

Minnesota Statewide AIS Advisory Committee (SAISAC)

February 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes

WebEx Online Meeting

Members Present: Maggie Stahley, Mike Sorensen, Shelly Binsfeld, Will Bement, Beto Garcia, Bruce Babcock, Holly Kalbus, Ryan Wersal, Michaela Kofoed, Charlie Brandt, Pat Brown

Members Absent: Kate Hagsten, Chris DuBose, KorriRay Northrup, Chris Magnotto

Ex-officio Members Present: Doug Jensen

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

DNR Staff Present: Heidi Wolf, Tina Fitzgerald, Grace Loppnow, Shane Kirlin, Chelsey Blanke, Wendy Crowell

Guest: Julia Bohnen

Chair H. Kalbus called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

Motion to approve agenda: First by W. Bement, second by B. Garcia.

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes from January 27, 2022: First by B. Garcia, second by W. Bement.

Meeting Summary:

- Five new members started service on the Committee: Maggie Stahley, Mike Sorensen, Shelly Binsfeld, Bruce Babcock, and Charlie Brandt.
- New members learned and returning members refreshed their knowledge about the DNR's Invasive Species Program goals, authorities, structure, staff and initiatives.
- The Committee received a final opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft updated State Plan for Invasive Species Management in Minnesota. Members will vote online by Friday March 4th on whether or not to list the Committee as a supporting organization in the plan.
- The Committee learned about past, present and future work on non-native Phragmites in Minnesota.
- The Committee briefly discussed topics of interest for future meetings.

Introductions

- **T. Fitzgerald:** DNR AIS Prevention Planner, helps facilitate these meetings, supports local government efforts in AIS prevention and management, DNR since 2014, Master's degree.
- **S. Binsfeld:** Involved in outdoor recreation, board member for Sherburne Watershed District, on county AIS task force, owns and operates Rock Creek Environmental.
- **H. Kalbus:** Works with outreach, watercraft inspections, Chair of this Committee, in grad school, outdoor enthusiast.
- **W. Bement:** Works for White Earth Reservation, in charge of AIS program and works in fisheries program, outdoor enthusiast.

Introductions continued

- **R. Wersal:** Assistant professor at the Minnesota State University – Mankato, aquatic plant management, 2 new master's students this summer.
- **M. Sorensen:** AIS program administrator at Minneapolis Park Board, B.A. in Environmental Sciences and Master's in Water Resources Sciences, worked in Donn Branstrator's zooplankton lab studying spiny waterflea, works on prevention, management, and response, goal to inspect 100% of watercraft.
- **M. Kofoed:** Works at 3M, competitive bass angler nationwide, made Aqua Weed Stick to remove weeds from trailer and lower barrier to people cleaning trailers, lives on Lake Manuela, active with BASS federation and high school fishing team.
- **M. Stahley:** Graduated from University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) in 2020, studied anthropogenic impacts on Duluth area waters, volunteered with Save the Boundary Waters, worked for Carp Solutions removing common carp, working for ice fishing industry, fly fisher.
- **C. Brandt:** Career in boat dealership, competitive bass angler, trout fisherman.
- **B. Babcock:** Mechanical engineer for Polaris, Grew up fishing in southern Minnesota, now lives near Lake of the Woods and does a lot of open water fishing.
- **B. Garcia:** Geologist, monitoring well contractor, worked for several local engineering companies in Twin Cities, Lake Mapping for Lawrence, lifelong angler and sailboat racer.
- **P. Brown:** Longtime fish biologist for Red Lake Band, recently found zebra mussel larvae in Red Lake, grad school work at UMD on AIS in Duluth/Superior Harbor.
- **D. Jensen:** AIS program coordinator for Minnesota Sea Grant, been working on AIS for 28.5 years on education, research, outreach; Graduate from UMD and Master's from UMD, ex-officio member since 2012.
- **H. Wolf:** DNR Invasive Species Program Supervisor, been with DNR AIS unit since 2001, been in current position since 2014, B.S. in Environmental Studies.
- **G. Loppnow:** Invasive fish coordinator, B.S. Notre Dame, PHD at University of Minnesota, with DNR since August, worked with bass in grad school and invasive carp in former job with US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **S. Kirilin:** Operations manager with DNR Enforcement, with MN DNR since 2001, UMD alumni.
- **J. Bohnen:** Master's in native seed production, landscape restoration with Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, working for University of Minnesota as state expert in Phragmites and evaluating restorations.
- Group discussed spiny water flea impacts and reports.
- Group discussed various zebra mussel topics.
 - **W. Bement** asks, are there documented impacts of zebra mussels on rice beds?
 - **D. Jensen** is not aware of impacts directly on rice beds, but they do make water much clearer so could cause competition problems with other plants. New Zealand mudsnails and rusty crayfish do have impacts.
 - **T. Fitzgerald** says there is interest for having AIS impacts on wild rice as a session at the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference.
 - **H. Wolf** adds the DNR has asked MAISRC to investigate mystery snail impacts on wild rice.
 - **B. Babcock** asks, would zebra mussels remove tannin staining from Lake of the Woods? **D. Jensen** is not sure, surprising they were found there because habitat is marginal given low calcium levels.
 - **C. Brandt** asks, what is the viability of zebra mussels in boundary water lakes? **D. Jensen** says most are too low in calcium and PH but there have been surprises. Prevention is key.

