

Minnesota Statewide AIS Advisory Committee (SAISAC)

October 1, 2020 Meeting Minutes

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

Members Present: Norman Baer, Justine Dauphinais, James Johnson, Brian Gross, Jim Boettcher, Kate Hagsten, Pat Brown, Holly Kalbus, Ryan Wersal, Isiah Tolo, Michaela Kofoed, Mary Alverson, Roger Imdieke

Members Absent: Eric Johnson, Kelsey Taylor, Chris DuBose

Ex-officio Members Present: Doug Jensen, Nicole Lalum, Nick Phelps

Ex-officio Members Absent: Amy McGovern

DNR Staff Present: Heidi Wolf, Jan Shaw Wolff, Phil Hunsicker, Tina Fitzgerald, Shane Kirlin (Enforcement), Chelsey Blanke

Meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

Motion to approve agenda. Motion made by J. Dauphinais and second by N. Baer. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes of August 27, 2020 made by J. Dauphinais and second by J. Boettcher. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting Summary:

- Committee shared their collective experiences on the Minnesota AIS Research Center's (MAISRC) first virtual Showcase held on September 22-24. Generally, they felt the virtual platform this year worked well, and they appreciated the opportunity to hear about new and on-going research and ask follow-up questions of the researchers.
- Committee learned about the Minnesota State Response Plan and the update process for Minnesota's State Management Plan for Invasive Species. Committee members made suggestions to make the response plan, specifically the process that happens after an initial detection of AIS, more understandable for the general public.

Motions & Actionable Items:

- None

Committee Member Updates

- **N. Baer:** Successful year on North Brown's Lake. Lake looked good all summer.
- **H. Kalbus:** New infestation in August of Eurasian watermilfoil on Upper Sakatah Lake. Just .2 acres and adjacent to state land. Mostly in shallow water (less than four feet). Did a chemical treatment with 2,4-D. Will see results in the spring. Impressed with quick response once it was found.
- **I. Tolo:** Going through samples in the lab. Using koi herpes virus to control carp has some similarities to conservation biocontrol that is used to control invasive plants. Water temperature and contact opportunity could increase mortality by just providing opportunities for carp with the virus to congregate with those not yet affected by the virus. Corn baiting provides good opportunities for encouraging this mixing, which may spread the virus among the population. Koi herpes virus does not seem to transfer to native fishes.
- **J. Johnson:** Made some interesting observations this fall. Observed that Eurasian watermilfoil growth was delayed. It was seeding in late August, about three weeks behind schedule. Did fall treatments on three lakes. Milfoil is often tucked into water lilies, so you can't treat it with chemicals. In the fall, lilies are already breaking down, so you can easily spot the milfoil and treat it. Participated in the MAISRC Virtual Showcase and saw Dr. Dan Larkin talking about starry stonewort and difficulties identifying it using pressed specimens or photos. Specimens often break down. Now looking at 3-D printing options. **J. Johnson** and his son will be using their 3-D printer to create larger scale bulbils for easy identification.
- **J. Boettcher:** Possible new zebra mussel introduction in Carver County. Doing surveys to verify. County commissioners have been talking about a county levy to support the costs associated with watercraft inspection. New Lake Waconia public access opening was delayed. Includes 35 parking spaces. The county needs that extra money that will be generated through AIS Prevention Aid, but completion of the access was too late to be included in the 2021 AIS Prevention Aid allocations. Wonders if there is an appeal process to include the access in the 2021 allocations since it could mean close to \$8,000 extra dollars that are sorely needed. DNR put the bunks in in April. The parking lot wasn't completed until mid-July, but the gravel between the bunks washed out and had to be repaired, delaying the opening. **T. Fitzgerald** explained the rigid statutory language. Numbers for public accesses and trailer parking spaces need to be received by Minnesota Revenue from DNR Parks and Trails by June 1 of each year, so they can certify their calculations for the following year. Now that the Lake Waconia public access is officially completed, it can be included in the 2022 numbers for Carver County. Observed that CD3 stations were shut down for the summer due to COVID. Not sure why. They were covered in June by Three Rivers Park District.
- **J. Dauphinais:** There is a CD3 outpost at Fish Lake in Maple Grove. It was closed earlier, but reopened with signs warning that they do not sanitize the units. Participated in hand pulling operation of hybrid watermilfoil with Crooked Lake Association. Some was inaccessible in 15 feet of water, so they did a 4-acre ProcellaCOR treatment. Nice example of integrated pest management. Sixty percent of the lake used to be covered. Now, there are just a handful of plants. Spoke as part of a panel for the MAISRC Virtual Showcase. Highlighted her work with nonnative Phragmites. Fourteen sites treated by PLM and got 94% control. The 6% that remained is now almost gone. Expect eradication in two years. Incredible success story.
- **K. Hagsten:** Concluded inspections. Busy with reports.
- **M. Kofoed:** The Hutchinson Fishing team is going to Nationals. Getting feedback on Aqua-Stick stations.
- **P. Brown:** One more round of plankton sampling on Red Lakes (Upper and Lower). No adult zebra mussels found on sampling plates. Did netting in both Upper and Lower lakes to look at stomach contents of fish. No adult zebra mussels found there, either.

