

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

## E-Newsletter August 2025



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### From The President - Sylvia Soeth

**What do you know about One Water One Plan?** Is it good for Otter Tail County bodies of water? How will 1W1P affect your lake? Is there money available

to protect our lakes? Who's in charge?

Chances are you don't know the answers unless you're directly involved in 1W1P. The COLA meeting on August 21 will help us understand. Darren Newville from EOT Soil and Water Conservation District has been our speaker at several meetings in past years and we always learn from Darren! The East and West Soil and Water Districts are sources of information and partners in protecting and improving our valuable resources.

This is the COLA Annual Meeting and the last property owner meeting of this year. The COLA Board meets year round to organize and carry out the business of COLA. The newsletter is on [otccola.org](http://otccola.org) each month, thanks to Administrative Assistant John Kruse, to spread the latest information.

Join us on Thursday, August 21, at the Otter Tail Community Center. The cookies are really good!

**[Sylvia Soeth, OTC COLA President](#)**

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### **Newville Featured Speaker August 21 2025**

The featured speaker for OTC COLA's August 2025 meeting will be Darren Newville. Darren is the 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.

One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) is a program sponsored by BWSR (Board of Water and Soil Resources) for locals to write a water plan on a watershed boundary. Traditionally, these plans have been written based on county

boundaries but efforts are to move away from that model to one model based on watersheds. This is a beneficial change that will help plans be more cohesive and impactful. It will look at all the issues and protection needs in a watershed and prioritize them. Goals will be created to restore and protect the most important water bodies. Local governments, counties, Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and watershed districts, will adopt these plans after the Board of Water and Soil Resources and other state agencies review the plans.

Join other lake property owners Thursday, August 21, 2025. All Minnesota lake property owners are welcome to attend OTC COLA meetings 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.

### [One Watershed, One Plan](#)

### [Darren Newville, EOT SWCD District Manager](#)

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Ezri Farnum

### **Starry Stonewort - Meeting Topic** **OTC COLA July 17 Lake Property Owner Meeting**

The featured speaker at the OTC COLA lake property owner meeting on July 17, 2025 was Ezri Farnum. Ezri is the President of the Koronis Lake Association. Lake Koronis is located near Paynesville Minnesota. The lake has been combating the infestation of starry stonewort since 2015.

Starry Stonewort is a noxious, matting algae posing a clear and present danger to lake property values and the quality of lake experience across Minnesota.

The challenge of dealing with Starry Stonewort at Lake Koronis has proved formidable from the outset. Little was known about the Starry Stonewort when it was first detected in Lake Koronis in 2015. Stakeholders for the lake continue to pursue information and advice to formulate a consensus of how to battle the harmful aquatic invasive plant. Over the years a knowledge base has been compiled from local experts as well as from those outside of Minnesota. Lake Koronis is the largest Starry Stonewort management project in Minnesota.

Otter Tail Coalition of Lake Associations has sponsored two bus tours to Lake Koronis. The first was in September 2017 and other in July of 2022. Participants of the tours have indicated they were enlightened to the threat of Starry Stonewort.

Ezri related how starry stonewort has impacted Lake Koronis and described what the Lake Association continues to do to combat it.

[Lake Koronis / Starry Stonewort slide presentation](#)

[Lake Koronis /Starry Stonewort Brochure](#)

[Ezri Farnum](#)

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## **Symposium : Summaries, References**

The Lake Property Owner Lake Stewardship Symposium on May 31, at Thumper Pond, at Ottertail City, was a tremendous success. Attendees have stated "excellent and look forward to your next event", "well run, speakers stay on topics and allow questions", "do another when you can", "great to visit with other lake property owners", "very well done, we want to come again".

Newsletter readers have requested selected summaries and references from the Lake Property Owner Lake Stewardship Symposium.

Plans are being made to organize an even bigger, better Symposium for next year. email [\*\*otccola2@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:otccola2@gmail.com) to be sure to receive notice of the event.

[Summaries, References](#)

[Spencer McGrew, OTC AIS Specialist](#)

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

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**Snorkeling for snails on Pelican Lake—as one of the world’s foremost experts on swimmer’s itch investigates the Pelican Lake outbreak.**

## **Swimmer's Itch More Terrifying Than A Shark Attack!**

The [July issue of the OTC COLA E-Newsletter](#) included an article reporting on the efforts of the Pelican Lake Association and the Pelican Group Of Lakes Improvement District to combat a serious outbreak of swimmer's itch on Pelican Lake. Interest in the article was measured as having the greatest interest by readers in the last 10 years!

An article in the Pelican Rapids Press contained the tongue-in-cheek headline "Swimmer's Itch More Terrifying Than A Shark Attack". It is assumed that interest in the subject has not diminished and that observations in Pelican Press's article, accessed with the link below, will offer additional perspectives not related before.

