

Minnesota Statewide AIS Advisory Committee (SAISAC)

January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes

WebEx Online Meeting 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Members Present: Holly Kalbus, Michaela Kofoed, KoriiRay Northrup, Beto Garcia, Will Bement, Kate Hagsten, Ryan Wersal, Chris Dubose

Members Absent: Pat Brown, Chris Magnotto

Ex-officio Members Present: Doug Jensen, Nick Phelps

Ex-officio Members Absent: Nicole Lalum, Amy McGovern

DNR Staff Present: Tina Fitzgerald, Heidi Wolf, Shane Kirlin, Christine Hokkala-Kuhns

Guests: None

Chair H. Kalbus called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Motion to approve agenda: Motion made by K. Hagsten, and second by R. Wersal. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes from December 2021 was made by R. Wersal and second by B. Garcia.

Meeting Summary:

- The Committee discussed tournament angling and AIS prevention with member **M. Kofoed**, who has experience participating in tournaments and supporting youth angling groups. Summary: Anglers want to do the right thing and want clean equipment. All organizations and events include AIS prevention in different ways. The best time to talk about AIS is at pre-tournament meetings. Teaching the youth to take personal responsibility, build good habits and continue the sustainability of the sport. Need to continue to break down barriers and misconceptions.
- The Committee reviewed topics they addressed in 2021 and priority topics to be covered in 2022. Discussions will continue with new member input next month.

Motions & Actionable Items:

- **M. Kofoed** is elected Vice Chair of the Committee.

Member Updates:

- **B. Garcia:** Last meeting he was in Florida delivering a boat. He was the BioBase ambassador for Navico, but it was sold to Brunswick and he is not working for them at this time as they sort out legalities.
- **K. Hagsten:** Leech Lake Resource Director. Finalizing budgets, writing grants, and went through the MAISRC committee training. Working to get the DASH system into use this summer. Participated in minnow dealer outreach with the DNR. Has to leave early for another meeting today. Recently had the quarterly meeting with the DNR.

- **M. Kofoed:** Currently at her job at 3M. Owns the business Aqua Weed Stick and is currently working with different counties on promotions or options for the upcoming summer. She is an avid angler/tournament angler and works with the Hutchinson youth group fishing league. They are starting to meet for the upcoming season.
- **K. Northrup:** Fond du Lac tribal member. Currently working with someone from Canada's Royal Geographical Society interested in mussels that live in underwater caves within the Great Lakes. **B. Garcia** asked if a link could be shared about the project. It's very new, she will share a link with the Committee when she is able.
- **R. Wersal:** Back teaching. Working with the US Army Corps of Engineers on a species of interest, Cuban bulrush. Currently found in MS, AL and FL. Working on growth and spread modeling. Triploid flowering rush is found in the Detroit Lakes area and to the West. Diploid flowering rush is found in the northeast part of the U.S. and is a prolific bud producer.
- **W. Bement:** Local schools are starting to get in touch with him for job shadow opportunities. Involved in taking kids ice fishing where they talk about AIS. Involved in the quarterly meeting with the DNR where they discussed AIS. Working with the Tamarac Wildlife Refuge. Applied for BIA funds for AIS education. Will be providing LSP (Lake Service Provider) training to resorts; received permission to do the training themselves.
- **C. Dubose:** Chisago County Commissioner. Continuing the fight with Phragmites. Completed a carp study in county lakes, possible options for commercial fishing to reduce the numbers.
- **H. Kalbus:** CBSM (community-based social marketing) pilot final report will be available soon and posted on the county website. A take away: education and outreach is still needed. Planning for the 2022 watercraft inspection season is underway. Water guards will be the contractor for this year. There is a new, small infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil in Lake Sakatah. She will be doing a brief summary of AIS management with the parks department.
- **D. Jensen:** BWCA (Boundary Waters Canoe Area) signage for trail heads and accesses will hopefully be posted by spring. The advisory committee and focus groups reviewed prototypes for messaging. Update on Don't Pack a Pest – will be attending a national coordinators meeting. Looking for money for management of yellow Iris in the St. Louis River. Working with Chelsey Blanke at the DNR on the State Plan. **N. Phelps** asks, where the plan is at? **H. Wolf** says the State Plan should be completed by March and ready for federal review. Plans to attend an international AIS conference in Belgium in April.
- **N. Phelps:** Completed annual report. Opened a request for proposals (RFP) for new projects. \$1.8M to be allocated to new research. There is an AIS Detectors Program webinar today on the small scale removal of narrow leaf cattail.
- **B. Garcia** asks **D. Jensen** for an update on rusty crayfish in Lake Superior. There has been an infestation in the St. Louis River since 1999. **D. Jensen** is unsure why the population is low. There is a new infestation in the Snake River.
- **T. Fitzgerald** gives an update for **P. Brown** who could not attend today's meeting: Larval counts of zebra mussels went up slightly in Red Lake last year. Even though they have been found the last 4 years, no adults have been observed to date. They are also working on a joint AIS plan for the Red Lake Watershed. Slow going, but making progress and hope to have something by spring.