Committee member updates continued

- **R. Wersal:** Trying to keep up with academics and the hybrid system that is being implemented. It includes in-person, and online interaction with students. Finishing up a starry stonewort management research project for the DNR. Will have a report done in six weeks. Currently the president of the Aquatic Plant Management Society, so busy with those tasks in addition to his University responsibilities.
- **N. Lalum:** Will be doing a series of statewide listening sessions in October with tourism businesses.
- **N. Phelps:** Had 315 registered for the Virtual Showcase. Involved with the Research Needs Assessment. Thank you to the DNR and the Advisory Committee for their submittal. 650 people responded to the call for research topics. Lots of interest, which means there is a lot to review before they can eventually come up with 20 priority ideas for future research.
- **D. Jensen:** As co-chair, working with ExComm to plan 2020 UMISC Online Conference, including media plan plus authoring/co-authoring 6 talks. Working with Great Lakes Panel on ANS to plan fall meeting and OIT symposium online. Attended many excellent MAISRC Showcase sessions. Kicking off Don't Pack A Pest for Academic Travelers-MN funded by APHIS. Will meet online with federal and state agencies in Nov, and UMD, Morris and Crookston campuses in Dec. Participated in national meeting last week. Intern created an infographic based on Great Lakes Landing Blitz accomplishments. She has uncovered >180 unreported AIS sightings in NE MN and now cross-referencing sightings from notes in DNR LakeFinder. Once complete, we will work with NRRRI to update/incorporate into the St. Louis County AIS Risk Assessment Tool. Initiated a social media effort in collaboration with BWCAW Coalition, led by Jeff Forester, MNLRA. Phragmites may be near eradication in the St. Louis River. Our intern with 1854 Treaty Authority visited last five last sites and only found one plant, which was pulled. As part of a larger NE regional AIS signage inventory, another intern visited 70 public water accesses in south St. Louis County and found 56 with SAH! signs, various other signs, but at several river and northern accesses signs were absent, damaged or out of date – serves as a model to other regions. Continuing to work with DNR on Organisms in Trade effort and MISAC to update the State's Invasive Species Management Plan, respectively.
- **B. Gross:** Working on developing smart live well technology to keep fish alive longer. High level discussions looking for ways to better seal boats. Boat sales have been great during COVID-19.
- **R. Imdieke:** Water clarity on Green Lake in Spicer has improved from 8 feet to 18 feet due, in large part, to zebra mussels. According to the DNR Fisheries office in Spicer, bass populations have increased, as well as populations of bluegills. The walleye population has decreased, so instead of stocking with fingerlings, larger yearlings are now being stocked. Population is now up 30% in most recent test netting. The Glacial Lakes Sanitary Sewer System has also contributed to improved clarity in the lake.
- **M. Alverson:** Held her pilot's seminar, but due to COVID, attendance was down.