The Pelican Lake Swimmers Itch Task force has published a Q&A document addressing common questions and answers; some dispelling incorrect assumptions that have been previously raised.

Also published is an "Urgent Swimmers Itch Action Needed" request for lake property owners to help persuade the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) to issue a permit for the control of merganser ducks to abate swimmer's itch in Minnesota lakes.

[More Terrifying Than A Shark Attack](#)  
[Swimmers Itch Q&A](#)  
[Urgent Swimmer's Itch Action Needed](#)



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Thank you for choosing RMB. We look forward to continuing to support your environmental testing needs.

Best regards,  
RMB Environmental Laboratories Team

[www.rmbel.com](http://www.rmbel.com)

RMB Laboratories provides analysis for OTC COLA's water monitoring program.

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## COLA Speakers Wind Up Season

OTC COLA has provided speakers at summer lake property owner meetings for several years. It is an opportunity for COLA to reach out to Associations and lake property owners providing information and education for promoting stewardship of Otter Tail County lakes.

OTC COLA was active during the 2025 lake season providing speakers for Lake Association meetings of lake property owners. Jeff Vansteenburgh, OTC COLA Environmental Director was the featured speaker at the Lake Property Owner meeting at the Ottertail Community Center on June 19. Scott Gaudette, OTC COLA Director, addressed the Lake Six Association on July 12. Jeff Vansteenburgh performed double-duty on July 12 presenting to both the Silver Lake Association and the Eagle Lake, Lake Improvement District on the same day! He also spoke to the Pine Lakes Lake Improvement District on July 26. John Kruse, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant also participated speaking at the Wall Lake annual meeting on July 24.

A big THANK YOU goes out to these Lake Associations for inviting OTC COLA to speak at their meetings and giving COLA the opportunity to meet and greet lake property owners.

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Warm regards,  
Sami Selter,  
MN Lakes and Rivers, Associate Executive Director  
[www.MNLakesAndRivers.org](http://www.MNLakesAndRivers.org)

## [August Newsletter](#)

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### **How Powerboats Impact Lakes Below The Surface**

Large surface waves produced by powerboats are a mainstay for recreational watersports. A new study from the University of Minnesota shows that beneath the surface, factors such as propeller thrust and other types of waves can impact delicate lakebed ecosystems.

Researchers at the University's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory built on [previous research](#) to study the effects of powerboats on lake ecosystems over the 2022 and 2023 field seasons. The team placed acoustic-based sensors that measured pressure and velocities through the water column and at the lake bottom at two different locations and at two different depths. They also collected sediment samples and data on various water quality parameters.

[MORE](#)

## UMN Extension Survey

My name is Olivia Olson, and I work with both UMN Extension in Otter Tail County and with the EOT SWCD. I am currently carrying out a county-wide needs assessment to see how Extension can be the most helpful for county residents, and I would like your assistance in reaching out to the members of COLA/lakeshore homeowners for their feedback. I have a [2-3 minute online survey](#) for individuals to take that allows them to share their preferences on what they want to learn about and how. I am also happy to come and talk about this in person with those interested in that format, whether that be a presentation at a lake association meeting or a conversation with an individual.

Let me know if you are able to help share this out, and I am happy to talk about this more if you have any questions.

Thank you,  
Olivia Olson

University of Minnesota Extension | <https://extension.umn.edu/also7655@umn.edu> | o. (218) 998-8303 | c. (218) 282-5963



### AIS Showcase- Registration is open!

We are excited to announce that **registration is now open** for the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center's [AIS Research and Management Showcase](#). 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:** 7:45 AM - 5:30 PM

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

**Tickets:** \$50; *discount codes available*

**Parking:** Hourly parking available in the [Gortner Parking Ramp](#) and daily rate parking available in lot #S101 and #S106. Disability parking is available on Buford Ave. There are also some metered parking spots available on this campus.

Visit [Parking and Transportation Services](#) for rates and maps.

Cancellation policy: 100% refund until Tuesday, September 30th at 11:59pm CDT. No refunds available after Wednesday, October 1st at midnight CDT (GMT-05:00).

[MORE](#)

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## Help Shape Future Research!

Every two years, the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) embarks on a process to identify the most pressing aquatic invasive species (AIS) questions and challenges that are impacting our state, in order to prioritize them for future research.

One way we accomplish this is to offer the chance for you to **share your biggest AIS concerns**. Whether you're a professional in the field, a property owner, or someone who cares about Minnesota's waterways, we invite you to participate - anyone can take the survey!

If you have questions, please [email MAISRC](#). The survey should take **no more than 5 minutes**, and will close on September 22nd.