DNR Updates:

- **H. Wolf:**
 - Control grants are out and open for a month. **J. Walsh** did a webinar which was recorded and will be put on the DNR website. One-time funding of \$850,000 available to lake associations and \$400,000 available to local and tribal governments.
 - There were 78 new applicants for this Committee. The short list is to be finalized. Heidi has a meeting with the commissioner's office on Feb 8th to review and approve the new members.
 - Three DNR AIS positions are posted and open for a seasonal AIS trainer, an AIS planner, and a statewide AIS trainer.
- **T. Fitzgerald:** The email about saving the dates for upcoming AIS online workshops has been sent. There are four workshops- behavior change, public engagement, control grants and species-specific topics, and early detection and response plus organisms in trade. Feb 7th is the first workshop. **B. Garcia** asked where these are posted. **T. Fitzgerald** will share specific meeting information via email and Basecamp.
- **S. Kirlin:** AIS work has been impacted by COVID and civil unrest. Two water resource enforcement positions are currently vacant.

Election of Vice Chair

H. Kalbus reviewed the role of the Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will assist with agenda topics, facilitation of meetings if **H. Kalbus** cannot attend, and it is a few hours a month. **W. Bement** and **M. Kofoed** were nominated. **T. Fitzgerald** asks, do you accept the nominations? **M. Kofoed** accepts. **W. Bement** declines. The group was asked for nominations three times. **K. Northrup** self-nominated. Last call. Ex-officio members were reminded to abstain. Members were asked to put their vote the chat. Five votes for **M. Kofoed** and three votes for **K. Northrup**.

M. Kofoed is elected this year's Vice Chair.

Tournament Angling and AIS Prevention

Discussion led by member Michaela Kofoed

- **M. Kofoed** provides background on her involvement with angling tournaments and AIS prevention.
- Youth programs. She works with Hutchinson High School and there are 30 teams in the conference. As far as AIS prevention, their kick-off meetings talk about normal club things like rules/expectations. They scrimmage once a week in June and July and do live weigh-ins. This way for larger conference tournaments they are more prepared. They talk about when leaving the ramp to help your boater keep the boat clean. Kids are typically excited to get to the weigh-in. Want to put the ownership on the kids for cleaning the boat. Want it to be a sustainable sport.
- For the larger bass organization, Bass Federation is a national group. Hosts the Bass Master Classic. Within the Bass Federation there are state and youth portions. **M. Kofoed** has spoken with the coordinator. There is a once a year kick off meeting for everyone that is a member of youth organization. It has the best attendance and best engagement. They go through rules, expectations, including 3-4 slides on AIS – what they are, why it is important, what can boaters do to prevent the spread, and what is expected of the boaters and kids. Make sure all the youth understand why it is important and teach them good habits. Just like wearing a seat belt. All bass tournaments are artificial bait, so don't focus on live bait. That makes that

easy. Focus on cleaning the boat, drying the boat off, washing it. There is a state tournament every year that you have to qualify for. At the pre-tournament meeting the night before, the same AIS slides are in that presentation. For the Minnesota state tournament, the state is split into sections. Sometime difficult to find a big enough lake with the high number of kids participating. This year they are lowering number of participants by asking kids to pre-qualify. Tournament kits to host a tournament include an aqua weed stick and they designate a person as an AIS inspector. Depending on the conference and who is involved, they work with decontamination stations from DNR and/or counties. There are 800 kids signed up for youth bass. It is a big opportunity to get kids started on the right track. The importance and why it impacts them. Many are teachers are in the school, so they are integrating it into their classes as well.

