Minnesota DNR AIS Advisory Committee

August 27th, 2026, Final Meeting Minutes

Online via Teams

Members Present: Shelly Binsfeld, Andrew Dickhart, Beto Garcia, Byron Karns, Jared Langer, Spencer McGrew, Carrie Ohly-Cusack, Sami Selter, Amanda Weberg, Raining White

Members Absent: Patrick Selter, M. Mahmood Tajbakhsh, Doris Loe, Liz Kaltenhauser

Ex-officio Members Present: Maddie Hayden

Ex-officio Members Absent: Amy McGovern

DNR Staff Present: Rafael Contreras-Rangel, Angelique Dahlberg, Grace Henrich, Eric Kenney, Scott Staples

DNR Staff Absent: *Doug Jensen, Kelly Pennington*

Chair **A. Weberg** called meeting to order at 10:02 am

Motion to approve Agenda: S. Binsfeld, motion, **A. Dickhart**, seconded, agenda approved

Motion to approve April Minutes: S. Binsfeld, motion**, A. Dickhart**, seconded, minutes approved

- Need to change Byron's title from Lake Association President to Lake Association Board Member in the April minutes.

Meeting Summary

Committee discussed the following:

- Action Items from April meeting, including the state of the county survey, and update from Carver County regarding their AIS Program in response to the Prevention Aid cuts, SAISAC membership recruitment, the October in-person meeting, having a booth at the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference (UMISC), and an update from the Minnesota Lakes and Rivers (MLR) advocacy campaign.
- Sarah Bonvallet presented on Minnesota's boat wrap recycling program.
- Angelique Dahlberg presented the Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) Grant process.

Action Items

- **Action Item:** A. Dickhart will summarize the results of the county survey about the AIS Prevention Aid funding cuts.
- **Action Item:** R. Contreras-Rangel will start working on populating the SharePoint page for SAISAC members.
- **Action Item:** DNR will check if there are resources for SAISAC members to use at UMISC booth.

Revisit Action Items from April Meeting

State of county survey

- **A. Dickhart** is continuing to summarize the results of the county survey about the AIS Prevention Aid funding cuts. There were at least 80 responses. County coordinators responded to the survey

with a resounding "No." to if they would receive additional support from their program. Nearly all county coordinators expect severe funding impacts.

- **A. Dickhart** will send a summary of survey results to the group. **A. Dickhart** will present the information gathered from this survey at UMISC.

Update from Carver County

- **A. Dickhart** summarizes current Carver County budget proposals and next steps. On Tuesday, the Carver County Administrator presented a budget that would completely cut the Carver County Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Program. **A. Dickhart** is still determining what this may mean for their AIS program and their position. Watercraft inspection is a large component of the AIS program but is not the entirety of the program. Need to discuss the details of the program with the county administrator.
- **A. Dickhart** reported the proposed budget to the Carver County Water Management Organization Citizen Advisory Committee. The committee was surprised, confused, and had many questions.
- **A. Weberg** asks if there is a public comment period. **A. Dickhart** explains that the budget approval process is moving quickly. The vote on the preliminary budget is next Tuesday during an open comment public board meeting. If the budget is approved on Tuesday, the funding amounts are only allowed to remain the same or decrease. Typically, the final budget is not finalized until December.
- **A. Weberg** asks if the county administrator can determine how AIS funds are used. **A. Dickhart** summarizes the new ways county funds would be split up in the proposed budget. In summary, yes, the county administrator can determine where the AIS funds are directed.
- **A. Weberg** asks if redirecting AIS prevention aid funds to other programs and their staff salaries is an appropriate use of grant funds. **R. Contreras-Rangel** explains funds must be used for AIS prevention. The county can make a case for redirecting funds.
- **A. Dickhart** notes that the county would be losing funds overall. The partnership funds that the watercraft inspection program brings in are larger than the levy funds used to support the program.
- **A. Weberg** asks what SAISAC can do. Is there time for individuals to send emails to Carver County Commissioners? **S. Binsfeld** notes this is an example of the value of coalitions coming together. SAISAC could facilitate connections and discussions between counties. **S. McGrew** highlights that the survey is going to be critical for this. Many more counties are going to experience this same issue. **R. Contreras-Rangel** explains the possibility of a DNR workshop on this topic in October.
- **B. Garcia** notes the importance of keeping decision makers informed. **A. Dickhart** explains that they have been trying to present to the county board since February but are consistently bumped off the board each month.

SAISAC new member recruitment

- **R. Contreras-Rangel** explains that the DNR is currently working on the application. The deadline will be September 25. Interviews will be held this year to avoid turnover. Please help spread the word. The questionnaire will be posted on the DNR webpage.
- **S. McGrew** asks if current members be able to reapply through this application. **R. Contreras-Rangel** states that yes, current members should reapply through the online questionnaire. To be

determined if members seeking another term will need to do an interview. Two consecutive terms are allowed.

