

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

## E-Newsletter May 2026



### [SUBSCRIBE](#)

Someone forward this Newsletter to you?

Go to the link above to subscribe to the monthly E-Newsletter

[View as Webpage](#)

---

### **In This Issue:**

- **From The President**
  - **OTC COLA Upcoming Events**
  - **Lake Stewardship Symposium**
  - **Swimmer's Itch Update- Pelican Lake**
  - **OTC COLA Speaker Team**
  - **MAISRC Newsletter**
  - **MLR Zero Trace Baits**
  - **MN COLA- Position on Wake Activities**
  - **DNR- Long Range Muskie Plan**
  - **DNR- Angling Questions Answered**
  - **DNR- Seasonal Fishing Closures**
  - **DNR- Safe Practices Around Cold Water**
  - **OTC Commissioner Meetings on YouTube**
  - **OTC AIS Snapshot Of Accomplishments**
  - **AIS Handbooks - Still Available**
  - **OTC Board Of Commissioners Minutes**
  - **[www.lakeadmin.org](http://www.lakeadmin.org) - Featured Posts**
  - **Instant Access Links-**
  - **[Newsletter Article Index](#)**
  - **[Water Quality Analysis Reports \(2025 Samples\)](#)**
- 

### **From The President**

Sylvia Soeth

Spring has sprung! Ice is off and boats are going in the water! It's the time for OTC COLA to leap into our active season for members and property owners. We begin in April with water samplers receiving supplies from RMB Labs to fill water bottles and read secchi discs once a month on each member lake. The first sample will be due May 18.

Water quality is one tenet of COLA and Education is the other. We will not meet the third Thursday of May because we sponsor the AIS Symposium with the AIS Task Force. You can learn about so many topics on Saturday, May 16. Speakers range from the county to statewide. Spencer McGrew of AIS has scheduled a variety of speakers to educate you to protect and enjoy our lakes and rivers. You can register with John Kruse of COLA in this newsletter. There is no charge, but we need you to register to plan for the hot breakfast and snacks!

Mark your calendar! June 18, July 16 and August 20, COLA will meet at 7 p.m. at the Otter Tail Community Center. We continue offering useful Education opportunities all season. These speakers are chosen from OTC so you get acquainted with experts in the field that you could contact anytime: RMB Lab and Jeff Vansteenbergh of COLA about water testing and Pete Guck of EOT Soil & Water Conservation District on how you can work with them. At the Annual Meeting Spencer McGrew will update us on AIS progress and the Deputy Sheriff dedicated to AIS will talk about enforcement of MN AIS laws in the county.

The season will end with the last water samples in September. Results of tests appear in the COLA newsletter that we hope you read all year long.

[Sylvia Soeth, OTC COLA President](#)

---



### **OTC COLA Upcoming Events**

OTC COLA events scheduled for 2026 include the Lake Stewardship Symposium in May and Lake Property Owner meetings, third Thursdays in June, July and August.

**May 16, 2026-** Lake Stewardship Symposium, Thumper Pond Resort.

**June 18, 2026-** Lake Property Owner Meeting, Ottertail Community Center. The Featured Speaker will be Tracy Borash of RMB Laboratories, Detroit Lakes Minnesota. RMB has partnered with OTC COLA doing the water quality analysis for its Water Monitoring Program since 1992.

**July 16, 2026-** Lake Property Owner Meeting, Ottertail Community Center

Pete Guck, Riparian Conservation Specialist at East Otter Tail Soil Conservation District (EOT SWCD) will talk on the services available from EOT SWCD for lake property owners.

**August 20, 2026-** Lake Property Owner Annual Meeting, Ottertail Community Center. Spencer McGrew, Otter Tail County Aquatic Invasive Specialist will review activities of the Otter Tail County Watercraft Inspection program. Assisting Spencer will be Deputy Derek Tollefson.

OTC COLA events and meetings are always opportunities for lake property owners to learn how to be better stewards of their lakes and for networking and socializing with other lake property owners.

