stakeholder/shoreowner investment and current research conclusions.
- **August 21 - Darren Newville**, East Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District, District Manager. Darren will present an update on the [One Watershed, One Plan](#) program. The East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was named SWCD of the Year for 2024.

OTC COLA summer meetings are an excellent opportunity access materials and information to bring back to Lake Associations and to network with other lake property owners.

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

OTC COLA Water Monitoring Program

The 2025 OTC COLA Water Quality Monitoring program is off and running. All participating COLA Lake Associations have received their initial coolers. New courier drop off sites have worked very well and the system is functioning smoothly.

Sincere thanks go out to all of the couriers hosting drop of points and lake samplers who tirelessly donate their time and effort to collect the samples.

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

2025 Lake Sampling Dates

The lake sampling dates for the 2025 Season are:

- May 19
- June 16
- July 21
- August 18
- September 22

A reminder:

If you have been using the courier drop off site on Lake Marion that location is no longer in use. The new location is 43620 Round Lake Rd. Ottertail MN. There is a small garage on the opposite side of the address where the samples coolers will be

collected.

If you have used the Battle Lake site or taken the samples directly to the lab in Detroit Lakes, that has not changed.

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



Jeff Vansteenburgh

Vansteenburgh To Speak At June Lake Property Owner Meeting

The June 2024 Otter Tail County Lake Property Owner meeting will be held June 19, 2025 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).

Jeff serves as the environmental director for the OTC COLA. He received his BS degree from Minnesota State University Mankato in Biology and Community Health and MS degree from University of Wisconsin LaCrosse in Biology and Aquatic Sciences. Jeff worked 36 years for the State of Iowa serving three years as a limnologist at the State Hygienic Laboratory - University of Iowa and thirty

three years in the field services bureau, environmental services division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. He has experience in a variety of environmental areas including surface and groundwater quality, wastewater treatment and drinking water quality.

[Jeff Vansteenburgh](#)

Dates Still Open For OTC COLA Speakers

The OTC COLA Speaker Team is still scheduling dates for lake association meetings in 2025. Multiple topic requests range from individual water quality analysis to aquatic invasive species prevention to overviews of OTC COLA's history and programs.

The Team is currently responding to Lake Association requests to schedule speaking dates. 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.



Protecting
Minnesota's lake
and river heritage
since 1994



MLR is inviting you to [Water Connects Us All](#), Minnesota Lakes and Rivers' (MLR) annual in-person gathering of lake association leaders, advocates, and partners, taking place June 27–28 at Northern Lights Casino in Walker, MN.

Water Connects Us All is Minnesota Lakes and Rivers' (MLR) annual in-person gathering of lake association leaders, advocates, and partners.

Included is the Starry Stonewort Summit. The event will bring together emerging and experienced water leaders for a summit focused on leadership development in the face of growing threats to our waters.

[MORE](#)



Join Us in October!

We are excited to announce the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center's [AIS Research and Management Showcase](#) on **Thursday, October 9, 2025**. This event is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to meet our researchers and learn about the latest tools, information, and technologies being developed at MAISRC.

Date: Thursday, October 9, 2025

Time: 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Location: [St. Paul Student Center](#), University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus ([Google map](#))

Tickets: \$50

Mark your calendars! Registration will open in **July 2025**.



MN COLA To Hold Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting of 2025! We are so pleased with the

speakers who have generously offered their time to talk to MN COLA about important water-related issues.

MN COLA Annual Meeting
Tuesday, June 17, 2025
9 - 11 a.m. Central time via Zoom

Topics to be covered:

- Strategies to provide AIS prevention
- "State of the Market" treatments for AIS, algae, and other factors affecting clean water.

Click [HERE](#) to register anytime before the meeting. The Zoom link for the meeting will be provided following registration in an email from Zoom. Watch for it and be sure to save the email.

[MORE](#)

MN COLA Hosts Information Table at the Lake Stewardship Symposium

MN COLA hosted a table display at the Lake Stewardship Symposium on May 31, 2025, at Thumper Pond Resort, Ottertail, MN. The Symposium was well attended by lake property owners from multiple regional counties. Seven speakers presented addressing lake stewardship best practices including AIS prevention, shoreline restoration and current MN legislative issues.

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

[MNCOLA.ORG](#)

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



Boating Education Requirements

Beginning July 1, 2025, more people who operate motorboats or personal watercrafts on Minnesota waters must obtain a valid watercraft operator's permit. The updated requirements, passed into law during 2023, are intended to make boating safer by ensuring people operating motorized watercraft know the rules and are properly trained.