DNR Updates

- **S. Kirlin:** Major with DNR Enforcement will be new Committee appointee representing the Enforcement Division. He will replace Jackie Glaser. Twenty years in with the DNR, six of which have been involved with training and hiring.
- **T. Fitzgerald:** Community-Based Social Marketing update. Grantees are removing barriers at public water accesses by providing bait disposal stations and providing cleaning tools. Showed photos of some of the stations that have been installed. A Lot of good evaluation will result from these projects. For example, counters are being used every time someone opens a disposal bin or uses a tool. In Lake County, they had to

bear-proof their bait disposal bin. They also created a sign for unwanted baitfish and they list the laws since according to surveys, anglers are motivated by following the laws. An added motivator is that the unused bait goes to fertilize a local community garden.

- **H. Wolf:** DNR Commissioner approved the recommendation to change the status of nonnative Phragmites. Will now go through the rulemaking process. Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture (MDA) is looking to get wastewater treatment plants to phase out their use of nonnative Phragmites as a de-watering agent. The DNR is starting the process to create the 2020 Invasive Species Annual Report. The report for the Lake Service Provider Pilot Project will be submitted to the legislature. The report recommends not allowing LSPS to remove zebra mussel-infested equipment to go directly to their shop and then return to the lake uncleaned. Only two LSPs participated in the pilot project. Discovered that Enforcement would be difficult if the program was expanded. Not worth the risk. **N. Baer** asks how the 2020 Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) grant program went. **H. Wolf** responds that in general, it went well. Most of the money was spent. There is always someone who does some work before their grant is approved and wants to be reimbursed. That can't happen. Looking at other ways to do the grant program, something different from the current first-come first-serve method. Jake Walsh with the DNR will be talking with lake associations and with this Committee to try and answer that question and come up with a viable alternative method to distribute grant dollars fairly. Later via the chat function, **H. Wolf** shared the following information: In 2020, the DNR funded 174 of 196 applications for IAPM grants. Gave out a total of \$528,950 (average of \$3,040 per grantee). NGOs (non-governmental organizations like lake associations) received 113 grants totaling \$338,037 and LGUs received 61 grants totaling \$190,913.

Discussion of Experiences at MAISRC Virtual Showcase

- **J. Johnson** asks when recordings of sessions will be available. **N. Phelps** responds soon, sometime in October. Links will go out in the MAISRC newsletter and he will post it on Basecamp for this Committee. **J. Johnson** thought the Virtual Showcase went well. Liked the short future/new research presentations.
- **P. Hunsicker:** Was impressed with **J. Dauphinais'** panel presentation on nonnative Phragmites. Good information and it highlighted a success story based on a combination of good research, good planning, good collaboration, and good implementation.
- **N. Phelps:** Asks the Committee: "Was the presentation on real world applications of research useful or helpful?" **J. Johnson** responded yes.
- **J. Dauphinais** thought the panel worked well. It was well-facilitated by Meg Duhr. Has already received follow-up comments and questions from others regarding Phragmites management.
- **D. Jensen:** Thought the presentations by **J. Dauphinais** and **I. Tolo** were good. The online format worked well.
- **J. Johnson** asks if attendance was up because of convenience. **N. Phelps** responds that MAISRC will be doing a survey with participants. Perhaps that will come out in the survey. There were a lot of out-of-state participants because of the virtual format. The lake association crowd seems to be less, possibly because they like the networking aspect of an in-person conference, and that is hard to replicate in a virtual format.
- **J. Johnson** liked Gretchen Hanson's research on impact of zebra mussels on game fish and the connection with mercury uptake in near-shore verses offshore feeding. The bio-film presentation was also interesting – a way to keep zebra mussels from attaching to hard surfaces like boats, docks, boat lifts, etc.
- **J. Dauphinais** likes hearing about research from all stages – brand new to older and ongoing.