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



Logo photo courtesy [whittenaerials@gmail.com](mailto:whittenaerials@gmail.com) [www.vernwhittenphotography.com](http://www.vernwhittenphotography.com)

## **Have You Registered For the Symposium Yet?**

Registrations keep coming in for the 2026 Lake Property Owner Symposium on May 16 at the Thumper Pond Resort. They have been received from Otter Tail County as well as from a number of regional counties.

The event will start off with a free hot breakfast for all attendees from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

The speakers will cover a variety of subjects and issues of great interest to lake property owners.

### **Get the latest news and scientific updates to help lake property owners become better stewards of their lakes**

- MAISRC researchers are investigating how AIS may increase human exposure to the swimmer's itch parasite.
- Hear about new statistical approaches to analyze data at the University of Minnesota. Recommendations for prioritizing future funding will be presented.
- Learn how septic systems work and what is looked at during state and county compliance inspections.

- Learn about harnessing the power of Lake Associations to drive public policy. Hear about what you can do to reverse the MN defunding of the AIS Prevention Aid. It is estimated the result will be a \$200,000 hit to Otter Tail County.
- The East Otter Tail County Soil & Water Conservation [Lake Stewardship Booklet](#) is now available. The 20-page booklet outlines tips to help guide lake property owners to become better lake stewards.

Invitations have been extended to organizations to host table displays for dissemination of relevant lake property owner information. To reserve a table at the Symposium please email [John Kruse, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant](#).

The Symposium will be held at Thumper Pond Resort in Ottertail City from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on May 16, 2026. There is no cost for the event including the free hot breakfast.

Registrations for the event are greatly appreciated to assist in capacity planning. For more information see previous issues of the [OTC COLA E-Newsletter](#) in the [OTC COLA Newsletter Index](#) , postings on the [otccola.org](#) website or news releases published in regional newspaper publications. You can also register by calling [John Kruse, OTC COLA Administrative Assistant](#), 701-219-0465.

[Symposium Flyer](#)

[Speakers](#)

[Program](#)

[Register HERE](#)

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

---



## Swimmer's Itch Update - Pelican Lake

As you may recall, our current snail population hatched and was infected with the swimmer's itch parasite last summer. Based on a scientific analysis, 16.4% of snails in Pelican Lake were infected with *T. stagnicola*. This is, by far, the worst outbreak of any lake ever tested in the US. These snails will die off in July/August, which means we expect to experience severe swimmer's itch problems again this summer. Residents are urged to be cautious this spring and summer about entering the water and to take precautions (e.g swim in the middle of the lake rather than close to shore). If we are able to halt the swimmer's itch lifecycle by the end of June, there is hope that by August of 2026 (and beyond) when new snails are hatched, things can start returning to normal on the lake.

### **Disclaimer:**

**This article was submitted by Pelican Lake Association and Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District for information and does not necessarily express policy of the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations.**

[MORE](#)



## **OTC COLA Board Members To Speak At Your Meeting**

Lake Associations are in the process of planning their annual meetings for 2026. The OTC COLA Board Members on the Speaker Team are looking forward to invitations to speak at any lake property owner event. Topics are being explored and presentations prepared that are of high interest to lake property owners.

The Team is currently responding to Lake Association requests to schedule speaking dates. Coordinating Team Members with desired meeting dates and times is sometimes 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](mailto:John.Kruse@otccola.com), at [otccola2@gmail.com](mailto:otccola2@gmail.com).