Updates via Email

- **K. Hagsten** updates via email: I wanted to follow up on some the topics that I hope to see the committee discuss in the next year. My top four: Integrating AIS, Water Quality, and Ecological Integrity; IAPM; Tribal perspectives on AIS issues; Reviewing/compiling AIS success stories. Updates for us: Plugging away on the starry stonewort infestations in the Leech Lake Reservation (LLR). Met/talked with two of the resort owners that have starry stonewort. Installed 4 CD3 stations – working with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers to get a few more units.

Introduction to the DNR's Invasive Species Program

Presentation by T. Fitzgerald

- See PowerPoint at the end of these notes.
- DNR AIS Program contact info: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/contacts.html>
- Discussion
 - **W. Bement** asks, if zebra mussels are detected, are upstream and downstream lakes listed as infested? **T. Fitzgerald** says downstream would be listed, but each is evaluated on a case by case basis. Depends on how connected they are. Infested waters list is a regulatory tool to reduce risk.
 - **D. Jensen** adds the DNR has helped Minnesota be way out in front of AIS by being early adopters of prevention measures. Inspection data on compliance similar to boater willingness to be involved in AIS prevention (both 97%).
 - The Brainerd area AIS Prevention Planner position (coordinates with local governments) is open and posted.
 - **D. Jensen** adds the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) task force started in 1990, reauthorized in 1996 and authorized formation of regional panels. Minnesota sits on both the Mississippi River and Great Lakes panels. **D. Jensen** serves on committees with Great Lakes Panel and the DNR handles Mississippi River Basin Panel.

The Revised Minnesota Invasive Species Management Plan

Presented by C. Blanke, DNR AIS Pathways and Plans Analyst

- She has been leading the update of the State Plan for Invasive Species Management in Minnesota on behalf of the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC). Plan update team is diverse and a sub-committee of MISAC.
- Background: The original plan was completed in 2009 and a lot has changed since then. In 2019 MISAC developed new species threat ratings and wanted to add this to the plan. The ANS Task Force reviews approves the plan as well as provides funding through the plan. Minnesota statute requirements exist for a state plan too.
- These updates build on the existing plan – clean and updated. The process started in spring 2020. Lots of discussions and drafts with various groups. Final reviews are happening now and plan to submit for review mid-March.
- The new additions include tribal consultation before implementation, climate resiliency, and MISAC species threat ratings. It also summarizes key current efforts and identifies gaps in authorities and implementation. It includes implementation tables and priorities for action.
- Past Committee comments on previous drafts have either been addressed or will be addressed through accompanying documents including short-form guide to support implementation by partners and an implementation evaluation process.

- **Does the Committee want to be listed as a supporting partner?**
 - **H. Kalbus** says she reviewed most of it. She really liked the tables. It gives a better idea of who is doing what. Also likes the additional pathways to address, e.g. LSPs and contractors doing shoreline restoration. A holistic approach.
 - **C. Blanke** adds she appreciates the recent comments received thus far, they have been really helpful (Thanks **M. Sorensen** and **P. Brown!**).
 - **M. Sorensen** says the plan update team did a really nice job, very thorough.
 - **P. Brown** says thank you for including and incorporating changes.
 - **D. Jensen** says thank you to **C. Blanke** for her leadership. **D. Jensen** helped develop the original plan and has been involved in the revision process. The plan will serve Minnesota really well.
 - **B. Garcia** would like more time to review the plan before a vote takes place.

Each member will vote, via an online form provided by T. Fitzgerald, by 12pm on Friday March 4th on whether or not the Committee should be listed as a supporting organization in the updated State Plan (yes, no, abstain).

