

## Minnesota Statewide AIS Advisory Committee (SAISAC)

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**April 30, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

**Virtual Meeting via Skype from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Norman Baer, Justine Dauphinais, James Johnson, Kelsey Taylor, Jim Boettcher, Kate Hagsten, Pat Brown, Holly Kalbus, Ryan Wersal, Isiah Tolo, Brian Gross, Michaela Kofoed, Eric Johnson

**Members Absent:** Chris DuBose, Roger Imdieke, Mary Alverson

**Ex-officio Members Present:** Doug Jensen

**Ex-officio Members Absent:** Amy McGovern, Nicole Lalum, Nick Phelps

**DNR Staff Present:** Heidi Wolf, Jan Shaw Wolff, Phil Hunsicker, Tina Fitzgerald, Brian Stenquist, April Rust

**Meeting began at 10:03 a.m.**

**Motion to approve agenda. Motion made by J. Dauphinais and second by J. Boettcher. Motion approved unanimously.**

**Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of February 27, 2020 including edits by D. Jensen made by J. Dauphinais and second by N. Baer. Motion approved unanimously.**

### Meeting Summary:

- Committee held their first virtual meeting via Skype, and it worked relatively well. Only one member who tried to access the call was unable to connect (**N. Phelps**).
- Committee heard how the COVID-19 precautions have affected the DNR's Invasive Species Program. The DNR's Invasive Species Program is trying to find ways to do their work while still respecting social distancing recommendations and the governor's emergency orders.
- Committee received an update by **A. Rust** and **B. Stenquist** on the Angling, AIS, and Access Open Space meetings held last year.
- Committee discussed possible summer 2020 field trips, depending on COVID-19 restrictions.

### Motions & Actionable Items:

- Committee should figure out a way to work more closely with the DNR on recommendations for AIS research being done by MAISRC. Ideas from the DNR and from the Committee should be combined instead of having separate lists. Committee should start using Basecamp to gather initial ideas for future research needs. Research will be part of the August agenda.
- **A. Rust** will share questions with the Committee about their thoughts on the Angling, AIS and Access discussions. **T. Fitzgerald** will post the questions on Basecamp so Committee members can respond. The

Committee members should respond within the next week so their thoughts can be included in the final report.

- **T. Fitzgerald** will post on Basecamp a question about where Committee members would like to visit for a summer field trip. Committee members should post their ideas.

## Committee Member Updates

- **N. Baer:** Will be doing curly leaf pondweed delineation. Received DNR Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) grant money for curly leaf pondweed treatment.
- **B. Gross:** Business was shut down temporarily, but they are starting up slowly with COVID awareness. The Design and Technology group is looking into future boat designs to eliminate the transport of AIS. Can't be specific yet about what is coming.
- **D. Jensen:** Requested by ANS Task Force to help develop a call for proposals to conduct an assessment of public outreach (pending). Helping develop/transform upcoming Great Lakes Panel on ANS into virtual meeting June 16-18. Recommend SAISAC members attend. Can share the link upon request. As the 2020 UMISC Co-chair, supporting conference efforts to go virtual this fall: Conference may be spread out to 4-5 days – dates will change – still in fall. Program committees instructed to continue planning to solicit speaker and poster abstracts, and workshop sessions. Abstract submission deadline extended to May 14<sup>th</sup>. Continuing to work with Chelsey Blanke, MNDNR, on organisms in trade (OIT) project that builds upon the Habitattitude campaign by reaching out to pet stores with a letter and fact sheet with updated regulations. Continuing to work with MN Invasive Species Advisory Council to revise the state plan. Started a research project with Fond du Lac Band related to indigenous knowledge and invasive species. Working on two contracts for AIS outreach with MNDNR and St. Louis County (hiring two interns) and two proposals to develop Minnesota into hub for the Don't Pack a Pest for Academic Travelers and another to support GL BIOTIC Symposium for fall 2020. Canceled most events through end of June due to COVID-19. Interviewed by Duluth Tribune ([article link](#)).
- **E. Johnson:** National Park Service has announced that camping will be open in the park. However, no boat tours this season. Invasive cattail research is continuing. Limiting one person per boat. Looking at what Canada does to open up border as that will affect activities at the park.
- **H. Kalbus:** Working from home. Hoping to continue doing education and outreach this summer in some form. Contracted to do virtual AIS classes for schools. Great way to reach out beyond the students to the parents and siblings too. Applied for grants. One is a CBSM grant to work with lake associations and shoreline property owners to respect the 21-day-dry law for docks and lifts. Second grant is through MAISRC, and it is to look at common carp movement through the German Lake Chain. Want to understand how carp affect a new strain of walleye found in the chain. Having difficulty working with DNR Fisheries to get support for carp studies. Trying to find opportunities for collaboration. Planning on starting watercraft inspections in two weeks, depending on training being made available by the DNR.
- **I. Tolo:** Busy with common carp biocontrol project. Looking at Koi Herpes Virus and Edema Virus effects on management of common carp. Working on Lake Elysian, which is located south of Le Sueur County.
- **J. Johnson:** Working on **N. Baer's** lake today. Busy doing surveys. Applicators and LSP's have been deemed exempt. Not sure about those of us who do lake surveys. Drafted a letter explaining Governor Walz's emergency orders and how it can be interpreted that lake surveyors are exempt, too. Curly leaf pondweed is behind this year due to long cold spring. Ten inches tall and not curly yet. Just starting to sprout on some

