

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter August 2026



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UPCOMING EVENTS!

OTC COLA Upcoming Events



Derek Tollefson, Otter Tail County Deputy Sheriff

Lake Property Owners Meeting Thursday, August 20, 2026

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

Otter Tail County Deputy Sheriff will explain his roll in contributing to compliance to Otter Tail County AIS control regulations.

Spencer McGrew, Otter Tail County Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist will cover:

- Future installations of 30 self service tool stations in Otter Tail County
- Self service AIS rinse stations installed at area churches
- MN AIS Prevention Aid status and next steps
- Detection and control of Starry Stonewort at Lake Anna

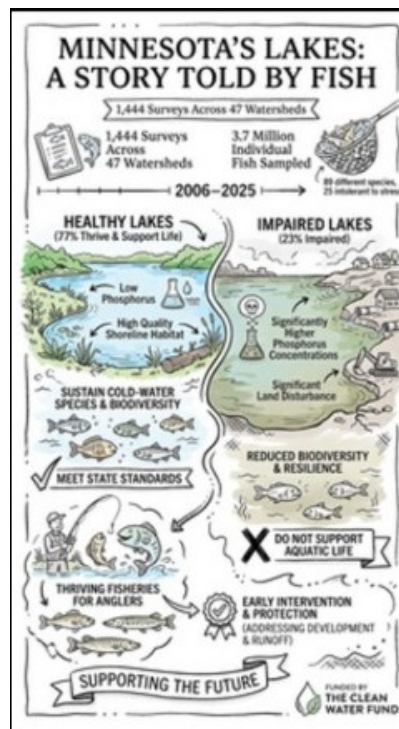


Join other lake property owners Thursday, August 20, 2026. All Minnesota lake property owners are welcome to attend OTC COLA meetings at the Ottertail Community Center, 93 Lake Avenue South, in Ottertail, Minnesota 56571. The August 2026 meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to arrive early for coffee and cookies and a time of socializing and networking.

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

Remaining Water Monitoring Sampling Dates 2026

August 17
September 21



DNR Fish Monitoring Report Rates MN Lakes

A new report from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, documents that healthier lakes tend to have lower phosphorus from runoff or drainage, less disturbance of land in the watershed, and better shoreline habitat.

"This report conveys the massive undertaking of more than a decade of studying fish populations specifically to assess the baseline health of lakes across the state," said Derek Bahr, DNR fisheries research scientist. "Ultimately we can use these results to enable state and local partners to better protect, or if necessary, restore Minnesota's aquatic habitats."

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DNR Updates Long-Term Muskie Plan

The updated plan will guide muskie management in Minnesota through 2040. It includes 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) muskie management in the metro area
- Broadening research and education efforts

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DNR Asks For Reports of Fish Mortality

The Minnesota DNR encourages people who see multiple dead fish in one area of a body of water in Minnesota to file a report by using a new online form or calling the state duty officer. People can report fish mortality events by:

- Preferred – using the online form on the [DNR website](#)
- Calling the Minnesota duty officer at 651-649-5451 or 800-422-0798. The duty officer line is staffed 24 hours per day, seven days a week

In the report, it's especially helpful to know the types of fish and their general sizes. Fish mortality events can occur for a variety of reasons and may be classified as a fish die-off or a fish kill depending on what contributed to the event.

Reports from the public are an important way we receive information about fish mortality. The reports help us facilitate timely water and fish sampling and other response actions, if needed.

Using the online form speeds up and simplifies our interagency response process, so we prefer people to use the online form. Still, if they want to call the duty officer, that also remains an option. More information about reporting, state response to fish mortality events, and general information is on the [DNR website](#).

Check For AIS Before Moving Water Equipment

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reminds people to check boats and trailers, docks and boat lifts, and all other water-related equipment for aquatic invasive species (AIS), especially when buying or selling used equipment.

Minnesota law requires that docks and lifts remain out of the water for at least 21 days before they can be placed into another waterbody. In addition, anyone who transports a dock or lift with attached zebra mussels from a shoreline property to another location for decontamination needs a free [permit \(mndnr.gov/invasives/ais_transport.html\)](https://mndnr.gov/invasives/ais_transport.html) to transport it legally.

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DNR Approach To Emerging Aeration Technologies

The DNR is aware of growing interest in emerging aeration technologies, such as nanobubble systems, restructured water, nanovoid and others, which introduce ultra-fine gas bubbles, or other, into the water column and are marketed as a solution for water quality improvement. While these technologies are gaining attention, the DNR is taking a precautionary approach to ensure these technologies achieve long-term sustainable treatment objectives, align with broader water quality goals and natural resource protections, and do not cause unintended harm to aquatic ecosystems.

At this time, the DNR is only issuing pilot study aeration permits for emerging technology/nanobubbles for the purpose of data collection and evaluation. Permittees are required to collect data and submit a written report at the end of the treatment season for evaluation.