- Recommendations: Go to the pre-tournament meetings, most large ones have this. Avoid right at the start or finish, because at the beginning people just want to get on the water and at the end they just want to get out of the way.

Discussion

- **D. Jensen:** Sounds like an exciting opportunity. I've worked with Bass Federation re: fishing tournaments. As a part of that project, we have several products available to support tournaments including how to integrate boat washing, which can be a little tricky. Please feel free to reach out to me for more information. Thanks!
- **M. Kofoed** says decontamination stations are not very popular with Bass participants. Some boats that have wraps got ruined by the decontamination. Word about that spread, plus misinformation about it being bad for carpet bunks (pressure and heat). **D. Jensen** says for his efforts they didn't recommend decontamination, but a rinse or lower pressure wash. **M. Kofoed** adds that most keep their boats sparkly clean, they go home or use car wash. **D. Jensen** suggests to work with tournament coordinators to get on the schedule to talk, they are very willing. Got many pledges. **B. Garcia** asks, is it the heat or high pressure bad for the wraps? **M. Kofoed** says likely both. Pressure will for sure rip them off. **H. Wolf** clarifies that somebody did something wrong, they should not be that close. She adds that if DNR damages something, we pay for it. For instance someone had stored a stereo in a water-holding compartment – DNR bought a new stereo. If you are doing things correctly, you don't damage anything. **M. Kofoed** says it was likely one bad incident that scared everybody away. Also, some of it is a timing thing and they are going to do it on their own. **B. Garcia** says heat is more important than pressure, based on his experience as a lake service provider. If they could tone down the pressure, then that hot water kills all the AIS. **H. Wolf** agrees.
- **M. Kofoed** asks, anything else you want to see? Open to other ideas. There are 800 kids. If there is a video we can share. Other ways or other things to cover? The scrimmages teaches at the ramp with hands-on, personal experience. Put ownership on the kids. Don't want boaters to have "inspector fatigue," we want them to do it on their own every time, without having an inspector present.
- **H. Kalbus** asks, what can SAIASC do? There is the misconception about anglers not being good stewards. How can we emphasize they are doing their part and kids are doing their part? **M. Kofoed** says that would be great. Also the fear of the decontamination. Sometimes they feel like they are under attack. Bad connotations like "dirty" and "spreaders." Reality is we all do our part, which is all we can control.
- **B. Garcia** mentions the Clean In, Clean Out training for free online. Are tournament organizers required to be Lake Service Providers (LSP)? **H. Wolf** says no, only businesses moving equipment for pay. DNR requires permits for tournaments over certain number of boats or dollar amount award, but under those thresholds they are not required. Tournaments can be a lightning rod, they get a lot of heat, but they are not any more

or less likely that other boaters to spread AIS. In fact, they are potentially less likely. **T. Fitzgerald** adds that everyone has to follow the rules, not matter if it is 100 people or 1 person. Big group is “scary” to some people, but no different than average anglers spread across the landscape on a given day.