lakes. Wanted to let Committee members know that **N. Phelps** was recently recognized with the Richard C. Newman Community Impact Award at the University. Congratulations!

### Committee member updates continued

- **N. Phelps:** Tried to connect via Skype, but no success. Sent an update via email: No major updates. Hopefully everyone just received our newsletter with some research updates. We will be diving into the research needs assessment again this year, which will be ramping up in late summer. As we have done in years past, I'll be seeking input from SAISAC in some way. I discussed the purpose, process (as it was done in the past), and brainstormed a bit with the research sub-committee a few weeks ago. The members from that group could discuss some options and what they thought would be a good plan for this cycle. Basically, the DNR would generate their priority list and SAISAC would review, discuss, and suggest changes if necessary. This positions SAISAC's role as more advisory to the DNR's recommendations. Individual SAISAC members would still be encouraged to add their personal ideas through the same survey process we have had in years past. I think most of this could be done via Basecamp, with the first meeting in August to finalize recommendations.
  - **J. Dauphinais** says the Advisory Committee should look into how to improve the process, to combine DNR research suggestions with Advisory Committee suggestions, so they are not separate. **T. Fitzgerald** suggests putting the topic of research on the August agenda. In the meantime, Committee members can share their research ideas on Basecamp to begin to create a cumulative list of ideas. Those ideas don't have to be completely fleshed out. For example, an idea could be as simple as understanding more about Chinese Mystery Snails.
- **J. Boettcher:** Concerning the watershed district, they are doing surveys on Lotus and Riley Lakes where zebra mussels have been found. Also doing a brittle naiad survey. Carp electrofishing in Purgatory Creek Recreation Area. Carver County wants to conduct watercraft inspections, but waiting for DNR direction. Continuing to deal with goldfish on the Grace Chain of Lakes. WSB Engineering is the contractor. Seined 2,600 goldfish last week, which is about 640 pounds. Tagged 250 and released them to track their movements in the chain. Estimates are that there are 100,000 to 200,000 goldfish in the chain. **I. Tolo** asks if carp are mixed in with the goldfish as they can hybridize. Not as far as they know. **D. Jensen** says there are probably multiple generations of goldfish. Are the goldfish that are caught being tested for pathogens? Yes, they have been tested for Koi Herpes Virus. If **J. Boettcher** is interested in having the goldfish tested for multiple viruses, **I. Tolo** can ask his supervisor. Multiple generations of goldfish are evident by their coloring. Noticing that older fish lose their coloring and become green. There are lots of green goldfish. **D. Jensen** asks if the captured goldfish can be used as a local food source. Yes, according to **J. Boettcher**. Talking with a cat center located up in Anoka. **J. Dauphinais** mentions that she used to do some work with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and they found a lake full of goldfish in the Carver Reserve. **J. Boettcher** will pass along that information to the county's AIS coordinator, Drew Dickhart.
- **J. Dauphinais:** The watershed district is fully operational, but working from home and doing solo field work. Served on a panel to advise MAISRC's Amy Kinsley who was investigating statewide early detection work for AIS. A draft report will be given to the legislature in June. Looking at County AIS Prevention Aid distribution in a more science-based manner than by number of public accesses and number of trailer parking spaces. Looking at applying distribution based on risk factors. The Fish Lake Association received a grant for installation of CD3 unit at the public access. Hope to get it installed in a couple of months. Carp tracking with WSB Engineering. Curious about **H. Kalbus'** earlier report that she has been having difficulties with DNR Fisheries. **J. Dauphinais'** experience with DNR Fisheries has been different. Very collaborative. May be a