Non-Native Phragmites Control Update

Background on Non-native Phragmites Initiatives in Minnesota

J. Bohnen, MAISRC Researcher

- She has been working on non-native Phragmites since 2017 together with DNR and partners. This presentation will focus on a statewide control effort and distribution mapping. Additionally there are waste water treatment plants (WWTP) that use non-native Phragmites as a “green” technology as part of their treatment process, but is a source of non-native Phragmites on the landscape. Therefore, they are also starting research to evaluate non-native Phragmites in WWTPs and the efficiency of native/non-native Phragmites/hybrid species for nutrient uptake.
- Non-native Phragmites is cryptic because there is a native look-alike. It is a prohibited noxious weed (Department of Agriculture). There are differences and populations vary in those characteristics (e.g. height).
- **Spread:** Non-native Phragmites spreads four ways – rhizomes (below ground), stolons (above ground), stem fragments, and seeds. Seeds need genetic diversity to be viable. Seeds are produced on some, not all, populations in Minnesota.
- **Impacts:** reduces plant community diversity (concerned about wild rice); degrades wildlife habitat; impacts transportation, stormwater and agriculture infrastructure; impacts access to water for recreational use; reduces property value.
- **Distribution:** 926 documented populations in Minnesota (due to initial initiative to document locations and now people are more aware and report); 75% were treated in 2021 or previously. Some were “eliminated,” which will be monitored for 3-5 years. Ongoing monitoring is an important aspect of the control program. Most populations are concentrated in the metro area (388).
- **WWTPs:** 8 are still using non-native Phragmites – they are waiting for a substitute.
- Partners are key!
- Report non-native Phragmites! Use the app EDDMapS – the alerts go to **J. Bohnen** for verification.
- **Identification** (Find details on the [University’s non-native Phragmites website](#)):
 - Leaf sheath: native are open, don’t overlap, fall off in winter; non-native are tight, overlap and stay on in winter. “Naked is native.”
 - Stems: native are red and glossy; non-native are dull green and ridged like corduroy.

- Ligule (where the leaf extends from the stem): native is a thick brown line; non-native is thin and hairy.

Funding for Non-native Phragmites Control in Minnesota

W. Crowell, DNR AIS Management Consultant

- The University of Minnesota has been working on non-native Phragmites for a while and produced a plan on how to proceed. Recommends to focus on clearing out areas of the state where there are small populations. Most have been treated now. The DNR got two Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grants to help fund coordination and treatment. The DNR has a contractor that we can hire to go and treat as much as they can. The DNR can also get funding directly to counties. The metro area work is done by watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts and counties. The DNR wants to just give them funding. Almost all of the populations are on roadsides, but typically also need permission from landowners to treat. For instance, the populations in Lake of the Woods County hasn't received permission yet because it is on railway. This is being worked on now. Nice thing is that the Department of Agriculture requires control. The DNR can say "just sign this and we can do it for you." Funds go through 2023, but could extend if needed.
- **J. Bohnen** adds that 23% of populations are on lakeshores. Only 30 lakes or rivers, most in Chisago County, 13 counties total. Community Action Duluth got extra separate funding to monitor and manage it. There is also interjurisdictional GLRI grant funding being used to find alternatives for WWTPs. Some funding has been used to kill non-native Phragmites in WWTPs.
- What is the treatment process? The most effective is to treat in the fall, mid-August to early October, using imazapyr (Habitat) or glyphosate (Rodeo/Roundup) in/near aquatic settings. The contractor is using imazapyr, which has a longer soil residual to get to the rhizomes. Some patches will be treated for 2-3 years and then use glyphosate as the last application, so that active or passive revegetation can happen. Out in the eastern U.S. they are using helicopters to treat extensive populations. We hope we never get to that point.
- **D. Jensen** says the work in the St Louis River Estuary by Duluth Community Action is on the verge of eliminating non-native Phragmites. This year they only found 5 shoots! **J. Bohnen** adds that two populations still need to get permission. One is on a superfund site and part of the superfund work is controlling non-native Phragmites.
- **B. Garcia** shows a sample of a grass he just collected, what is it? **J. Bohnen** says it is silver banner grass also known as mysanthus. It is not invasive now, but may be listed.
- **M. Sorensen** says via chat that Julia was a very helpful resource for my organization as we starting managing invasive Phragmites for the first time last year. Thanks Julia!
- **J. Bohnen** says if you have non-native Phragmites, you won't not be hearing from me 😊

Members discussed and added ideas to 2022 topics

- **M. Sorensen** has started bilingual and multi-cultural AIS education, what are the DNR goals to do this? **H. Wolf** says the DNR has a Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator (currently vacant) and Affirmative Action Coordinator and Culture of Respect. **T. Fitzgerald** adds the fishing regulations were recently translated into four languages, there is AIS information in there that could be used. The DNR is interested to hear about other organizations that have done things with a DEI lens. How are people doing thing differently?
- Commercial fishing. **H. Wolf** says Sean Sisler with the DNR could talk about this and bait harvest. There is also a bait harvest pilot to allow hard-sided traps in zebra mussel infested waters.
- Listing prohibited species and risk assessments. **H. Wolf** says the current list is under legal review.

- As legislation move through this session, the DNR will share with this Committee. **H. Wolf** mentions HF3617 for \$450,000 in grants to lake associations to manage aquatic invasive plant species.
- AIS Pathways (e.g. construction equipment). **H. Wolf** says a presentation could be developed to review ANS pathways of concern.

Ideas for next meeting

- Ask for a research update from Nick Phelps during the next meeting.
- Ask Kelly Pennington (DNR AIS Prevention Consultant) to discuss upcoming listings for prohibited species.
- Ask Annalee (DNR Government Relations) to talk about how DNR participates in policymaking.
- For April: **M. Sorensen** to speak on bilingual outreach.

Adjournment at 12:00 PM. Next Meeting to be held online from 9am to 12pm on March 24, 2022.

DRAFT