- **B. Garcia** adds, for sailing regattas, most stay on the same lake, but some do travel. They go through the same issues. A dirty boat is slow boat. People are conscience of cleaning and draining. LSP is not a big deal, \$50 for 3 years. Training access would be free. Lots of free training online. **T. Fitzgerald** can send **M. Kofoed** what DNR has available now to see what might be most helpful to her efforts.
- **K. Hagsten** says she has not had any luck trying to get Fish Donkey app to change their layout or add anything about AIS. The more people pushing them, the more successful we will be. **M. Kofoed** says most are going to go back to normal, because they didn’t like the price of the app.
- **K. Northrup** asks, is there a way to require boat cleaning before measuring the fish in the tournament? **M. Kofoed** says for certain tournaments yes, a few have the weigh in at the beach on the lake. People can launch at different ramps and therefore less congested.
- **M. Kofoed** mentions that over 20 boats needs a permit.
- **H. Kalbus** says she has had success in a local bass fishing contest. The Sheriff’s deputy is part of the legion, which is a good connection. She attends and get a table and hands out promo items. She tailored content more to live bait this year. People thanked her for being there. She offered an Aqua Weed Stick as a prize, they could enter a drawing if they signed a commitment. It’s the night before the contest. Maybe not everyone is paying attention, but a lot of people. Biggest challenge for her is knowing when the tournaments occur. Is there a better way to connect? **M. Kofoed** says that can be tough and depends on the group. The small leagues (e.g. Monday night) are tough. Facebook is where they are getting shared, sometimes they have their own websites. Classic Bass used to have list of tournaments, but don’t have it anymore. Bass federation and Minnesota federation of bass have smaller clubs within them. **K. Hagsten** adds that Fish Donkey might have some listed.
- **M. Kofoed** says if you have any questions about fishing tournaments, please reach out!

2022 Topics of Interest

- For the 2021 Topics of Interest document, **T. Fitzgerald** says the table is sorted by the top number of votes from last time. Suggests discussion starts with the top line item and we can also add as we go. Share new ideas today and add more when new members join next month.
- **Managing boater movement/operation pathways of spread**
 - Boat operator licensing with AIS content. **C. Dubose** commented there would be a lot of push back. **T. Fitzgerald** said the intent is good but the uptake is not likely; a recent DNR Parks and Trails survey of registered watercraft owners showed boaters support voluntary training, not mandatory licensing. **D. Jensen** said Texas has a program, but for whatever reason Minnesotans are not interested. **K. Hagsten** appreciated **D. Jensen’s** comment. This is not completely off the table. What about signage and the use of QR codes to link to DNR’s species specific webpages? Due to the recent private boat launch finding of starry stonewort, she is interested in ways to work with the resort and do outreach. Also interested in **W. Bement’s** update working with resort owners and build relationships. **D. Jensen** suggests to continue on with the boat license and don’t drop it. Discussed improved signage with a science based approach to develop QR codes. Wildlife Forever has done this but unsure of the

outcomes. These have not been strongly used, but also not strongly promoted. **B. Garcia** suggests if you put QR codes at Gray's Bay for example, make it unique to the ramp. Collect data from the codes such as what ramp a boater is at. QR codes can provide valuable data. In Texas these licenses are already in use. Texas has an ocean and licenses are required from the coast guard. In Minnesota there is a Master's License but we would have to get people to use it, like charter captains on Minnetonka or Mille Lacs. We don't have a culture here like in Texas.

- Private boat launches. **K. Northrup** asked about a benefit program to get people doing AIS checks. **T. Fitzgerald** said there will be a presentation in an upcoming workshop by Bill Grantges and the 5 Star Initiative for lake service providers. The program is promoted by the county and lake associations.

- **Participating in AIS legislation**

- The DNR does not have any AIS changes proposed this year. **T. Fitzgerald** could invite Jeff Forester or Henry Erdman from Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates (MNLRA) to discuss current AIS legislation. **K. Northrup** is interested. **M. Kofoed** would like a better understanding of AIS prioritization/roles/funding and what it is used for, both for the DNR and MNLRA. **H. Wolf** suggests inviting Annalee (DNR government relations) to an upcoming meeting to discuss how Minnesota DNR legislation works.

- **Addressing inadequate and inconsistent AIS funding**

- **T. Fitzgerald** mentions the Committee has discussed voluntary contributions in the past, based on the walleye stamp. And in December Ann Pierce talked about overall future funding for DNR. There is an [engagement platform](#) that all members are encouraged to participate on. Anything for MAISRC? **N. Phelps** says not right now.