regional anomaly. **H. Kalbus** says she learned that DNR Fisheries has gotten burned in the past doing carp management. She is trying to improve the relationship with Fisheries staff to get the necessary permits.

### Committee member updates continued

- **K. Hagsten:** Working from home. Plant Dept. staff have been laid off. Had a cyber attack that crippled their computer system just before COVID-19 hit, so teleworking has not been an easy transition. Working with Nicole Kovar of the DNR, along with Levy Bergstrom of Cass County and Bruce Anspach of Beltrami County to strategize on how to stay connected with people. Indian country has been hit hard by COVID-19, so trying to be careful. Interested to hear during the DNR updates how watercraft inspection and decontamination will proceed this summer. **D. Jensen** recommends contacting Tyler Kasper with the 1854 Treaty Authority to compare notes with another tribal organization dealing with similar issues.
- **K. Taylor:** Treaty fishing season is happening now, despite COVID-19. New protocols and procedures. Requiring facemasks at the landing. Can share this information with **K. Hagsten**. Employing comprehensive decontamination procedures during the netting season. Currently a fifty-mile travel quarantine in Fond du Lac. Hinders field work. Not sure about watercraft inspections. Just hired staff, but can't start work, so in limbo. Not yet deemed essential by the Band. Getting outside funding sources so we are able to continue with some of the AIS work. Not sure what summer work season will look like. Less work than in the past. Education and outreach events have been cancelled or postponed to a later date. Recently did a podcast with Wisconsin Sea Grant on tribal AIS management policies. Podcast will be posted soon. Never found large concentrations of Chinese Mystery Snails over the winter. Now suspect they burrow into the substrate rather than congregate in deeper water, which is what we initially theorized.
- **M. Kofoed:** Not sure yet how COVID-19 will affect professional fishing tournaments and high school tournaments. Aqua weed stick stations are now available with bait disposal and a tool usage counter.
- **P. Brown:** Waiting for ice out on Red Lake. Maybe tomorrow. Field staff have been staying at home due to COVID-19 restrictions. Continuing with plankton sampling for presence of zebra mussel veligers and spiny waterfleas. Also putting out zebra mussel sampling plates around the lake. Working with **T. Fitzgerald** on informational pieces to educate and inform those who use the lake.
- **R. Wersal:** Trying to teach online, which is difficult with courses that are heavily field-based. Have grad students to do research on Koronis Lake starry stonewort management techniques. He is also busy as the V.P. and program chair for the Aquatic Plant Management Society. Trying to determine if a planned national meeting is possible.

### DNR Updates

- **H. Wolf** responded to questions about DNR's Invasive Species Program during COVID-19. Staff continue to work from home. DNR is still issuing permits for invasive aquatic plant management and we are processing the grants that were awarded for IAPM. For the first time, we have developed an online training for Level 1 watercraft inspectors. While inspectors have not been deemed exempt, we are trying to figure out how inspectors can be successful balancing their inspection responsibilities at public accesses with social distancing recommendations. We feel it is possible to do both. LSPs have been designated as exempt, so we have been sending that information to LGUs. As of now, no invasive species workers with the state are exempted. We are doing what we can while respecting the governor's emergency orders. Waiting to hear what the governor's announcement is this afternoon to possibly extend the Stay at Home order and how that will affect our work moving forward. **J. Johnson** asks if the DNR will be checking treatments or doing delineations. **H.**

**Wolf** says the top concern is can it be done safely? There is no policy about working alone on boats. There are groups discussing how to do our work in a safe manner, while still respecting social distancing recommendations and the governor's orders. **J. Dauphinais** says AIS field work is not exempt right now. Can this Committee do anything to push for the continuation of important AIS work? **H. Wolf** says she doesn't think so. We are following the governor's orders and trying to figure out how to do our work safely.

