

Minnesota Statewide AIS Advisory Committee (SAISAC)

February 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting via WebEx from 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Members Present: Justine Dauphinais, James Johnson, Kate Hagsten, Holly Kalbus, Ryan Wersal, Isiah Tolo, Michaela Kofoed, Roger Imdieke, Kelsey Taylor, Eric Johnson, Chris DuBose, Pat Brown

Members Absent: None

Ex-officio Members Present: Nick Phelps, Doug Jensen

Ex-officio Members Absent: Amy McGovern, Nicole Lalum

DNR Staff Present: Heidi Wolf, Phil Hunsicker, Tina Fitzgerald, Jan Shaw Wolff

Meeting began at 10:04 a.m.

Motion to approve agenda. Motion made by J. Johnson and second by P. Brown. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2021 with changes made by J. Dauphinais. J. Johnson requests a clarification on page 5, that we should make sure to have a discussion about what the Committee does after being presented with new information, how it impacts DNR and any potential actions to take.

Motion made by E. Johnson and second by H. Kalbus. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting Summary:

- Committee members learned about the current status of the recruitment process to fill three vacant seats on the Committee.
- Committee members commented on a draft response scenario being prepared by the DNR so lake groups can better understand the process that happens when a new invasive species is found.
- Committee members continued their discussion of 2021 priorities. Through an activity, each Committee member got to choose their top three general priorities. Votes were tabulated and general priority categories for 2021 were established.

Committee Member Updates

- **D. Jensen:** End of the year reporting, performance review, administrative stuff.
- **E. Johnson:** Spiny waterflea towel will be handed out to Rainey lake guides, house boat businesses, etc.
- **H. Kalbus:** County Board approval of the watercraft inspection program, with added hours using the AIS Explorer Tool. Targeting waterfowl hunters. Water guard contractor says it is challenging with waterfowl

hunters (bad weather, late in season), but going to try. Also approving additional education and outreach by CLIMB Theater through pre-recorded sets of videos for K-12. Could use at fishing tournaments too. Radio adds. **D. Jensen** says he has a one-page flier for waterfowl hunters he could share.

Committee member updates continued

- **I. Tolo:** Just published a paper on carp edema virus and how it doesn't spread to other species. Lab KHV transmission – direct contact is really important.
- **J. Johnson:** Gave a talk at an herbicide applicator recertification program. Different because it was for aerial applicators, mostly agricultural. One speaker from DNR spraying hybrid cattail on flowages, hundreds of acres. No mention of Non-native Phragmites. **D. Jensen** says there is an aerial association for the upper Midwest. **J. Johnson** says the DNR Control Grant communications has been phenomenal – very few questions from customers and they understand it is a lottery system. There has been some confusion with online (MPARS) in that the invasive aquatic plant management option says “lakewide control of invasives” but most are not whole-lake treatments. He talked to Keegan Lund (DNR AIS Specialist) and confirmed aquatic plant management (APM) is control of natives and invasive aquatic plant management (IAPM) is control of invasives. **H. Wolf** says Wendy Crowell is our person for MPARS, she will connect with her about this issue. **J. Johnson** says most are doing spot treatments, so need to make it really clear. **J. Dauphinais** suggests it could say “targeted” treatment of invasives. Not all treatments are IAPM.
- **J. Dauphinais:** Attended IAPM online workshop for local coordinators. It was more of a basic overview, was hoping to see what other counties were doing. But did get the opportunity to talk directly with a few DNR Specialists about the flowering rush in a ditch which may include dredging/herbicides and disposing of plant parts. Anoka County program update, they found that violation rates for watercraft inspections was higher than in past years (6%). Could this be because new people are boating? **H. Kalbus** says she talked with some lake association volunteers and they also said they encountered many new boaters.
- **K. Hagsten:** Meeting with Cass County, Beltrami County, Todd Tisler with the U.S. Forest Service, and Jeff Forester about the CD3 stations through the “Stop Starry” Project to discuss maintenance and ownership. Posting decontamination positions. Developing outreach materials. Coordinating with Nicole Kovar (DNR AIS Specialist) about starry stonewort re-delineation on Cass Lake and if it is impacting wild rice habitat.
- **N. Phelps:** RFP is closing in the next week or so. Thanks for posting the past funding support letter on Basecamp. An update for funding at legislature: the LCCMR bill with 80 projects, one of which is funding for MAISRC, was held up yesterday in the Senate. It was introduced but not voted on. The tone in the room indicates the LCCMR politics last year will probably play out this year. LCCMR didn't pass for the first time ever last year and now it may happen again. The republicans are holding the LCCMR bill funding hostage with protest votes; they are not against LCCMR, but against other democratic agenda items. We'll see how it goes. The letter will be really helpful. Will keep the committee posted on progress and needs. The Stop Starry project is part of the LCCMR package too.
 - **J. Johnson** says to contact him and **J. Dauphinais** when you need help, they can draft. **J. Dauphinais** asks how to do this for quick approval if needed.
 - **J. Johnson** makes a motion that this group supports funding for MAISRC through LCCMR and any other sources. **E. Johnson** seconds. All in favor, motion passes. **J. Dauphinais** will post for comment if time allows.
 - **R. Wersal** says the Aquatic Plant Management Society and Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) met virtually with staffers of U.S. Senators Smith and Klobuchar. Would it make sense for this committee to meet with state staffers? **H. Wolf** says you are an independent group, not sure how it would be perceived. For DNR staff, we only respond if we are called on. Not sure what the politics are around this Committee. **J. Johnson** says **N. Baer** did this without consulting the Committee in the past.