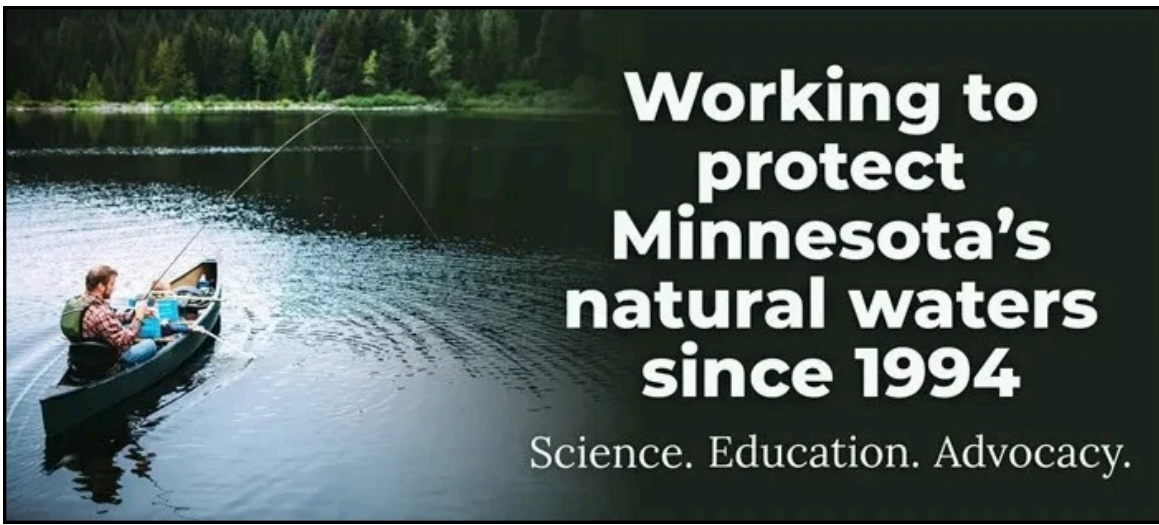
## Explore the Latest in Aquatic Invasive Species Research

The newest edition of the MAISRC newsletter is now available, highlighting new research, partnerships, and opportunities to strengthen aquatic invasive species (AIS) management across Minnesota.

This issue features the launch of MAISRC's **2026 Externship Program**, connecting AIS professionals with researchers to test management strategies directly in the field. Projects in this cohort address key challenges like biocontrol of Eurasian watermilfoil, community-based management of mystery snails and rusty crayfish, early detection of starry stonewort using eDNA tools, and understanding how weather influences common carp movement.

[MORE](#)

---



## Zero Trace Baits

Zero Trace Baits are made from glycerin, gelatin, and “a few guarded secrets” that slowly release pheromones to attract fish and trigger the bite response, which means you'll catch more often and can feel good about leaving nothing behind. When these baits break down, they aren't leaving behind microplastics, BPA, or AIS that will persist for decades and degrade fisheries. Choosing this bait actively protects fish populations—so you can keep catching season after season.

[MORE](#)

[Zero Trace Website](#)

[Minnesota Lakes & Rivers Advocates](#)





## **Position Statement on Enhanced Wake Activities**

Ice is out on many Minnesota lakes, and it won't be long until we are back on the water. But, unfortunately the angst about enhanced wake activity (surfing) will continue to be a very hot topic on Minnesota Lakes.

Last summer, we were anxiously waiting for the University of Minnesota--St. Anthony Falls Laboratory to complete their Phase 2 work on enhanced wake activity. That amazing work was released in the fall regarding the impacts of wake surfing on the lake bed. With the new insights from the Phase 2 research in hand, MN COLA was able to put together a statement of our position that includes key elements including appropriate distances from shore and the depth of water required for this fun family recreation to be done safely.

[MORE](#)

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

[MNCOLA.ORG](#)

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

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



---

## **DNR Finalizes Long Range Muskie Plan**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has finalized its multi-year effort to update the state's long-range plan for muskellunge. The plan is available on the [DNR muskie webpage](#) ([mndnr.gov/muskie](http://mndnr.gov/muskie)) and will be used to guide muskie management in Minnesota through 2040.

The plan uses information from recently completed studies focused on muskie survival and ecology, along with community interactions and extensive stakeholder input. Updates to the plan include revised management goals, objectives and strategies centered on:

- Improving existing muskie populations
- Shifting approaches in the production of muskies to be stocked
- Continuing hybrid (tiger) muskellunge management in the metro area
- Broadening research and education efforts

“This plan marks a shift in our focus and a significant pivot in our approaches,” said Leslie George, northeast region fisheries manager. “We know there will be successes and challenges as we begin to put the plan into practice, but starting with a shared vision will position us well as we move forward.”