## Update on Angling, AIS, and Access Open Space Meetings – April Rust and Brian Stenquist

- This was a follow-up discussion to the one held with the Advisory Committee on January 23.
- **A. Rust** asked Committee members to think back on the notes from the three meetings held around the state. What were some takeaways?
  - Many attendees were confused about the purpose of the meeting they attended and what future steps would happen after the meetings took place.
  - Initial discomfort and tension in the room led to a better understanding of differing viewpoints by the end of the meeting.
  - Some attendees wanted to talk about subjects outside of the Angling, AIS and Access parameters. For example, some wanted to talk about wake boats. Not about their ballast tanks that can transport AIS, but how noisy they can be and how the waves they churn up cause damage to shorelines.
- **A. Rust** said the information that came out of the meetings was presented at the DNR Roundtable. It was also discussed during a DNR staff meeting, and DNR staff who attended a meeting related what they heard at the meetings.
- Next steps include a final report that will include a summary of key lessons learned, suggestions of ways the DNR can improve some of the things we do, and how the DNR and others can use the open space format in future meetings whose goal is to bring two opposing sides together in a search for understanding and compromise.
- **A. Rust** asked if the Committee members had questions about the process. **B. Gross** asked what is the biggest issue that the DNR needs to tackle? **A. Rust** responded that the DNR needs to improve clarity in our communications.
- **J. Dauphinais** suggested that the DNR provide an overview of DNR responsibilities and what they don't control. The DNR gets blamed for a lot of things over which it has no control. The general public doesn't understand that line of demarcation between what the DNR can and can't do.
- **T. Fitzgerald** suggested that **A. Rust** send her questions for the Committee to her, and she will post them on Basecamp for Committee responses. This will give Committee members an opportunity to review the meeting notes again. The Committee was reminded that notes were taken by the individual who suggested the topic, so be careful how you interpret them. They are elements of a much richer conversation. **A. Rust** informed the Committee that she would need responses quickly, within the next week, so they can be included in the final report.
- **B. Stenquist** asked the Committee to think specifically about the role of the Committee as this issue moves forward.
- **J. Johnson** suggests that the report be formatted in such a way that part of it describes what was heard at the meetings, and places where the DNR can improve to address concerns. The second part should address

things that people incorrectly assume. Those shouldn't be ignored because they are incorrect. They should be addressed and corrected.

## Summer Field Trip Ideas

- **J. Johnson** would like a trip that involves common carp or goldfish management.
- **N. Baer** suggests a visit to a water treatment plant using non-native Phragmites. **H. Wolf** reminds the Committee that this will be a long process getting water treatment plants to change over to a different plant for their operations. First, they will be asked to take measures that keep their non-native Phragmites from spreading. The DNR is working with MAISRC to find a viable alternative. Julia Bohnen has connections with the treatment plants using non-native Phragmites. She may be a contact.
- **J. Johnson** suggests a trip to Lake Koronis to check out the work being done on starry stonewort. The Committee talked in the past of doing this trip, but it never happened. Maybe visiting another lake impacted by starry stonewort. **J. Johnson** thought **R. Wersal** may have some examples.
- **J. Boettcher** suggested a trip to observe AIS researchers. He was able to see what researchers were doing on Lake Waconia. Might be able to observe both the research and social distancing recommendations by using several pontoons.
- **T. Fitzgerald** suggests posting this question on Basecamp so Committee members can begin to put together a comprehensive list of field trip ideas.

## Wrap-Up

- **Next meeting will be Thursday August 27, 2020. Location TBD based on COVID-19 restrictions.** Committee will discuss AIS research and how to work more closely with DNR to make agreed-upon research recommendations to MAISRC.

***Adjournment at 12:07 p.m.***