- **T. Fitzgerald** reminds the Committee that Lucia Levers and Amit Pradhananga will be our guest presenters next time on October 22 to talk about the willingness of recreationists to pay for AIS management. Perhaps, they will also shed some light on additional survey work that was done.
- **J. Johnson** suggests offering some virtual talks next time, even when we are able to meet again in person.
- **N. Phelps** says he hopes that doing webinars every couple of months meets that need for virtual learning.
- **J. Johnson** liked having “conference days” to dedicate to learning about research. Likes the occasional webinars, but also likes seeing a wide range of research topics presented over 1, 2, or 3 days.
- **D. Jensen** says that with the UMISC conference going virtual this year (registration is now open), they will be setting up some social space to hopefully meet that need for networking and socializing.
- **P. Hunsicker** says he missed the networking aspect from this year’s virtual Showcase. It’s a great way to meet and chat with our county AIS Coordinators in attendance. Not commuting down to St. Paul and instead, just sitting out on the porch on a nice day with a laptop and being able to listen to top researchers talk about their work, was enjoyable, too.
- **J. Johnson** suggests using “topic rooms” next time instead of “agency rooms or lake association rooms.” Liked the lunchroom discussions. Thought that worked well in the virtual format.

Discussion of Minnesota’s Response Plan

Presentation by Chelsey Blanke, DNR AIS Pathways and Plans Analyst

Overview

- The Response Plan describes “the actions the DNR takes leading up to and following reports of potential new AIS infestations.”
- It supports partner collaboration, working together and assisting with response.
- It was updated for accuracy and clarity. In the past, there has been some confusion, but there is a process.
- Any response is complex and variable
 - Invasion curve – the more established, the more difficult to remove/control.
 - What is reasonable? What is successful?
 - E.g. eradication vs. containment.
 - Consider non-target impacts.
 - Some responses are ongoing and take multiple years. Adaptive management is very important.
 - Communication and partnership is key.

Flowchart

- The flowchart is an “at a glance” view of what the process looks like.
- The full plan has sequential level of increasing detail – flowchart, table, and text.
- The plan focuses on the actions taken by DNR, but collaboration with outside organizations is typical and essential.
- There is variability in the actions taken. The flowchart shows the general sequence, but sometimes things happen concurrently.
- The organization that leads the response depends on the species and the scenario. Typically, the DNR leads at first and then takes on a technical advisory role.
- The flow: Detect → Verify → Communication (partners are engaged at different levels throughout the process) → Assess Population → Assess Risk (mostly for new species to MN; already

assessments/knowledge for existing species in MN) → Action Decisions → Implement → Adaptive Management

- **C. Blanke's** role was to put it on paper, but she is not typically involved in the actual response. Wendy Crowell (AIS Management Consultant) and regional AIS Specialists are typically the ones leading the responses for DNR.