- **J. Shaw-Wolff** suggests to invite Bob Meier (DNR Assistant Commissioner) to this meeting. He is open and interested in your thoughts and ideas.
- **N. Phelps** clarifies that it isn't in the value of the LCCMR that is up for debate, it is political posturing. If people have influence with local representatives, that might help.
- **C. DuBois** says he reached out to state senator about it and confirms it is posturing. He will reach out to show support for what we do.
- **J. Dauphinais** asks, are there a handful of representatives where AIS is a big part of what they do and we could convince them? Key players we could target? **N. Phelps** says protest votes happened on the "ways and means committee" which doesn't overlap with the "environmental committee." Senator Ingebrigtsen, from Alexandria, introduced the bill and decided not to vote on it. Senator Gazelka is the majority leader.
- **H. Wolf** asks, what's going on with AIS surcharge efforts? **N. Phelps** says the LCCMR funds the RFP and there are two other pots of funds and one is direct appropriations. The AIS surcharge was increased two years ago for DNR work. The State wants to increase by \$0.60 this year. Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates and Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations (MNCOLA) want to increase the surcharge even more with a portion to go to MASIRC for research. Don't know what the status is. It's been tried before. Our priorities for funding are to find the most stable, long term funding to build a dedicated research program. That's why the surcharge is of interest. The surcharge would replace LCCMR, not on top of. **H. Wolf** asks, is the direct appropriation ENRTF (Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund)? **N. Phelps** says no, it's the heritage enhancement fund. That's the pass through.
- R. Imdieke adds another issues with the county government aid, a direct payment, and the mutual aid agreements between cities. There is recommendations that counties or cities that sent support to Minneapolis should be supported through local aid.
- **P. Brown:** They took 100 samples of Upper and Lower Red Lake for zebra mussel veligers. One sample hit in each lake. So the population is small for now. Working on control for AIS movement into inland lakes too.
- **R. Imdieke:** no updates.
- **R. Wersal:** sad to hear about LCCMR, wants that to get up and running.
- **C. Dubois:** For the non-native Phragmites control, they are reducing sizes. One Watershed One Plan for the Lower St. Croix is moving forward.
- **M. Kofoed:** fishing clubs are starting to meet and get schedules lined up.

DNR Updates

- **H. Wolf**
 - DNR received an EPA LAMP grant for non-native Phragmites for \$247,000. Another non-native Phragmites project funded through an inter-jurisdictional grant through the USFWS, the DNR will be subcontracting to Dan Larkin and Julia Bohnen with MAISRC to help waste water treatment plants transition away from non-native Phragmites. Also have 2020 GLRI funds of \$800,000 and another \$5,000 for another inter-jurisdictional project.
 - In the legislature, HF1073 proposes state invasive species management plan revisions. Chelsey Blanke (DNR) is leading the update with MISAC (Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council), the owner of the plan. **H. Wolf** testified for Senate about how the plan is important and the process by which it is accepted by the federal government which enables DNR to get significant funding. We'll see where that goes. May get told to include climate change, which the update currently does. Then we'll see if we'll be told how often to update.

