

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter October 2025



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From The OTC COLA President Sylvia Soeth

Another lake season is slowly coming to an end with the nice Fall weather. It's been a successful year for OTC COLA. Much information was shared with property owners at the meetings this summer. This came after the Symposium at Thumper Pond in May that COLA sponsored with the AIS Task Force. OTC COLA Board members David Helgersen and Jeff Stabnow supervised registration on the day; John Kruse got the many attendees registered. There are plans in place to have a number of topics at the Second Annual in 2026. Also looking forward to next year, the Speaker Team of Jeff Vansteenburgh, David, Scott and John will

reach out to Lake Associations to tell the story of COLA and water quality issues, as they have done.

Water testing came to an end for the year in September. Jeff Vansteenburgh led a dedicated crew of testers from COLA member lakes. John will compose the numbers into a 10 year analysis for each lake. He will continue to share information in the newsletter through the Winter and Spring months until we meet again in Summer of 2026.

[Sylvia Soeth, OTC COLA President](#)



Starry Stonewort Treatment at Lake Anna

October 8, 2025 –**OTTER TAIL COUNTY, MN** – Otter Tail County officials announced that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has positively identified two invasive aquatic species in Anna Lake, located north of Underwood off County Highway 35. The invasive species discovered include starry stonewort and zebra mussels.

The initial discovery was reported on Thursday, September 11, when the DNR confirmed the presence of both species at the end of the dock at the public access in approximately 4-6 feet of water. Following the confirmation, a comprehensive survey of the lake was conducted on Tuesday, September 16, by Spencer McGrew, Otter Tail County AIS Specialist, and Mark Ranwieler, Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist, Northwest Region, DNR based out of Fergus Falls. The survey found no

additional starry stonewort beyond the initial discovery site at the boat ramp.

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OTC COLA Funding Cut

Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations (OTC COLA) will suffer from Minnesota's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Aid funding cuts.

The impact of the projected \$6 billion Minnesota State deficit expected for the 2028–29 biennium, was to cut the AIS Prevention Aid funding to counties. The net effect to OTC COLA was the discontinuation of receiving any future annual funding starting in fiscal 2026.

Protection and preservation of Otter Tail County lakes remain priorities of OTC COLA but the funding cuts will drastically diminish its effectiveness and opportunity to achieve its objectives. Please consider a donation to OTC COLA to help keep OTC COLA as a viable organization.

OTC COLA, 4302 13th Ave S, Ste. 4-333, Fargo North Dakota 58103

Visit www.OTCCOLA.com to learn more about OTC COLA

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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

[BACK STORY](#)



OTC COLA Needs Donations More Than Ever Before

Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations (OTC COLA) gratefully receives donations from Lake Associations, lake property owners and other individuals. In the past this support has done much to allow OTC COLA to provide valuable programs and events aimed to prevent the proliferation of Aquatic Invasive Species, preserve lake water quality and promote practices to control shoreline erosion.

OTC COLA's ability to continue its efforts to protect lakes is in jeopardy. OTC COLA Funding from the Minnesota AIS Prevention Aid program will be discontinued in 2026 (Please see "OTC COLA Funding Cut" article in this newsletter).

For more information about OTC COLA please go to www.otccola.org

Please consider a donation to OTC COLA. Please send to:

OTC COLA

4302 13th Ave S, Ste.4-333

Fargo ND 58103.

For questions please contact

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

701-219-0465



2025 Thank You Lake Samplers!

Samples for the 2025 OTC COLA Water Monitoring Program have been turned in and analyzed. Thank you samplers for your time, diligence and dedication!

The OTC COLA Water Quality Monitoring Program has been active since 1992 and has evolved to incorporate the efforts of volunteers from Member Lake Associations who do the sampling, with RMB Laboratories in Detroit Lakes MN for doing the analysis of samples at a discounted rate, with OTC COLA who compiles the data and generates annual 10-year trend analysis reports. The reports are used by Lake Associations to monitor water quality trends for their lakes and to help steer efforts to preserve lake quality. The data is also shared with the MPCA (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) to assist in evaluating State management decisions.

