

IMPORTANT NEWS from Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations

E-Newsletter September 2026



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From The President

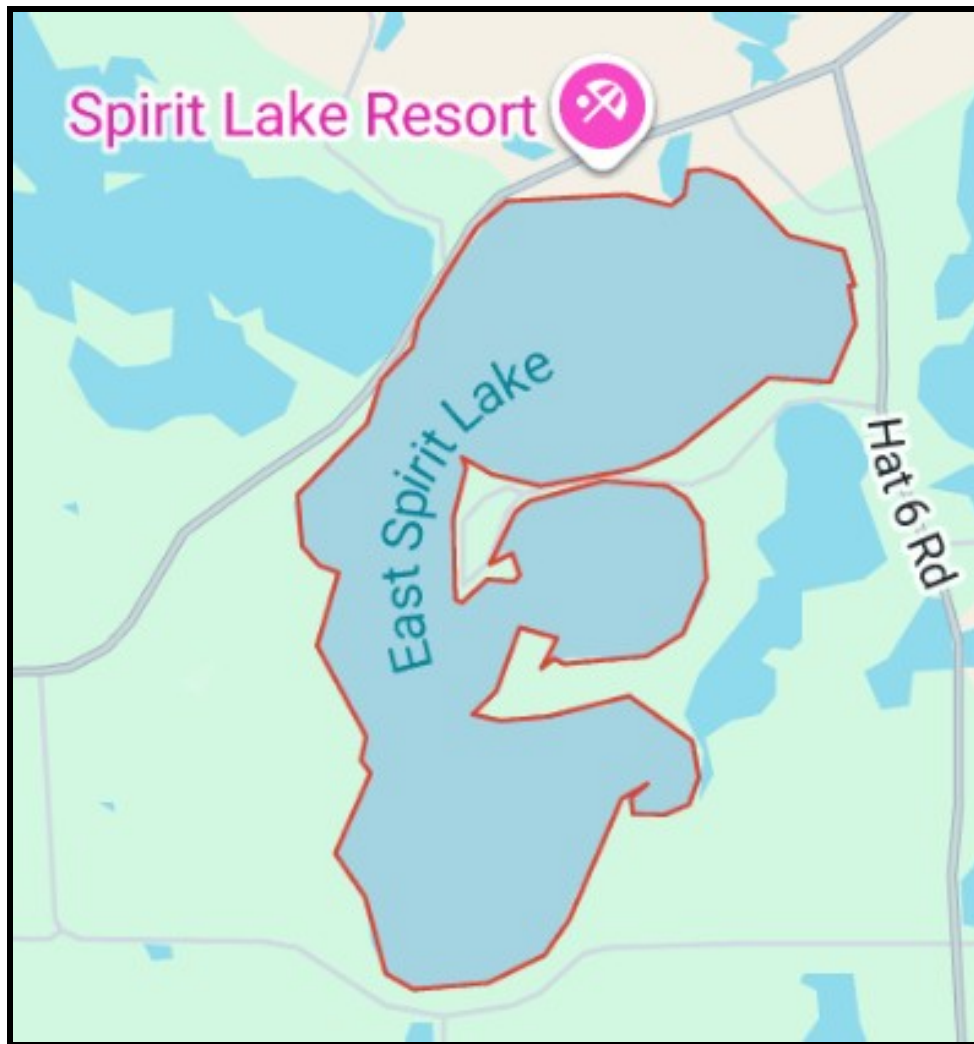
Summer is over and we had our last member meeting of the year in August. The three COLA meetings were interesting and informative. We learned about well testing from RMB Labs, the East Ottetail Soil and Water Conservation District workings, and Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force progress, as well as enforcement by the Deputy Sheriff dedicated to AIS. It's good to hear most cooperate with inspectors. Many questions were

asked and answered. Do you have a topic to suggest for 2027? The COLA Board wants to know!

Water samplers will wrap up the season with final tests on September 21. After that Administrative Assistant John Kruse will summarize another year for lakes that test. A summary for each will be published in the newsletter, so watch for that over the winter months. Although members don't meet, the COLA Board continues through the year.

With Fall there are still activities around the lakes. Be aware of Invasive Species when removing docks and equipment. Maybe you use a duck boat when hunting. Protect your lake through all the seasons, so we can enjoy the waters again next year!