[MORE](#)

---

## Get Angling Questions Answered on the DNR’s Fishing Webpage

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has a [fishing webpage](#) ([mndnr.gov/fishing](http://mndnr.gov/fishing)) to help answer anglers’ questions. The page answers questions like:

- What species can I fish for?
- What kind of bait is legal?
- What kind of fish can I keep?

The page is a mobile-friendly destination for information on when, where and how to fish. Users will also find resources like the [LakeFinder](#) ([mndnr.gov/lakefind](http://mndnr.gov/lakefind)), which provides maps and details about lakes throughout the state, and the [StreamFinder tool](#) ([mndnr.gov/streamfind](http://mndnr.gov/streamfind)) that gives a description, species list, regulations, and access information for trout streams throughout Minnesota.

---

## DNR Announces Temporary Seasonal Fishing Closures

To protect spawning fish, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has begun to close certain portions of some Minnesota waters. The closings are routine and based on local conditions.

Closings happen each year as ice melts and waters begin to warm. The DNR closes spawning locations to fishing only where habitat is limited and fish are very concentrated in one location, such as a segment of a river or the bay of a lake where fish congregate during spawning.

Areas closed to fishing are listed and updated regularly on the [Minnesota DNR website](#) ([mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing/fishing-seasonal-closures.html](http://mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing/fishing-seasonal-closures.html)). The DNR also posts at access sites and other visible spots near the closed areas. Anglers may fish in areas that are not posted. Closures are posted on the webpage at least 48 hours before their effective date.

---

## Safe Practices Around Cold Water Are Critical

The ice is gone from most lakes in the southern part of Minnesota and ice on many northern lakes is melting quickly. It's already common to see anglers and paddlers on open water, but with water temperatures dangerously low, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reminds anyone who's around lakes, rivers and ponds that cold water is dangerous and unexpected falls into the water can quickly turn tragic.

Each year approximately 30 percent of all fatal boating accidents occur during the cold-water period, defined as anytime the water is below 70 degrees. Many of these incidents involve victims who weren't wearing a life jacket. The best way to survive a fall into cold water is to wear a life jacket and make sure it's buckled or zipped.

[MORE](#)

---



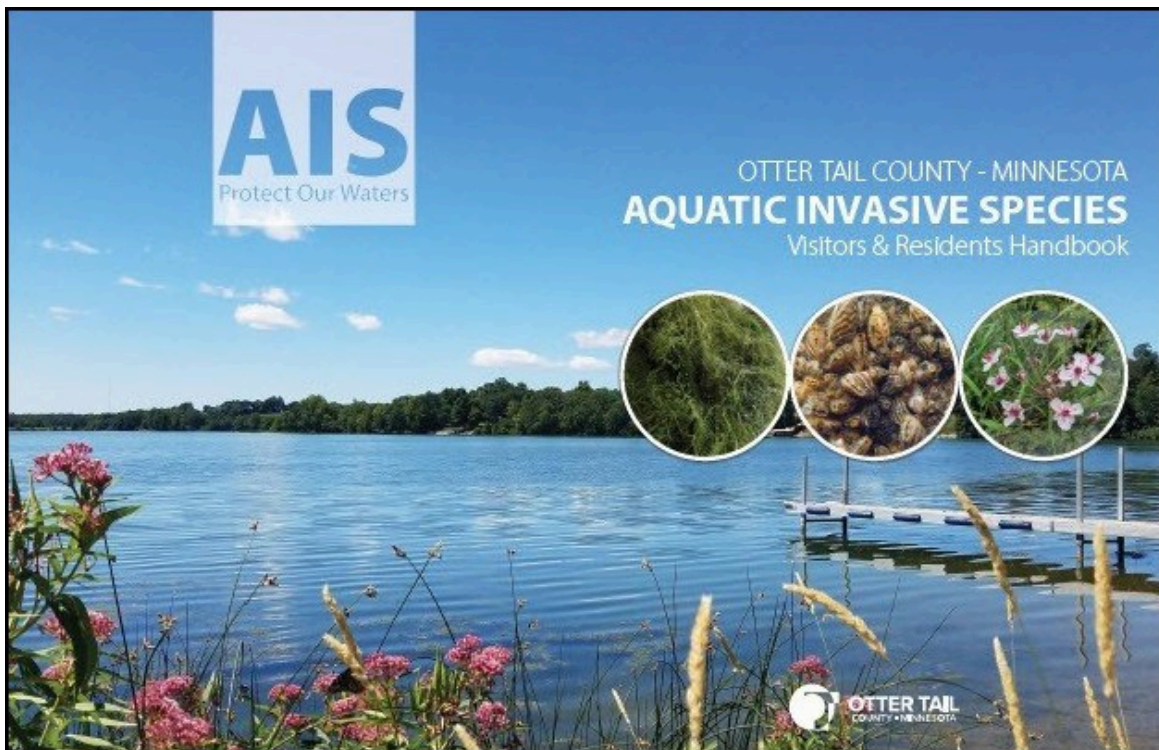
# Board of Commissioners Meetings Now Available on YouTube

