

Angling, AIS and Access Open Space Meeting Session Notes

Date: 08/10/2019

Location: Central Lakes College, Brainerd, MN

All notes have been typed unedited, directly from handwritten participant notes.

Topic 1: What can stakeholders do to improve our success rate for prevention AIS (18 attendees)

Convener: Nicole Erickson

Discussion Notes

- People think about the lakes health
 - Change their way of thinking.
- Policy DNR is working?
- How do we as stakeholders approach?
- Not a sustainable models
 - More pilot programs.
- Come up with an idea
 - A new normal to address this access.
- More inspectors / hours.
- Why does it come down to lakeshore owners having to solve the AIS problem in the lake they live on?
- Education on the process on how to complete the steps.

Topic 2: Quarantine (26 attendees)

Convener: John Milton

Discussion Notes

- Adam Block – DNR Boating Regulations
- Plug wrench as part of equipment
- Educational component good but more approaches needed.
- Buying and storing decon station and expensive; self-operating systems more practical. We concentrate on stony stonewort or fleas – a good start.
- DNR laws important – treat different AIS differently (fleas and stonewort)

- Ottertail County. Expert education – state holds resources in trust (public water and protection should be prioritized).
- Changes in laws with legislation – pressure legislators.
- Coalition of different groups a must.
- Rule to drop motors should be on the boats.
- Run water through live wells.
- In affected lakes – addressing boats coming out vs. quarantine – self performed more likely than formal decon
- Decontaminate every vessel leaving infected.
- Private landing and resorts – important sources.
- AIS test when fishing, license was dropped.
- Talk with legislators.
- Motivation: destroying resources we should be protecting.
- Change – the will to get the jobs done.
- Self-serve – wants in more locations – some do not care – enforcement and fines.
- Get tools for AIS - proper equipment / inspectors.
- Water in lower unit.

Topic 3: DNR Public Access Policy – Should it change? (8 attendees)

Convener: Phyllis Mead

Discussion Notes

- 11,842 lakes in MN
- Mahnomen County restrictive regulations (exclusions) in lakeshore – No public access – 200 feet set back, septic inspections to protect access - pristine.
- If public access denied, are we limiting the opportunities for citizenry?
- All people care; but non-owners may not.
- Parks and Trails DNR – land only from willing sellers – DNR isn't as assertive as in 70's
 - Carry-in
 - 1) turn around not big enough
 - 2) Lake of space
 - 3) Deep around water
 - 500 acres
- Public demand plays into DNR decisions. DNR has not purchased new property because of AIS for at least five years. Spread of AIS by boats and trailers – few incidents of animals/birds transference. AIS risk by letting boats in lakes by private owners.
- Question – with two public accesses – could one be closed and changed to carry in so other access would be better monitored? Would need Governor or Commissioner to make the change.
- Carry-in access could be argued as increased access by canoeist and kayaks (not as a trade-off for standard public access – trailer/boat).
- Suggestion: Any person applying for hunting or fishing license be required to take a test to educate people to understand the threats of AIS.
- Problems hiring inspectors, 50% boaters were good / not others.
- Behavior change challenge discussed. Peer pressure helps routinized.

Topic 4: Wakeboating (12 attendees)

Convener: Steve Frawley

Discussion Notes

Concerns:

1. Big waves pounding shore and equipment
 2. Develop single lake ordinance
 3. Boat design
 4. Erosion, disturb lake bottom, AIS impact on other recreation, increased Phosphorus cycled, increased algae.
 5. Safety – small boats and kayaks.
 6. Impact on other recreation.
 7. More than education needed.
 8. Boat plowing is a problem creating huge work.
 9. DNR looking at statutes – implements what legislature says and set rules as needed.
 10. More public input to discussion.
 11. Issues related to noise.
 12. Transfer of veligers (zebra mussel larva) in wake boat ballast.
 13. Safety issues – paddleboat and kayak endangered from wakes.
 14. DNR needs to act on boat restrictions.
 15. DNR issues permit to weed roller regularly concerns about sediment why not attend to lake bottom impact of wake boats.
 16. Adam Doll – DNR is looking at wake boat issues and is talking to manufacturer.
 17. Impact on spawning fish beds and loons on waves.
 18. Economic impact as lakes continue to deteriorate.
- Depth 16' – shallow vs. deep – fisherman leave – education vs. rules – 150'

Topic 5: Does Public Access Equal Unrestricted Access? (20 attendees)

Convener: Doug Johnston

Discussion Notes

- Lakeshore owner
 - We need to learn to respect one another and educate each other – Residents and Users
- Jet skiers disturbing enjoyment
- What does public use actually mean? Unrestricted access?
- Lakeshore owners are restricting access to non-lakeshore owners.
- We are all in this together.
- Responsibility to the lakes not the water.
- We should all be steward of the lake.
- Boat inspections – is there more we can do?