- The Stop Carp Coalition wants to host a summit. It will be in mid-May and Peter Sorensen is leading the effort with DNR involved in planning.
- DNR is getting questions from county folks about the budget recommendations in the Statewide Surveillance Report to the legislature. If you get questions, have people contact **H. Wolf**.
- For the new Committee member recruitment process there were 117 applications including 11 of diverse races/ethnicities, an area DNR put extra effort into recruiting for. She had a meeting with the Commissioner's Office about the applicants and where to go next. We're exploring some issues before we go forward. Hopefully in March, maybe April, we'll have new folks. We're filling 3 spots. Next year there will be 5 spots. Any questions can be sent to **H. Wolf**.
- **J. Dauphinais** asks, should we talk about the DNR's role in the Surveillance Report? **H. Wolf** says there are some things that DNR doesn't agree on or support, and some counties may be concerned with the recommendations. The DNR doesn't support all the recommendations of the report. **J. Dauphinais** reminds members this is a Committee priority you can vote on later in the meeting.
- **J. Shaw-Wolff** appreciates everyone's participation on this Committee. Has the upcoming Modified Unified Method (MUM) project been mentioned? It will be happening on the Mississippi River this ice-out. An exciting and innovative effort. Behind the scenes the DNR Invasive Species Program is a trumpeter swan – graceful on the top of the water, but vigorously paddling underneath. Appreciates the staff and this Committee.
 - **H. Wolf** describes the MUM, an effort in response to the large invasive carp capture in Pool 8 last year. Nick Frohnauer (DNR Invasive Carp Coordinator) went to USFWS and is now the eDNA coordinator for the Midwest. Duane Chapman with the USGS went to China to see how they are harvesting the carp there, where the carp are native. The USGS tried it in southern states, want to try it here with a smaller population. Ben Larson with DNR Fish and Wildlife and Carli Wagner DNR AIS Specialist with Ecological and Water Resources are spearheading the effort. It is coordination between USGS, USFWS, Minnesota DNR, and Wisconsin DNR. Going to do this when the ice is out – end of March or early April. It will be a 12-day field event. **H. Wolf** will share more details via Basecamp.
- **P. Hunsicker** provides an update on the county workshops. Typical this time of year, in each of the 4 DNR regions for county AIS leads and partners to learn from each other and learn about successes/challenges. We wanted to maintain connections even though we can't do in person. So we went to virtual workshops – arranged for speakers at each one to talk about specific topics. Have done 3 of 6 with great attendance, 60+. So far talked about public engagement adjustments due to COVID, IAPM and grants, CBSM and grants. Next Thursday strategies for increasing decontamination. Keep shorter (1/1.5hrs). People miss the in-person, but getting good information out of this. In the future a hybrid approach could work well. Join!

Response Case Scenario for New AIS Infestations

- This Committee recommended the DNR develop examples of new infestation response scenarios, to help lake associations and local partners more clearly understand the process. Chelsey Blanke (DNR) worked with AIS Specialists to develop this first example of starry stonewort discovered in Stearns County's Lake Carnelian in 2020. What do you all think?
- **J. Johnson** says it looks great. It does a good job of saying what DNR does. Could specifics on what role does a lake group has be added? Lake associations want to "what do we need to do?" For example, who does the contracting?
- **R. Wersal** asks, what is the intended distribution? **J. Johnson** says he requested it because lake associations had new infestations and then they heard "crickets" for a month. It would be great to send something like this right away, to show what is going on behind the scenes. Share with people who have new infestations. Some

lake associations have AIS plans and they could include it in their plan. **R. Wersal** asks, could MAISRC or APM share it? **T. Fitzgerald** says it will be an appendix to the full statewide Response Plan. It will be shared widely and will likely be most helpful for county managers and lake associations. Likes the idea of sharing it more broadly, outside the state too.