Overview of the Steps

- **Detect**
 - The public and partners can enter the report (location, pictures, description) into EDDMapS. Or at the very least get the information to the Regional AIS Specialists (call or email).
 - There are many ongoing efforts to support detections by DNR and partners – sources of reports are diverse.
 - **J. Johnson** asks, how does EDDMapS interact with the AIS Specialists? **C. Blanke** says the Specialists are verifiers of reports posted on EDDMapS. If the Specialist gets the report by phone or email, they put it in EDDMapS.
- **Verify**
 - The DNR is mandated to investigate reports of potential AIS new to a location by state statute. Any submission in EDDMapS notifies Specialists for verification.
 - Photos and/or specimens are needed for verification.
 - **D. Jensen** says it is legal for someone to transfer prohibited species directly to a DNR office for identification.
 - **J. Johnson** asks, EDDMapS or contact Specialist, what's better? **H. Wolf** says whatever they are comfortable with, both are totally acceptable. DNR just wants to know. **J. Johnson** asks, what is the timeline for EDDMapS to notify the Specialist? **H. Wolf** says the Specialist will immediately get a notification from EDDMapS.
 - **C. Blanke** asks for clarification, is a permit needed to transport prohibited species for identification? **H. Wolf** says not at all – delivering it directly to DNR is totally legal.
 - **J. Johnson** asks, is EDDMapS a website? An App? **C. Blanke** says it's both.
- **Communicate**
 - There is a news release decision, a release may or may not be necessary. If there will be a news release, DNR staff will wait to distribute the information broadly until the news release goes out.
 - DNR staff will continue to communicate with partners assisting with the investigation. We ask partners to wait on sharing information broadly, so no conflicting information is going out.
 - If there is a news release, a notification goes out to interested partners just prior to the news release.
 - Other public communications include posting signs at accesses and adding information to online databases such as EDDMapS and the infested waters list.
- **Assess Population**
 - Determine extent and locations of the AIS population within the water body. Some assessments may be led by local organizations versus DNR staff.
- **Assess Risk**
 - This step is mostly for AIS new to Minnesota. DNR staff may conduct a risk assessment for the new AIS to try to determine if there are ecological or economic risks that were previously not understood.
 - Many risk assessments already exist (ecological, economic impacts). There is a database called GLANSIS that hosts these assessments too.

- DNR staff will also consider projected changes in climate, recognizing climate trends and that more nonnative species will likely be able to establish in Minnesota waters.
- **D. Jensen** notes that GLANSIS is non-indigenous species, whereas EDDMapS is invasive species.
- **J. Johnson** asks about any delays in notifying the lake group, is there a time set on that? A week? A month? **H. Wolf** says no. Usually a week or under, but sometimes situations are more complicated. For example, DNR invasives staff will be talking this winter to formalize zebra mussel confirmation when we only have very small piece(s) of information. In this situation, lake associations will be aware soon, because DNR will be reaching out for help to look for things attached to equipment. In other scenarios, the lake associations may not be aware until more significant information is collected. **J. Johnson** suggests to say “you’ll hear back in a week.” Even if there is no new information that is available, just to check in with the group. People get antsy after more than a week. It would be a good public relations move, even if no additional information is available.
- **Decide Action**
 - Essentially there are three options: No attempt to control, control to eradicate, and intermediate control. Many, many factors influence these decisions. This part of the full plan lists some factors to inform decision making at this point in the process. For example:
 - How widespread is it? Is the population small? Found early? In few locations?
 - What is the potential success of a control effort?
 - What is the capacity of the organizations involved?
 - Are there rare species in the area that could be impacted?
 - There is also an incident command system (ICS) decision.
 - ICS is a framework for large-scale response efforts that would be used if the response:
 - involves federal funding or participation;
 - is multi-jurisdictional and includes other states, tribes, Canadian provinces
 - and potentially for particularly challenging or time-sensitive AIS response efforts within the state
- **Implement**
 - A “response guidance group” is formed to lead actions (made up of DNR staff, local resource managers and organization leaders).
 - Permits are obtained.
 - The control action is implemented.
 - Adaptive management is used – potentially multiple years of work.

Discussion

- **P. Hunsicker** says a lot of the counties are trying to come up with their own response plans. For example, the New Infestation Response Plan (NIRP) created and shared by Ramsey County; In this case, a lot of what this does is figuring out the communication networks, who needs to be pulled into the conversation if something is found. Counties are using it as preparation.
- **C. Blanke** says she hopes this plan will help counties develop things like that. Will this plan help groups prepare for new infestations? Are there other resources DNR could develop for that purpose?
 - **J. Johnson** says it is not always clear who the responsible party is. What are DNR aspects versus non-DNR aspects? Right now the flow chart reads as if the DNR is doing everything. **C. Blanke** says yes, we can make that more clear. **T. Fitzgerald** adds that under the “communications” section, it does outline that a bit.