- Allow unfettered access via watercraft (?), dock, lift, barge.
- Do fishermen have a responsibility to protect our lakes as they move from lake to lake? Voluntary – yes, they clean their boats. A user that leaves an infested lake has a responsibility to decontaminate. Is volunteer self-policing enough?
- Require a decontamination certificate to enter a lake – must be recertified to move from lake to lake.
- Need better protection built into equipment – boats, trailers, live wells, boat bladders, etc.
- We cannot have unrestricted access to public waters. Fishermen disagreed – access to lakes is a right.
- Property owners are funding AIS protection and control.
- Does Lakeshore lose value if a lake is infected? - Realtor – yes! She sees a definite decrease when she discloses an infestation.
- These resources belong to all of us, and we need to work together to manage our lakes.
- Anything we can do now – even a little.
- A user has a responsibility to use a public property / lake property – the problem is enforcement. How and when to do enforcement? Inspections before, during and after.

Topic 6: Building Coalition: Singing Out of the Same Songbook (8 attendees)

Convener: Vern Wagner

Discussion Notes

Stereotyping Associations / Anglers

Discussion:

- Getting groups together
- Sponsoring Anglers for AIS training
- Speakers for Assn of Angling groups
- Tournament Permit Overview
- Build local partnerships at local level
- Connect watershed groups to shoreline restoration projects for owners.

Topic 7: Tournaments (10 attendees)

Convener: Tom Neustrom

Discussion Notes

- Times of Tournaments – too early 6:45
- No respect for Wildlife Enforcement during Tournaments
- DNR – permits on certain effected lakes.
- Permits required – notify
- Pre-fishing
- Pre-tournament – regulations. Hand out cards instructing care of boats. Inspect your own boat.
- DNR and County aren't coordinating efforts on tournaments.
- Go to location and start tournament instead of ...

Topic 8: Partnering with DNR and County to use technology more effectively to target communication more directly with boaters (11 attendees)

Convener: Tim Mahoney

Discussion Notes

- Nicole, CWC
- Vern, Anglers with Habitat
- Steve, WAPOA
- Kathy Peterson
- Steve Wolfe
- Wade Miller, DNR
- Steve
- Scott Mead
- Kim Nygaard
- Amanda, DNR

- Highest Risks
 - Docks and Lifts
 - Boats
- DNR – Community-based Social Marketing
- Camera has no value from an enforcement perspective. Increasing boater with zebra mussels is against the law. How can we better use access maintaining data we are already collecting?
- Partnering Technology
 - CD3 – Clean, Drain, Dry and Dispose Equipment
- Nicole – changes in behavior survey – producing

Topic 9: Fisheries Management – Stocking new species like Muskies in lakes. Why introduce new risk factors to delicate ecosystems when public feedback is mixed, at best, with new stocking. (8 attendees)

Convener: Uldis Birznieks

Discussion Notes

- A number of attendees think that current stocking level is appropriate of muskies and do not think it impacts other fish species.
- Greater impact is the small northerners.
- This is as much a social issue as science issue for many people but depends on the lake.
- Fry stocking just as effective as fingerlings stocking.
- Gull Chain residents were concerned of how DNR handled the stocking.

- Per DNR Fisheries retiree, this is not a scientific issue but a social issue.
- Quite a bit of discussion on musky stocking survey by Gull Lake Association.
- Good change by all involved.
- Want to see more engagement of younger people in Fisheries.
- Stocking will bring additional opportunities for fishing but could inherently increase its risk.
- Conclusion – What works on one lake may not work on another and that may change with time regarding stocking and fish management.

Topic 10: AIS Laws (8 attendees)

Convener: Greg Kuaze

Discussion Notes

- Enforcement of existing laws – very poor.
- No penalties or not severe enough for all AIS laws.
- Existing laws and compliance is going up significantly – but not enough penalties.
- More tickets, uniformity in penalties.
- Risk factors – prioritize species. Risks by species, or lake or ? Hit new infestations harder – funding is lacking.
- Out Inspections – may be some promise.

Topic 11: Enforcement (18 attendees)

Convener: Bill Grantges

Discussion Notes

- Beltrami County has \$7K budgeted in AIS Program for Enforcement. \$7K left unused last 2 years. Why? “No time for them to do it”. No mandate from the state to enforce AIS. Cost of \$50/hour for Itasca deputies (never used) and \$53/hour Beltrami
- Cass has 7 level 1 AIS Deputies – not doing inspections because they don’t have time.
- City of Lake Shores has deputies currently writing AIS tickets, not as many as liked.
- Enforcement not taken seriously ... “Until state takes enforcement seriously, no one will.”
- People in room had not heard – “if you write tickets, it will destroy tourism” like has been heard in Itasca.
- Roadside checks: Beltrami: many conditions: only on state land, only if no turn around ... take away was “it doesn’t happen because it’s too difficult with too many requirements and conditions that must be met.”
- Identify cost to enforce including court costs!
- All agreed fines are not high enough, they should at least cover all county/city costs including court costs and lawyers
- Talk to AIS Advisory Panel, get letters from them to state legislators concerning enhanced enforcement and increased fines.

- Beltrami AIS writes suggestions for agenda for county commissioners. Bruce uses that to use enforcement suggestion.
- Deputies not involved – non-believers.
- No political will to enforce.