[List of 2025 samplers for each lake](#)

[Water Quality Analysis Reports](#)



[October 2025 Newsletter](#)



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

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



Zebra Mussels Confirmed in Lake Six Otter Tail County

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in Munson Lake, near Detroit Lakes in Becker County, and Lake Six, near Frazee in Otter Tail County.

Pelican River Watershed District staff contacted the DNR after a Munson Lake property owner found zebra mussels attached to a boat lift. During a follow-up search, DNR invasive species staff immediately found an adult zebra mussel

attached to a native mussel near the public access. Munson Lake is upstream of Lake Sallie, where zebra mussels were found in 2016.

[MORE](#)

2026 Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Grants: Application Period Open Nov. 10

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Invasive Species Program will be offering grants for the management of curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, flowering rush, and starry stonewort in 2026. Invasive aquatic plants are non-native plants that can potentially reduce native plant diversity and create recreational nuisance in lakes. The DNR's **invasive plant management** goal is to minimize harmful effects caused by invasive aquatic plants while also protecting natural resources and their use.

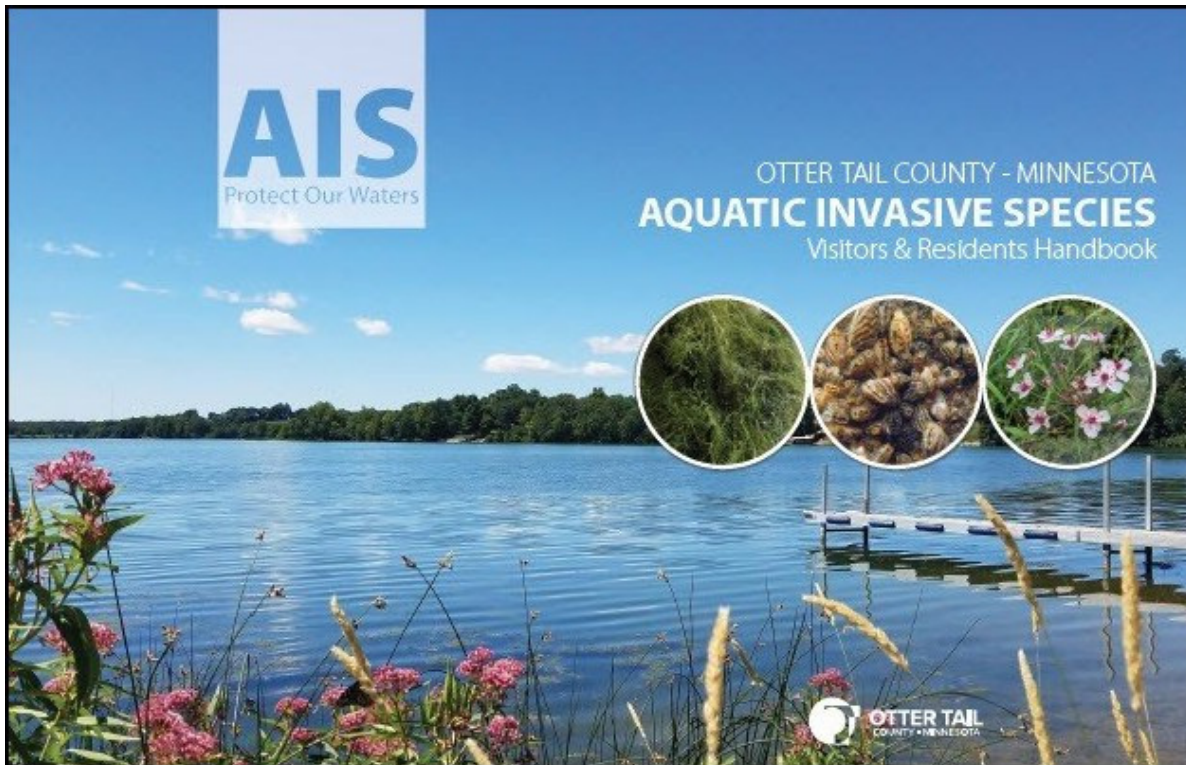
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AIS Prevention Aid Program Snapshot 2024

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.

[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

- [September 9, 2025](#)
- [September 23, 2025](#)



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

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

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