[AIS SURVEY](#)

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

[MNCOLA.ORG](#)

[Subscribe to the MN COLA E-Newsletter](#)

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

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## **Zebra Mussels Confirmed In Ethel Lake In Otter Tail County**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in Ethel Lake, near the town of Ottertail in Otter Tail County.

A DNR staff person found zebra mussels attached to native mussels while visiting Ethel Lake.

Whether or not a lake has any invasive species, Minnesota law requires people to:

- Clean watercraft, trailers and equipment to remove aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species.
- Drain all water and leave drain plugs out during transport.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.
- Never release bait, plants or aquarium pets into Minnesota waters.
- Dry docks, lifts and rafts for 21 days before moving them from one water body to another.
- 

These additional steps reduce the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species:

- Decontaminate watercraft and equipment – find free stations on the [courtesy decontamination page of the DNR website](http://mndnr.gov/decon) (mndnr.gov/decon).
- Spray watercraft and equipment with high-pressure water or rinse with water if high-pressure water is not available.
- Dry watercraft and equipment for at least five days before using in another water body.

People should [contact a Minnesota DNR aquatic invasive species specialist](http://mndnr.gov/invasives/ais/contacts.html) (mndnr.gov/invasives/ais/contacts.html) if they think they have found zebra mussels or any other invasive species that are not already known to be in the waterbody.

More information is available on the [aquatic invasive species page of the DNR website](http://mndnr.gov/ais) (mndnr.gov/ais).

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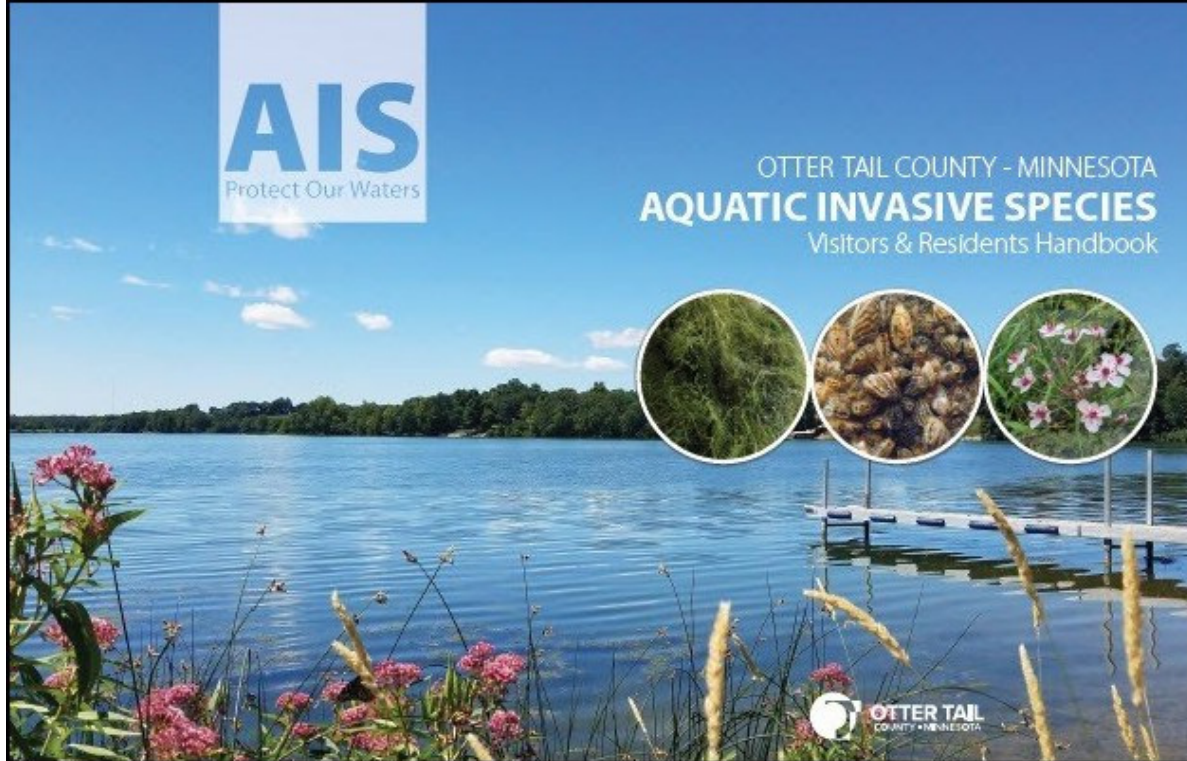
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## **AIS Prevention Aid Program Snapshot 2024**

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 Board Of Commissioner Minutes**

- [\*\*June 24, 2025\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*July 8, 2025\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*July 22, 2025\*\*](#)
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## Featured Posts - August 2025

- [Starry Stonewort Video](#)
- [Steps To Create A Lake Management Plan](#)
- [Water Quality Reports](#)

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- [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**

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