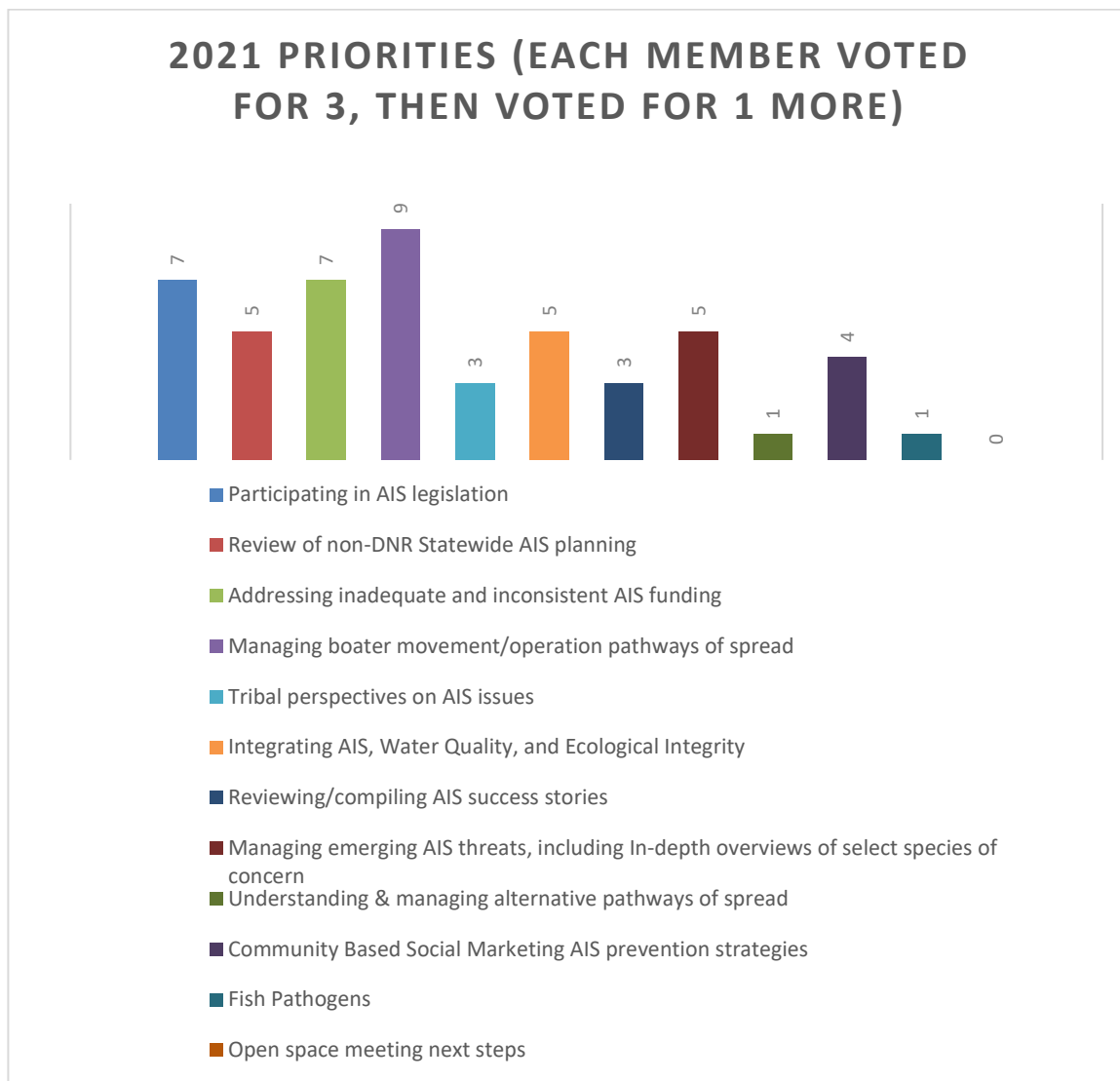
- **J. Johnson** suggests to have the DNR AIS Specialist send this document when the response begins.
- **J. Dauphinais** likes the simple look and format. Very user friendly for a lake association to pick up and use. It would also be helpful to give to board. Suggests adding a little bit on what the local government does too.
- **J. Johnson** suggests later to include, did it work five years down the road? **T. Fitzgerald** says Chelsey will be creating more examples for other responses.