- **P. Hunsicker** suggests a case study or two to show the process that happens. Every case will be different, but this is how it can happen. **J. Johnson** says lake groups tie into stories more than they do with flow charts. It would give more realistic expectations, be more organic, etc. **T. Fitzgerald** cautions that providing a case study might set the expectation that all responses would go the same way, which isn't true; that would need to be outlined clearly at the beginning. **D. Jensen** says fish, plants and invertebrate response examples would be helpful. Inland versus border waters/international too. **P. Hunsicker** suggests to include a disclaimer, what happens during your response would be different than the case study. **J. Johnson** suggests a one-page document with a few diverse examples. Realistic. Include a timeline and who was involved at which steps would be helpful for lake groups.
- **D. Jensen** says there are some Incident Command System examples in Illinois and there is a desktop training available. **C. Blanke** says we do reference the training in the plan.
- **C. Blanke** asks, how can we better communicate this plan? Overall as well as individual scenarios?
 - **N. Phelps** asks, is there more on the decide action box? There will be uncertainties in there. Some might be unknown or subjective. Is it quantitative or qualitative? Scoring or ranking? **C. Blanke** says it's more organic than that, more to guide the process and not that quantitative. Recognition of uncertainty is built in to the process. The questions are discussed with partners that will be involved in any response implementation. **N. Phelps** says no matter what you do, there may be people that disagree. These questions and responses may help you defend your decision.
- **H. Wolf** says we may change "decide action" to "make recommendations," because DNR is typically not the one doing the work or providing significant funding. A good example where DNR led is Grand Lake, where the association let DNR do only hand pulling so that data on that method alone could be collected. But typically the work goes to local partners.
- **N. Baer** lives on North Browns Lake and the current president probably has no idea what to do if they found starry stonewort. Anything you can send to a president like that would be really helpful.
- **P. Hunsicker** says that the regional DNR AIS Specialists have built good relationships with lake associations in their areas; tell the associations to contact their Specialist with any questions.
- **D. Jensen** says with the Incident Command System there is a single point person for a smaller executive committee and the committee makes decisions for actions. Takes the responsibility away from a single organization, but kind of gives it back in a way. It is especially helpful for politically sensitive actions.
- **H. Kalbus** says she just went through this process. How she presents information is different than the lake association would present information to the county board. The county board is not as confident in the lake association, but is more confident in the local government. She presented what DNR recommends and that her organization would like to do that, and they approved it with flying colors. Following up on it is really important with decisions makers and lake associations. Even the media too.
- **J. Johnson** suggests that the blue box is DNR-led and outside is local control.
- **T. Fitzgerald** suggests the full plan be shared on Basecamp (near-final draft). Then members can thoroughly review it and post any additional questions/comments.

A quick update on the State Invasive Species Management Plan Update

- MISAC published the plan in 2009.
- The plan is a source of DNR Invasive Species Program funding.
- Federal Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force approves plans and plan updates.
- Past Committee members suggested it be updated to current times and MISAC recently updated species threat rankings.

- **C. Blanke** says that since federal funding is attached to this plan, the ANS task force approval process is required, but from other states' experience this may be challenging. We're ready to give it a try. The current step is surveying partners about AIS activities, a listening session at UMISC, making updates and reviewing the plan, and then hopefully have the final draft for submission by the April 2021 ANS Task Force meeting, where they approve these types of plans.

Wrap-Up

- **Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 22. We will have a presentation by Lucia Levers and Amit Pradhananga from MAISRC on Recreationists' Willingness to Pay for AIS Management. Jake Walsh may be available to meet with the Committee to highlight the 2020 Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) grant process, and to introduce a conversation about how to structure next year's Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) grants.**

Adjournment at 12:35 p.m.