[Sylvia Soeth, OTC COLA President](#)



Welcome East Spirit Lake Association

It was great to hear from Lisa Fortney, Treasurer for the East Spirit Lake, Lake Association that their Members had expressed interest in joining the Otter Tail County Coalition of Lake Associations (OTC COLA). East Spirit apparently had been aligned with OTC COLA in the past but it was long enough ago to not be readily front of mind for current Members.

East Spirit Lake Association currently has 75 Members. I began conversing with Lisa Fortney in June this year about what OTC COLA is and does. We found that there was a

lot of synergy between our organizations and embarked on enrolling East Spirit into OTC COLA. The OTC COLA water monitoring is of high interest. East Spirit plans to join the program in 2027. Bill Huber, President of East Spirit Lake Association presented the idea to Members to join OTC COLA where the idea was enthusiastically received.

The Lake Property Owner Meetings hosted by OTC COLA in the summer season are also attractive. Jerry and Barbara Thurman, East Spirit Members, attended the Annual Meeting at Ottertail Community Center on August 20.

It was noted that the best way to become acquainted with OTC COLA is to [SUBSCRIBE](#) to the monthly E-Newsletter. Included in each issue are links to the [E-Newsletter Article Index](#) to view all issues since 2018. Each E-Newsletter includes links to the [Water Quality Analysis Reports](#) to view 10-year trend analysis reports for phosphorus, chlorophyll-a and sechi-disk data for over 50 OTC COLA Members. The OTC COLA website, www.otccola.org website is also a great resource to get information.

For more information contact:

[John Kruse OTC COLA Administrative Assistant](#)

Attention: OTC COLA Water Samplers

The Water Monitoring Program is a primary component of OTC COLA's effort to offer its Members information, education and other stewardship best practices on preserving and protecting lake quality.

The Program began in 1992 with volunteers collecting water samples and clarity measurements. RMB Laboratories of Detroit Lakes Minnesota has conducted the analysis creating libraries of phosphorus, chlorophyll-a and secchi disk data. The program has matured to include annual Water Quality Analysis reports showing 10-year water quality trend analysis tables.

Crucial to the success of the Program has been the dedication of the volunteers who do the water sampling. Some of these volunteers have done sampling for over 25 years!

The annual Water Quality Analysis Program begins in April of each year with the initial distribution of coolers to the samplers. Traditionally, this has been done on a designated day in April (third Thursday) at the Ottertail Community Center in Ottertail, MN. OTC COLA would like to revisit the scheduling of this day to find out if a different day or method would be desired by water samplers.

Also, OTC COLA would like to invite suggestions on a method or methods to assist in reminding samplers of upcoming dates to collect monthly samples. Currently the monthly OTC COLA E-Newsletter has included notification of these dates.

We will appreciate your suggestions, insights and comments on possible revisions to the OTC COLA Water Quality Monitoring Program. Please call me (701-219-0465) or email them to me (otccola2@gmail.com).

Thank you!

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



**UPCOMING
EVENTS!**

Water Sampling Date REMINDER

Remaining Water Monitoring Sampling Date 2026

September 21



Jeff Vansteenburgh takes a selfie at Stuart Lake Association Meeting

Speaker Team Winds Up Lake Association Presentations for 2026

Jeff Vansteenburgh, OTC COLA Environmental Director, gave a presentation at the Stuart Lake Associations Annual Meeting. Scott Gaudette Educational Director, liaison to the Ottertail County AIS Task Force, presented to Wall Lake Association. Unfortunately, a few requests received in 2026 could not be accommodated due to scheduling conflicts. Those Lake Associations will be given priority for contact next season. To arrange a speaker for 2027, please let me know.

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

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF BOATING

*The U.S. Coast Guard and NORC are conducting the National Recreational Boating Safety Survey to **improve boating safety nationwide.***

If you are a
boat owner or renter
operating a boat or
paddlecraft,
**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

**SIGN UP
FOR A CHANCE**
to be selected to
take the survey



Join In Shaping the Future of Boating In Minnesota

Greetings from the U.S. Coast Guard

We invite you to join us in shaping the future of boating safety by participating in the [National Recreational Boating Safety Survey](#), (NRBSS) focusing specifically on Minnesota. This is the only nationwide survey dedicated to understanding recreational boating, including boat usage, safety equipment, and estimating the number of unregistered boats. Your input will help improve safety and enjoyment for all Minnesota boaters and contribute to valuable data used to make our waters safer. Your participation will help update these facts and guide future improvements in boating safety for the entire community.