October in-person meeting details

- The next meeting is on Thursday, September 24, 10am to 3pm on Microsoft Teams.
- The following meeting is October 29, 9:30am to 2:30pm, in-person at St. Paul. A room is served at MAISRC. The MAISRC showcase is the day before the meeting.

SAISAC Booth at UMISC

- **A. Weberg** states there are no major updates. Space is available at DNR table at UMISC. **A. Weberg** is comfortable organizing and hosting this booth. Content will highlight SAISAC for general awareness. Could use name tags to differentiate from the DNR.

MLR Campaign for AIS aid update and how SAISAC can assist

- See Sami Selter's update below for MLR campaign details.

Minnesota's Boat Wrap Recycling Program

Sarah Bonvallet, Wrap Recycle Right, Operations Program Coordinator

- Boating and water are a part of Minnesota's culture and history.
- Boat wraps are used to protect boats during the off season, which is especially relevant in Minnesota.
    - Most boat wraps used in Minnesota are made of recyclable plastic. Generally, a clean and desirable plastic.
    - Very large pieces of materials each year.
- Material collection season is short and specific.
- Goal: Create a circular economy of valuable resources. Reduce landfill waste. Encourage eco-friendly product design.
- Minnesota passed the first boat wrap Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law in the nation in 2024.
- Opportunities for collaboration. Very similar audience to aquatic invasive species prevention and management.
- Find more information in the PowerPoint presentation shared via email. Reach out to Sarah with any questions.

Discussion

- **A. Dickhart**: Already have the program in the Carver County!
    - **S. Bonvallet**: Program is going well in Carver County. Brought in 5,000 lbs of boat wrap.
- **S. Binsfeld**: What are the results if someone does not follow through? What is the enforcement?
    - **S. Bonvallet**: Due to the way the law was written, it does not have many teeth. There is no legal incentive to collect this material. No one is required to become a collection site. The part of the law that does have teeth is the selling of the boat wrap into the state. Businesses must buy shrink wrap from a compliant producer. We rely on MPCA to enforce this. MPCA is still determining what enforcement would look like. Most people do not need a lot of convincing. If you can prep the material appropriately, you do not have to pay solid waste costs.
- **A. Weberg**: How do you determine 80/50 percent breakdown?

    - **S. Bonvallet**: We have access to the data of how much shrink wrap each business in the stewardship group sold in Minnesota. The MPCA would address the businesses that are not a part of the stewardship group. They also receive verified reports from the recyclers.
- **B. Garcia**: Are neighboring states creating a similar program?
    - **S. Bonvallet**: There have been some discussions with Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan. Some work is done with the Council of Great Lakes. Ohio currently has a good boat wrap recycling program.
- **B. Garcia**: Are decorative car and boat wrap made of a similar material?
    - **S. Bonvallet**: Not sure, but likely no. Boat wrap material is very thick (seven to nine millimeters). Decorative materials are likely thinner. However, it is the same as wraps used in hockey and construction. This program could expand but is only focused on boat wrap right now.
- **R. White**: Any options for reducing single use plastic?
    - **S. Bonvallet**: Custom covers are expensive. Reusable covers can last six to seven years. There are some materials out there that can be reused. Shrink wrap is very difficult to reuse. This material is not a good candidate for reuse. A lot of EPR laws include reuse, but this law did not. It mentions reuse, but there are no incentives or goals specific to reuse.
- **R. White**: Are there PFA concerns with this material?
    - **S. Bonvallet**: There are not any PFAs used in the boat wrap. Sometimes they add a UV inhibitor, but this does not fall into the PFA group. It will not fall under upcoming PFA legislation.
- **A. Weberg**: Maybe there are opportunities to combine boat wrapping with AIS decontamination and winterization.
- **B. Garcia**: Is there a sales tax on the material?
    - **S. Bonvallet**: Don't think so. This material is being applied by a business.
- **J. Langer**: Helpful to have a presentation that encourages us to think outside the box about aquatic invasive species and water resources.
- **B. Garcia**: We should think about requiring decontaminations before shrink wrapping. Invasive species could be protected inside.
    - **B. Karns**: Experience with invasive species frequently found on boat trim tabs, even though the watercraft was cleaned. The idea that shrink wrapping can protect AIS is something to consider. Unsure if AIS would be able to survive winter conditions.
    - **B. Garcia**: There was a significant boat fire in Hudson because of this shrink-wrapping process. Requires highly trained staff.

Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) Grants

Angelique Dahlberg, MNDNR

Discussion

R. White: What is the status of the rare species review process for grant proposals in 2027?

- **A. Dahlberg:** Don't have the latest update but DNR staff continuing to meet and work through rare/endangered species processes and hold ups for the 2027 grant cycle – Mike Verheoven can provide a more holistic update if there is interest.
- **R. White**: Leech Lake would love strong considerations and processes in place to review rare species when doing grant work.

R. White: Curly leaf pondweed is well-funded, but prevention is not at the forefront (lack of signs at accesses, LakeFinder does not list curly leaf, etc.). Why is that?