[MORE](#)

DNR Cautions Against Hydraulic Jet Misuse

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources frequently receives questions about devices that generate water current to blast muck and aquatic plants away. They have various trade names, but the DNR refers to these devices generically as hydraulic jets. Even though they can be purchased in Minnesota, they cannot be used in any way that disturbs the bottom of a waterbody or destroys plants.

[MORE](#)

DNR Loon Survey Volunteers Needed

Help track Minnesota's loon population! Now celebrating its 32nd year, the Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program is recruiting volunteers to count the number of adult and juvenile loons on pre-selected lakes one morning between Friday, July 4th and Monday, July 14th, 2025.

Detailed instructions, training materials, maps, and a data form will be provided. Time commitment is 2-4 hours per lake. Surveys must be done sometime between 5:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Volunteers must commit to completing assigned lake(s) within the specified time frame and returning completed survey materials.

To see what lakes need a volunteer surveyor or to sign up, go to mndnr.gov/eco/nongame/projects/mlmp_state.html and click on "Volunteer Map".

For questions or more information, call or e-mail the loon monitoring coordinator:

Contact Kriste Brezina, Fergus Falls, 218-671-7977,
kristie.brezina@state.mn.us

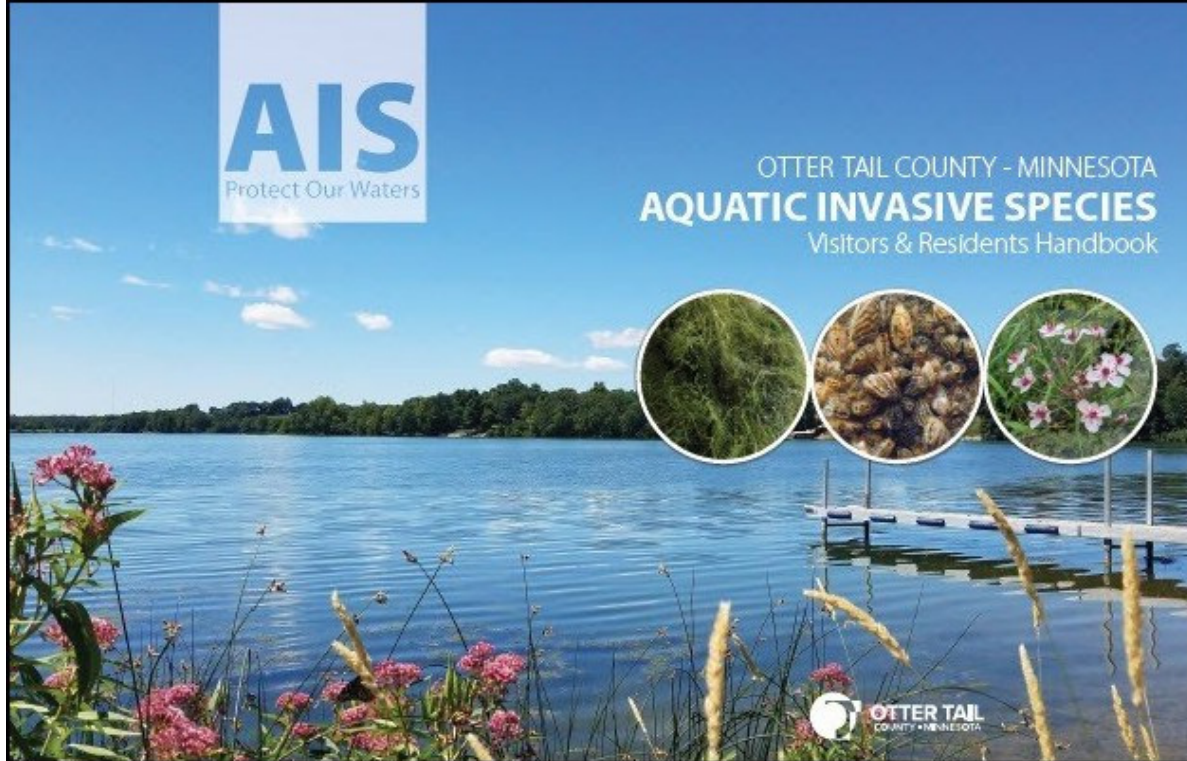


AIS Prevention Aid Program Snapshot 2024

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**](#)

OTC Board Of Commissioner Minutes

- [**April 22, 2025**](#)
 - [**May 6, 2025**](#)
-



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- [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

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