[NRBSS Survey](#)

[NRBSS Press Kit](#)



Low Water Levels Create Challenges For Boat Launching, Retrieval

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources advises boaters to take extra care at public water access sites throughout Minnesota, where ongoing drought conditions continue to cause low water levels.

This means fall boaters, especially those operating larger watercraft with longer trailers, may experience difficulties launching and retrieving them at shallow boat ramps. Low water levels may also expose additional or unmarked obstructions at the ramp, including stumps, rocks, holes, sand bars, and other damage caused by power loading. While the DNR continues to repair and extend boat ramps where possible, options to address access challenges are limited on many lakes.

[MORE](#)

[Power Loading Causes Damage](#)

Join the DNR Conservation Conversation

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is recruiting new members to serve on several key advisory groups related to natural resource management. The DNR has a long and proud tradition of working closely with advisory groups as we manage natural resources across Minnesota. With their diverse membership, advisory group members share a wide range of important perspectives and experiences with DNR.

Because no single group can effectively and credibly address the full scope of DNR's resource management responsibilities, we rely on several different advisory groups, each of which allows members to focus on particular aspects of our work to help shape thoughtful, balanced, and community-informed decisions. We're currently seeking new members to join several key advisory groups and continue this legacy of collaboration.



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



Statistics On Boater Accidents Lowest On Record

**Credit is given to implementation of new
Boaters Education and Certification requirement**

MLR lobbied hard, for many years, for the legislature to create a boaters education and certification program. Minnesota was one of only eight states that did not have a boater license requirement.

In 2025 the MN Legislature passed a new [Boater Education and Certification](#) requirement. The law went live on July 1, 2026.

[MLR August 2026 Newsletter](#)



Explore the Latest in Aquatic Invasive Species Research

Our August newsletter is here! Catch up on the latest research, outreach, and opportunities to get involved in protecting Minnesota's lakes.

- Help detect spiny water fleas: Free loaner kits are now available across Minnesota to help volunteers and local managers conduct surveillance during the peak monitoring season.
- Lab to Lakes update: See how teams in Chisago Lakes and Lake Fremont are putting research into action to manage common carp and study the effects on lake ecosystems.
- Aquatic Plant ID Workshop: Take a look back at this year's (sold out!) workshop, where participants learned to identify more than 80 Minnesota aquatic plant species.
- Native plants and lake resilience: Explore highlights from our Lake Harriet dockside event and learn how researchers are testing revegetation strategies to help lakes resist invasive plants.
- Registration is open for the AIS Research and Management Showcase on October 28, featuring the latest tools and research tackling Minnesota's most pressing AIS challenges.

[MORE](#)

Read the full MAISRC newsletter here: **NEWSLETTER**



MN Secretary of State Business Services

August 2026 Newsletter

***Note from OTC COLA:

Lake Associations are required to file as Business Corporations with the MN Secretary of State (SOS) and receive a certificate of Incorporation when the organization is formed. Minnesota businesses must file renewals every year to remain active. Lake Associations are encouraged to contact the Office Of Secretary Of State directly for current information.

sos.mn.gov | [Email us](#) | [651-296-2803](#) | [Make an appointment](#)

[Steps To Start A Lake Association](#)

[MN Articles of Incorporation \(Sample\)](#)

[Minnesota Annual Filing](#)

MN Secretary of State Newsletter Articles

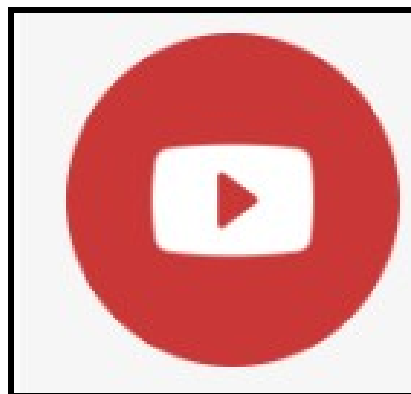
- Join us at our first-ever business pop-up
- **Keep your business in good standing by filing your 2026 renewal**
- Business Identity Recovery has helped 131 Minnesota business Owners
- LegalCORPS: Free legal support for Minnesota businesses and nonprofits
- DEED: Small Business Digital Toolbox

