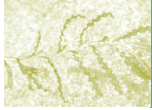


# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



## MN DNR STATEWIDE AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 26, 2015 (Revised)

### Summary of Committee Accomplishments in 2014

*"The past year has been a real pleasure serving as the chair for the AIS Advisory committee. I have found the experience to be a very rewarding and productive working with a passionate group of fellow Minnesotans with deep concern for the wellbeing of our water resources as we pass them on to the next generation." Committee Chair, Robert Olsen*

In 2014, the committee researched, debated and shared perspectives on a multitude of AIS topics. It was in the spirit of a multi-pronged approach that the committee embraced its charter mission to achieve three outcomes: 1) review and make recommendations for improving DNR's AIS programs, 2) make effective suggestions to other organizations on their AIS related activities and 3) develop a shared understanding among committee members of AIS issues and their impacts on the public. In 2014, the committee:

- Reviewed and provided input on various DNR AIS programs that staff brought to the committee.
- Facilitated a constructive dialogue representing a variety of constituent AIS viewpoints.
- Supported successful efforts to secure funding for local programs and research.
- Fostered collaboration between private and public sectors concerning AIS prevention.
- Contributed expertise to outside organizations.

#### Looking forward to next year, the committee will:

- Continue to identify and address important AIS issues.
- Develop and refine a work plan, with more focus on partnerships, coordinated communication, messages and actions.
- Monitor the County AIS Aid Program.
- Advocate for DNR facilitation of regional/local informal meetings.

This message summarizes the guiding approach of the Advisory Committee's work in 2014, a year with many bright spots - new successful funding for AIS initiatives as well as more people getting the prevention message and taking action on the ground. The committee held nine meetings, gathering in St Cloud to provide updates, develop priorities, discuss hot-button and emerging issues, listen to citizen comments, and provide input to DNR and other parties with AIS interests.

Over the year, many groups looked to the committee as an informed voice for statewide AIS issues: the University of Minnesota's AIS Research Center (MAISRC), the Initiative Foundation's newly created Pilot Program, as well as the DNR staff responsible for AIS programs, staffing and training. On a national level, members have been instrumental in initiating important improvements in boat design that can reduce AIS spread. Members also serve on other AIS national and regional committees while serving as conduits of information that better informs local and statewide AIS efforts.

#### Our Conviction

We believe that successful and sustainable AIS prevention is possible and must be enhanced to help protect Minnesota's waters from the harmful impacts of aquatic invasive species on the environment, recreation, and the economies of communities that depend on healthy lakes, rivers and wetlands. Actions by this committee will help improve AIS efforts statewide.

The committee is optimistic that science-based human dimensions research will continue to be used to guide improved AIS prevention strategies and tools now and into the future. We know Minnesotans love their lakes and rivers. Enforcement and watercraft inspection combined with stepped up AIS public awareness efforts will be crucial to local and statewide prevention efforts.

*"The DNR can't do it, the counties can't do it - it is going to take all of us working together."*

County Water Resource  
Manager

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To provide a framework for committee discussion and actions, the group prioritized four topic areas:

- Legislation and Public Policy
- Research
- On the Ground Strategies
- Communications and Education

Within each area, the committee achieved consensus on a variety of actions to address current and future AIS threats.



MN DNR



Jeff Gunderson, Minnesota Sea Grant

*“The DNR Statewide Aquatic Invasive Species Committee resolves that we believe state allocated funding for the U of M AIS Research Center should be used for applied and long-term scientific research to identify AIS solutions.”*

## Legislation and Public Policy

The number one legislative priority for the committee was to secure a sustainable funding stream for local government units to establish, support and conduct AIS programs and, along with that funding, to develop guidance for local governments to conduct successful programs. The most significant and game changing event in 2014 was the passage by the Minnesota Legislature of HF2885, SF2342 AIS Prevention Aid, an appropriation of \$10M for Minnesota counties. Following passage, the committee focused its attention on ways it could support the long-term viability and success of this monumental opportunity across the state. The committee:

- Recommended and advocated for sustainable funding for local AIS programs.
- Identified the need for counties and lake managers to convene annually to share AIS program results and lessons learned, network and tap expertise within the state as well as nationally.
- Supported the Initiative Foundation (IF) efforts to implement the HF1926 Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Council’s (LSOHC) \$4M allocation for innovative AIS local initiatives. The IF invited interested committee members to review project proposals, assist in the development of programs such as the Aquatic Invaders Summit to be held in January 2015 and act as liaisons between the committee and the IF program.
- Recommended pursuing resources to enable the DNR to develop guidance and a toolkit for county programs and to continue DNR assistance for county planning and programs, in coordination with the efforts of other institutions such as Minnesota Sea Grant.
- Supported the U of M’s bonding bill, including the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) lab renovation.
- Increased committee member awareness about AIS related bills and Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).
- Raised issues with the DNR’s Local Government Unit Delegation Agreement concerning watercraft inspections and the need to clarify legal liability for cities and counties. DNR modified its inspection program in response to this committee input, adding the Ambassador category of inspector that could work independently, but in coordination with DNR watercraft staff.
- Emphasized the need to recognize the effect of AIS legislation on tourism, especially out-of-state visitors.

## AIS Research Recommendations

The committee views AIS prevention and management research as a critical component towards preventing the introduction of new AIS species and preventing the spread of existing AIS species within Minnesota. Long term funding for the U of M AIS Research Center remains a high priority for the committee. A number of accomplishments made by the committee are:

- Advocated for LCCMR research programs.
- Prioritized and communicated AIS research needs to U of M and DNR. See list at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/aisadvisory/reports.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aisadvisory/reports.html)
- Supported the U of M’s bonding bill, which includes the AIS research laboratory renovation.
- Communicated to the DNR Commissioner the importance of U of M funding research. *“The SAISC resolves that we believe state allocated funding for the U of M AIS Research Center should be used for applied and long-term scientific research to identify AIS solutions.”*
- Discussed the need for new long-term funding sources for basic AIS research.
- Emphasized the need to evaluate behavior change to reduce AIS spread.
- Encouraged collaborations by the DNR and U of M with regional research groups to solve local issues.

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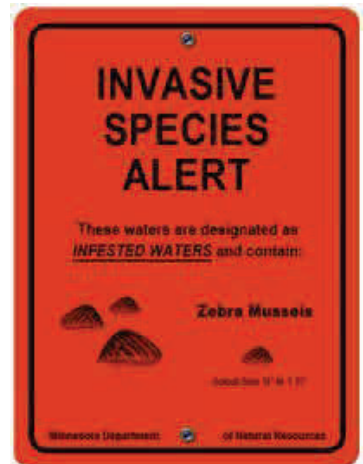
## On the Ground Strategies: AIS Prevention, Partnerships and MN DNR Program Improvements

The committee strongly supports AIS prevention innovation in the government and private sectors. Within the private sector, key committee members have been instrumental in working with the American Boat and Yacht Council and major watercraft manufacturers to promote design changes to watercraft and trailers that can reduce or eliminate the risk of transporting residual water. A national task force will be convened in January 2015 by the American Boat and Yacht Council with the support of DNR (as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Tonka Bay Marina) as recommended to the DNR Commissioner by the committee in 2013. The committee also reviewed DNR AIS programs related to enforcement, education, public waters access inspections, equipment decontamination, and public waters access signage. With the new \$10M AIS funding allocation to counties, the committee provided input on ways to support county AIS programs. The committee:

- Sent a letter to DNR Commissioner Landwehr and Governor Dayton supporting a requirement that boat and other watercraft manufacturers adhere to a national design standard which reduces or eliminates the spread of AIS and develops a rating system that is acknowledged, used and promoted to inform the entire supply chain, including retailers and retail customers.
- Acted as a sounding board to the Initiative Foundation as they set up their \$2M AIS Prevention Pilot Project Grant program, with committee members recruited to serve on the application review panels, assist with program development and act as a conduits for information.
- Provided input on DNR AIS programs, communications strategies and activities, including:
  - ◆ *Watercraft Inspections at public accesses* - shorten, streamline and simplify watercraft inspector training; make better use of volunteer access educator-gathered information; remove local government liability clause in the DNR Delegation agreement template.
  - ◆ *Public Waters Access Signage* - consider new approach to signage using science based “human dimension” factors (i.e., color, words, pictures).
  - ◆ *Enforcement* - use technology/tablets for data collection, especially to identify repeat AIS violators; increase ratio of violation tickets issued vs. warnings.
  - ◆ *Equipment decontamination protocols* - recommended posting the DNR’s fisheries AIS operation orders which outline best management practices for decontaminating water related equipment to use as a model for local governments and other interested parties.
  - ◆ *Education/Outreach* - develop education and outreach materials increasing awareness of the “docks and lifts 21 day out of water” law and make available to the public and for purchase using DNR awareness grants; develop strategies to reach smaller, unpermitted fishing tournaments, sailboat regattas, etc.
  - ◆ *Lake Service Provider Training* - increase education for resorts who were added to the definition as a lake service provider.
  - ◆ *County AIS Programming Assistance* - recommended various ways DNR could support county implementation strategies, especially with regard to convening, monitoring protocol and synthesizing outcomes, and lessons learned.