More information can be found on the MNDNR Lake Aeration webpage, under the Emerging Technologies banner. Frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

[Denise Elston, MNDNR](#)

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DNR Encourages Courtesy on MN Waterways

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reminds all recreationists to remember the state's waters belong to all people, and everyone has the right to enjoy them.

"Some people will be fishing, kayaking or paddleboarding, and others just out for a cruise, riding a personal watercraft, or wake surfing," said Lt. Eric Sullivan, leader of the DNR's statewide Marine Unit. "We all play a role in protecting our waterways and keeping them safe, so please remember: These are shared resources and it's up to everyone to ensure their activities don't negatively affect the environment or the safety and enjoyment of other users."

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



AIS Research and Management Showcase: Registration opens in two weeks!

MAISRC is hosting our **12th annual AIS Research and Management Showcase** on **Wednesday, October 28th**. 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. **Registration will open in two weeks on Monday, August 10th.**

Upcoming Events

- August 4, 2026: Learn about revegetation after AIS treatment at Lake Harriet; [register](#)
- September 9, 2026: AIS Detectors webinar: [Restoring our underwater forests: Can native revegetation enhance invasion resistance in lakes?](#) Presented by Abha Panda
- October 28, 2026: Save the Date: [AIS Research and Management Showcase](#)
- November 10, 2026: AIS Detectors webinar: [Trends in watercraft traffic on Minnesota lakes](#), presented by Jared Langer

In the News

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Jeff (Easy Rider) Vansteenburgh, OTC COLA Environmental Director

Drivers and Riders Share the Road

Summer is riding season in lakes country, and the roads are full of boat trailers, campers, farm equipment and motorcycles. That is why the [Otter Tail County Safe Communities Coalition](#) and the [Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office](#) are joining the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration with a simple message: *A motorcyclist's safety is everyone's safety.*

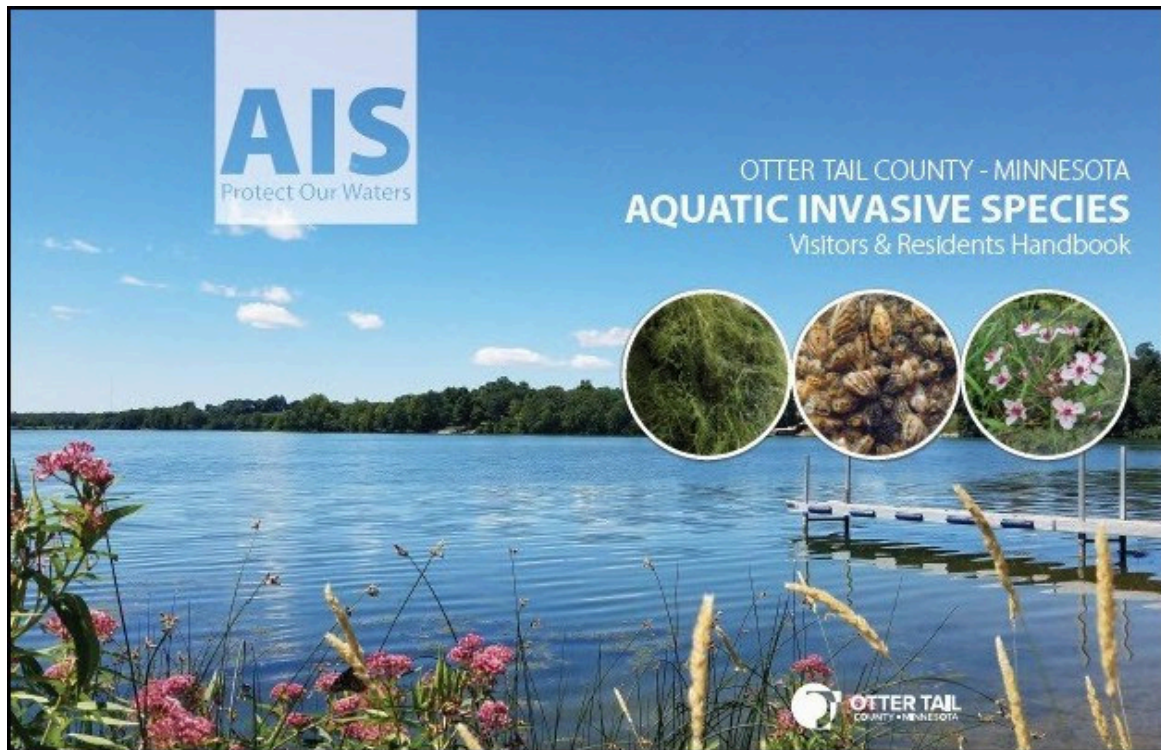
“Motorcycles are smaller and harder to spot, so take an extra second and look twice at intersections, at driveways and before pulling out of the lake access,” said Sergeant Allen McKesh of the Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office. “That one second can save a life.”

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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

- [June 23, 2026](#)
- [July 14, 2026](#)



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

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

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