- **R. Contreras-Rangel:** DNR cares about management of curly leaf, but prevention is not prioritized as much because it is so widespread and has been in the state for so long. Mike Verheoven and Kelly Pennington from DNR can speak more on the strategic discussions around putting the amount of money we do towards curly leaf pondweed management.

R. White: Leech Lake had an issue with a grant application in 2026 and asked for update.

- **A. Dahlberg:** Will be personally emailing grant applicants if she receives applications to try to mitigate any issues. DNR is also trying to improve application process for 2027 to address hang-ups but is unsure if it will be ready in time for this year's cycle.

C. Ohly-Cusack: Post management delineation to evaluate effectiveness of grant work is a great addition to the process. It would be invaluable for lake associations/local staff/etc. to get an idea of what has been done in the past and what works. Will the data be publicly available?

- **A. Dahlberg:** Any of the grant data is public information and you can submit a data request to get any of it outside of sensitive data (e.g. personal data). At some point down the line DNR might work to put together a synthesis of post management results. We have talked through this idea with Professor Jake Walsh at the University of Minnesota who is already working on a project to consolidate herbicide application data throughout the state. When pulling up PI survey data on PI charter, the hope is to eventually be able to see management data on that specific lake. We can work with the University to potentially tie in post-delineation data from this grant program into that work at some point.

B. Karns: Can plant surveys fit into these IAPM grants? If not, any suggestions for getting plant surveys done?

- **A. Dahlberg**: These grants are only meant for lakes with known invasives. 1 of the 4 invasive species included in our grants program needs to be present in a lake for an application to be considered.

B. Karns: Any suggestions for where to look for emergency response funding?

- **S. Binsfeld:** Suggests putting emergency funds from AIS prevention aid funding for counties into emergency rapid response bucket, should any invasive species be found, although recognizes that might be challenging with funding decreasing.
- **E. Kenney:** If any early detection/high-priority invasive species are found in a waterbody, the DNR might also be able to help get rapid response funding. For example, we got rapid response funding to follow-up with signal crayfish work in Lake Alexandria from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A. Dickhart: Should we prioritize large lake curly leaf treatments and use them for both management and research? Is this better than small scale treatments?

- **A. Dahlberg:** We understand that this may be more effective and a better use of funds and strategic conversations are ongoing about how to manage curly leaf effectively through the IAPM program. Some challenges do exist that limit larger scale treatments of curly leaf rather than small scale treatments.

S. Selter: What is the flexibility of the timing of the grant process? Especially considering the early die off of curly leaf, can these timelines be flexible? Can consultants be hired as a part of the use of grant funds to relieve some of the administrative burden related to some of these projects?

- **A. Dahlberg:** We have never had the ability to hire a consultant as an eligible expense from the grants before and do not see that changing any time soon. The administrative burden, although sometimes heavy, is manageable. About the flexibility of timing for the grant process, we can only provide funding for 1 fiscal year and can renew for a second fiscal year. For curly leaf, it is possible to do two years' worth of treatment with this timeline in mind, due to the early die-off of curly leaf. For Eurasian watermilfoil, it is sometimes possible to do two years' worth of treatment, but June 30th is a hard deadline. The end timelines are rigid but other timelines can be flexible if there is a strong desire.

S. McGrew: Noticing that a lot of Lake Improvement District's (LIDs) are being created to do curly leaf and general AIS treatments. Is this worthwhile? Do we want to focus more on prevention work than some of this IAPM work that is adding a new layer of governmental entities through the creation of LIDs?

- **S. Binsfeld:** Has noticed that there is more teeth behind the work of LIDs rather than lake associations. A local LID has been able to get funding to carry out PI surveys, fish stocking, sedimentation tracking, and AIS treatments. The creation of the LID has helped overall lake stewardship.

DNR Updates, Member and Ex-Officio Member Updates

Discussion Time for Committee Action Items

SAISAC SharePoint

R. Contreras-Rangel: SharePoint can be used for SAISAC as a resource sharing hub if there is interest. This would be especially helpful as one-stop shop for new members and can also be a place to store meeting info, notes, shared docs, etc. Is the group interested in using it?

- **R. White:** Noted that when you upload document to a DNR SharePoint, a message pops up saying something along the lines of if you share this you agree that the document is becoming DNR property. Flagging this if this is a concern for others.
- **R. Contreras-Rangel:** This does not have to be a place where members upload documents and thinks it will still be helpful to store DNR owned resources related to SAISAC and share information with the group.
    - Some expressed interest in creating a SharePoint.

Updating and modernizing website page

R. Contreras-Rangel: Is taking time to revamp website as it is dated. The plan is to take some of the text from the website and place it on a potential SharePoint to make the website sleeker and better as a public facing resource.

- Some interest in this, especially from **A. Weberg**, but further discussion is likely needed as the meeting time wound down.

Unfinished business and wrap up

Motion to adjourn: B. Karns motion, **S. Selter** seconded.

Adjourned 3:00 p.m.

Next meeting is Thursday, September 24th, 10 am – 3 pm online via Teams