Board of Commissioners meetings are available to re-watch on YouTube. To access the videos, visit the [Board of Commissioners page](#) and scroll to “Recent Meetings and Events” or visit our [Public Meetings playlist on YouTube](#). The meeting videos are divided into chapters by agenda item so you can click the video timeline to jump directly to the segment you would like to watch. Videos remain available for three months after each meeting.

---

## Otter Tail County AIS Prevention Aid Program [A Snapshot of Accomplishments in 2025](#) [Spencer McGrew](#), OTC AIS Specialist

---



## 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

- [February 24, 2026](#)
- [March 10, 2026](#)
- [March 24, 2026](#)
- [April 14, 2026](#)



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

### May 2026 Featured Posts

- [Lake Property Owner Event Administration](#)
- [Lake Property Owner Directory Listings](#)
- [Integrated Communications](#)

[www.lakeadmin.org](http://www.lakeadmin.org)

[Subscribe to the FREE lakeadmin.org BULLETIN](#)  
to learn about new and featured posts

---

### Instant Access Links

- [Newsletter Article Index](#)- Visually scan article titles from all OTC COLA E-Newsletters from 2018.
- [Water Quality Analysis Reports \(2025 samples\)](#)
- [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**

---

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

---

#### OTC COLA Board of Directors

David Helgersen · Jeff Stabnow · Jeff Vansteenburgh  
Roger Neitzke · Ronald Christensen · Scott Gaudette · Sylvia Soeth

OTC COLA Members

Bass Lake Underwood Association · Berger Lake Association · Big McDonald LID · Boedigheimer Lake Association · Buchanan Lake Association · Clitherall Lake Association · Dead Lake Association · Devils Lake Association · Eagle Lake Lakeshore Association · East Battle Lake WS Association · Elbow Lake Association · Franklin Lake Association · Hoffman Lake Association · Jewett Lake Association · Lida Lakes Improvement District · Lake Lizzie Lakeshore Association · Lake Seven Association · Lake Six Association · Leaf Lakes Association · Little McDonald Kerbs and Paul Lakes LID · Long Lake at Vergas Association · Loon Lake Association · Marion Lake Association · McDonald Lake Improvement Association · North Long Lake Association · North Turtle Lake Association · Otter Tail Lakes Property Owners Association · Pebble Lake Lakeshore Association · Pelican Lake Property Owners Association · Pickerel Lake Improvement Association · Pine Lakes LID · Prairie Lake Lakeshore Association · Round Lake 56-214 · Rush Lake Association · Silent Lakes Association · Silver Lake Property Owners Association · South Turtle Lake Improvement District · Spitzer Lake Property Owners Association · Stalker Lake Association · Star Lake Property Owners Association · Stuart Lake Association · Swan Lake Association · Sybil Lake Association · Tamarac Lake Association · Ten Mile Preservation Association · Trowbridge-Leek Lake Association · Wall Lake Association · West Battle Lake Association · West McDonald Lake Association · Wymer Lake Association

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

OTCCOLA | 4302 13th Ave S, Ste 4-333 | Fargo, MN 58103 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)