Entities registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State are required to file an annual renewal once every calendar year to maintain active status and good standing under Minnesota Statutes*. The deadline for renewals is December 31, but you may renew at any time during the calendar year! No need to wait until the end of the year - renew now and check it off your list early.

If you have already renewed or reinstated in 2026, your entity is active and in good standing for the year, and no further action is needed. If you have not filed a renewal for 2026, you can do so now. And if you're unsure of your renewal status, just use the button below to visit our renewal webpage, where you'll find step-by-step instructions and additional details.

[Renewal Information](#)

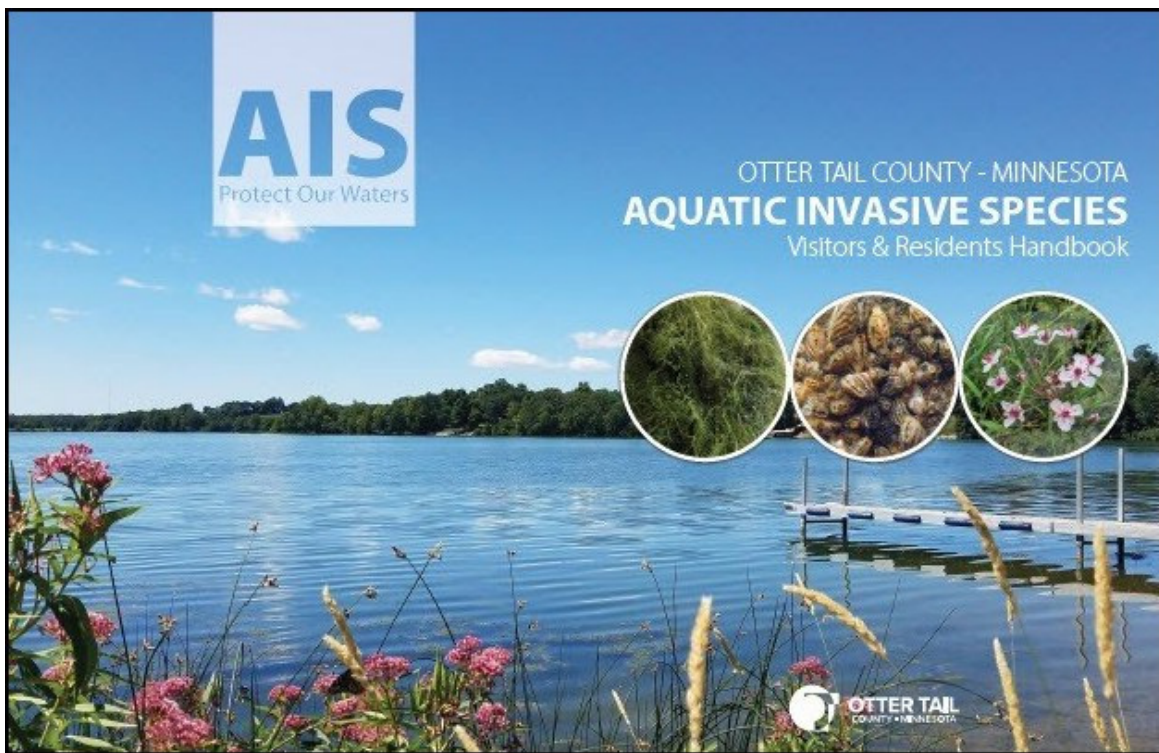
Read the full MN SOS Newsletter [HERE](#)



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

- [**July 28, 2026**](#)
- [**August 11, 2026**](#)



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

August 2026 Featured Posts

- [Powers of Attorney](#)
- [Tool for MN Lake Health Information](#)
- [Antibiotics Accumulating in Lakes](#)

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to learn about new and featured posts

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- [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**

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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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