- **Review of non-DNR statewide AIS planning**

- **T. Fitzgerald** reminds the Committee they were asked to review the State Plan, from the Committee as a whole and individual comments. **D. Jensen** says the deadline is February 25th for final review. Once a plan is received and approved by the ANS Task Force, any statewide activity will fit under this framework. This is not an implementation plan. **N. Phelps** asks, what about implementation and evaluation? **D. Jensen** said there has been a struggle, how to evaluate the plan and whose role is it. There is no entity to conduct an evaluation on a statewide basis. **H. Wolf** and **D. Jensen** said for the State Plan, the framework is what everyone can do, but it is up to each to do what they want. It is possible for entities to have their own operational plans. Entities may have multiple funding sources and different capacities. **N. Phelps** said the Committee could advise the DNR for an operational plan that supports the state plan. This is a good time to look at it. **K. Northrup** asked, do we want to develop an evaluation plan? **T. Fitzgerald** says that is not really the responsibility of the Committee, but the Committee could suggest how to implement a plan. **N. Phelps** says it could go either way. He suggests to have a presentation about how the DNR would implement and the Committee could give comments or tell the DNR how to implement. **H. Wolf** suggests to review the [2021 Invasive Species Annual Report](#), which highlights what was done and lists future needs and plans.

- **Managing Emerging Threats**

- **T. Fitzgerald** lists topics from 2021 such as invasive carp, genetic biocontrol and starry stonewort. For genetic biocontrol, it was not implementation, but rather a study of social perceptions. **H. Kalbus** says Julie Bohnen from the University could give an update on non-native Phragmites. **T. Fitzgerald**

notes her and Wendy Crowell are presenting at an online workshop; could also have them present to this Committee. **D. Jensen** says the Great Lakes Panel has priorities that align regionally. The DNR is part of an ad-hoc committees bringing together entities that have data on boater movement and will have a summit with law enforcement and program managers. **B. Garcia** suggests having a presentation on zebra mussels. **T. Fitzgerald** suggests Gary Montz at the DNR.

New ideas for 2022

- **H. Kalbus** adds CBSM, live bait, and Great Lakes boater movement. She is in grad school and could invite her professor.
- **B. Garcia** adds boater movement and tracking. All boats have a trailer sticker, could a bar code reader be used? It is a privilege to have a boat. Could track metadata or do a survey. **H. Wolf** said the DNR watercraft inspection collects data on vehicle licenses, which are public data. The survey anonymizes the public data. People really don't like to be tracked. **B. Garcia** said the registration stickers could be scanned like RFID tags or geo-fencing. **H. Wolf** said that would probably require a rule/statute change. **K. Northrup** suggests Facebook to get location data. People know they are being tracked but they are participating in a platform they like and it provides location data. **H. Wolf** asks, was does tracking mean to us when getting it from a fishing app? **K. Northrup** asks what about an app that can notify you when you are at infested waters, kind of like an exposure notice. **H. Wolf** said it is good to get the ideas down. **B. Garcia** says if people are following the rules, great! But you can't always clean under bunks and accidents happen. Metadata could show the quantity of flow between waterbodies. Lake A to Z because of quantity of traffic. **T. Fitzgerald** says **N. Phelps** has presented to this Committee previously about MAISRC's [AIS Explorer Tool](#) that shows just that – boater movement connections to inform watercraft inspection and surveillance efforts.

Wrap-up

- **T. Fitzgerald** will reach out to Julie Bohnen and Wendy Crowell about non-native Phragmites. For new members it would be good to have an overview presentation on the DNR. **K. Northrup** asked why the tribal perspectives on AIS issues was totally blank. **T. Fitzgerald** adds that perspectives/topics tend to come about organically because of representation on the Committee. **K. Northrup** offered to bring a document to the next meeting. She said this should be mapped out so others see the representation. A lot of people are not used to having this voice. **W. Bement** suggested breaking perspectives out for stakeholders. Having important topics listed gives a feel of being represented. **T. Fitzgerald** adds that bios for members are posted online, so the public knows about the background and diversity of Committee members. **D. Jensen** adds there is a graduate student writing a report for the past two years on how to engage with the Fond du Lac Tribe on AIS issues.
- **B. Garcia** mentions there is a new zebra mussel infestation in Lake Owasso where he lives, which is what got him interested in being more involved in AIS work.
- **H. Kalbus** asks if this time works for everyone. **B. Garcia** says it was his commute time. **D. Jensen** says yes it works. General consensus is yes.

Adjournment at 12:00PM

Next Meeting to be held via WebEx at 9AM on February 24, 2022. On the agenda for the next meeting is potentially onboarding new members and non-native Phragmites.