2021 Priorities

- **T. Fitzgerald** thanked **J. Dauphinais** for summarizing the long list of potential 2021 priorities into a simple spreadsheet. From that condensed spreadsheet, **T. Fitzgerald** was able to create a survey tool to poll Committee members about their top three priorities that the Committee will address over the remaining six meetings in 2021. The Committee was encouraged to think big picture as an Advisory Committee to the DNR. **P. Hunsicker** reminded the Committee that even if a general topic like Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) doesn't land in their top 3 choices, the DNR will continue to briefly update the Committee on the CBSM project as well as other relevant DNR news. **T. Fitzgerald** reminded Committee members that there are some good online resources dealing with many of the potential topics too; some learning can happen outside meeting times.
- **J. Dauphinais** said that her spreadsheet is not perfect. Some items were split while others were lumped together. For example, invasive carp, which isn't specifically mentioned, could fall under the heading of "Managing Emerging AIS Threats." Also, "Managing Boater Movement" is a broad topic, and would provide much to talk about. "Addressing Inadequate Funding" could include supporting stable MAISRC funding and creating a voluntary contribution mechanism to support AIS work throughout Minnesota.
- Members were instructed to vote on priority categories using a poll created in Microsoft Forms. After voting, the top vote-receiving choices were as follows:
 - Managing Boater Movement/Operation Pathways of Spread – 9 votes
 - Addressing Inadequate and Inconsistent Funding – 8 votes
 - Participating in AIS Legislation – 7 votes
 - Integrating AIS, Water Quality, and Ecological Integrity – 5 votes
 - Review of Non-DNR Statewide AIS Planning – 5 votes
 - Managing Emerging AIS Threats, Including In-Depth Overview of Select Species of Concern – 5 votes
- It was suggested that the funding priority might be combined with legislation topics. For example, Bob Meier (DNR) could discuss both as it relates to AIS. Could also include a discussion about instituting voluntary donations to support AIS work since that initiative would ultimately require legislative support.
- **J. Johnson** suggests when new members are seated on the Committee in April or March, they are given a brief introduction to the DNR's work on AIS. That has been done in the past, and new members found it helpful.
- **J. Dauphinais** commented that the "Review of Non-DNR Statewide AIS Planning" category is timely. Perhaps in March, the Committee can talk with Amy Kinsley about the Legislative Report on Statewide Surveillance. The Committee could also talk about the Statewide Invasive Species Management Plan by inviting Chelsey Blanke (DNR). **T. Fitzgerald** suggested including input from Committee members **D. Jensen** and **K. Taylor**, who are also members of MISAC. **D. Jensen** said that this week, the MISAC committee members are commenting

on the plan. Stakeholder involvement is coming which may provide an opportunity for the SAISAC to comment on the plan.

- **T. Fitzgerald** asked if there is no MISAC update in March, is there a species update preference? Starry stonewort, spiny waterflea, flowering rush, invasive carp, nonnative *Phragmites*? **R. Wersal** said he has no new information to share on starry stonewort.
- **J. Johnson** suggests Gretchen Hanson to speak on a more holistic approach to AIS (example of Lake Mille Lacs) or tapping into her knowledge of crayfish.
- **J. Dauphinais** suggests someone like Donna Perleberg or Paul Radomski to talk about IBI.
- **J. Johnson** suggests that in the fall, the Committee should get an update from Jake Walsh (DNR) about the recently restructured control grants. Successes? Outcomes? **T. Fitzgerald** says that that particular topic didn't rise to the list of top priorities, but the DNR can give brief updates on control grants when there is news to share. **T. Fitzgerald** will post the results of the survey on Basecamp (actually included below).



Non-native *Phragmites* Update

- Topic was requested by **K. Taylor**.

- **H. Wolf** says the Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) upgraded nonnative *Phragmites* to prohibited control status, which is a more restrictive level. There is an exemption for water treatment plants.
- **C. DuBose** asks what the change in status does. **H. Wolf** replies that we are not completely sure. **K. Taylor** says people must now deal with it if it is on their property. If they don't deal with it, they must be open to others coming onto their property to control it. This change helps with some of the previous access issues. **C. DuBose** asks about grants for water treatment plants. **H. Wolf** responds that grants don't come from the DNR. MPCA has some grant dollars that may be eligible. It's very complicated. Julia Bohnen and Dan Larkin with MAISRC are surveying treatment plants to better understand the current situation and what treatment plants are doing to move away from the use of non-native *Phragmites*. DNR grants are to look at experimental replacement of non-native *Phragmites* with a hearty native strain. DNR is working with MDA and MAISRC to create BMPs if treatment plants are unable to transition right away.
- **J. Dauphinais** says the Committee could talk about non-native *Phragmites* in the fall. **H. Wolf** thinks a panel discussion would be informative. It could include Julia, Dan and Wendy Crowell (DNR).

Wrap-Up

- Next virtual meeting is scheduled for **Thursday March 25, 2021**. AIS Planners will work with the Chair and Vice-Chair to develop an agenda based on expressed 2021 priorities.

Adjournment at 12:30 p.m.