DNR AIS programs reviewed:

- Watercraft Inspection
- Public Water Access design
- Enforcement
- Fisheries equipment decontamination protocols
- Education/Outreach
- Lake Service Provider Training
- County AIS Prevention Program assistance



DNR Law Enforcement reports that compliance is steadily increasing. Assessment results also back up DNR’s claims. Study results suggest compliance has increased with about 85-87% reporting taking action in 2013 up from 60% in 2000 and 50% in 1994.

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## Good News, Good Results

Nationally, Minnesota is a leader in AIS outreach with over 20 years of experience. The good news is that further progress is being made to improve AIS public communication and education. Social science-based assessments using multiple approaches at various scales show dramatic increases in actions among boaters and anglers aimed at preventing the spread of AIS. Using strategic marketing tools emphasizing the Clean, Drain, Dry consistent messaging is key. Nearly 100% of respondents understand the threats posed by AIS – good news indeed.

## Communication and Education Strategies

The most critical action identified by the committee regarding communication was to advocate for a “unified message to all water resource users in the state and across the region.” Consequences of ambiguous and confusing messages were communicated to committee members by their constituents and the success of a consistent message was evidenced by human dimension research conducted by committee members and their organizations.

One purpose of the committee is to make recommendations to the DNR Commissioner, however, communicating with the public is equally important. The diversity of interests and expertise of the committee makes it an ideal conduit for information flows between the private and public sector communities. The committee:

- Posted meeting agendas, correspondence, and notes on DNR website at: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/aisadvisory/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aisadvisory/index.html).
- Provided direct input to DNR AIS program managers (committee meetings and emails).
- Shared information through updates about committee members’ work, priorities and issues.
- Officially communicated through letters to the DNR Commissioner Landwehr and other organizations (U of M AIS Research Center, American Boat and Yacht Council).

## About the Committee

The DNR Statewide Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee was formed in 2013 to “advise the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on its Aquatic Invasive Species Program. The advisors were appointed by the DNR Commissioner and representing diverse interests and experience in AIS issues at local and regional levels. The committee includes five Ex-Officio members representing tourism, outreach, research, federal agencies and tribes.

## Committee Members

John Barten	Delano	Natural Resource Director, Three Rivers Park District
Gary Botzek	Elk River	Association Manager/lobbyist
Jerry Byron	Waseca	Vice President, Alumacraft Boat Company
Pat Conzemius	Blaine	Conservation Director, Wildlife Forever
Rachael Crabb	Minneapolis	Water Quality Specialist, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Matt Dotta (until Nov '14)	Park Rapids	Hubbard County Commissioner
Barb Fischburg Halbakken	Detroit Lakes	Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations (MN COLA)
Jeff Forester	Minneapolis	Executive Director, MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates, Writer
Jay Green	Mound	Software engineer/systems architect
Ken Grob	Park Rapids	Chairman, Hubbard County AIS Task Force
Tera Guetter - VICE CHAIR	Detroit Lakes	Watershed District Administrator
Gabriel Jabbour	Orono	Owner, Lake Service Provider
Dr. Michelle Marko	Moorhead	Assoc. Prof Biology/Environmental Studies, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN
Robert E. Olsen - CHAIR	Canby	Lincoln County Environmental Administrator
Greg Oswald	Ellendale	Owner, Oswald Fisheries
Jim Stratton (Dec '14)	Alexandria	Douglas County Commissioner
Paul Thiede (Dec '14)	Pequot Lakes	Crow Wing County Commissioner
<b>EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS</b>		
Carol Altepeter	Brainerd	NW and Central Region Manager, Explore Minnesota
Norman Deschampe	Grand Portage	Chairman, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Mike Hoff	Eagan	Regional AIS Coordinator, U.S. Fish & Wildlife - St. Paul
Douglas Jensen	Duluth	Aquatic Invasive Species Prog. Coordinator, U of M Sea Grant Program
Dr. Peter Sorensen	St. Paul	Prof., Dept. of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, U of M

## For Further Information

Meeting notes, the committee charter and other information can be found at:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aisadvisory/index.html>