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# Statewide Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee

## 2018 Annual Report

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### About the Committee

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The Statewide Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Advisory Committee advises the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on its Aquatic Invasive Species Program. Its 16 members and five ex-officio members have a range of personal and professional experiences with AIS issues, represent different parts of the state, are demographically diverse with various recreational interests, have diverse educational backgrounds, and represent a range of private, nonprofit and public sector organizations actively engaged in AIS issues.

Members are dedicated to finding solutions to address aquatic invasive species in Minnesota. Through discussion, differing views move to general consensus on complex and sometimes contentious issues. Based on their continuously evolving work plan, the Committee's initiatives are organized into these four main categories:

**Legislation**

**Review DNR  
Programs**

**Research**

**Communications  
and Education**

Members value the opportunity to share their thoughts with the DNR. This local, on-the-ground input from members representing diverse Minnesota communities is essential to running a successful statewide AIS program.

More information about the Committee can be found on their webpage: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/aisadvisory](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aisadvisory)

*“The year has flown by and it is time for me to thank the Committee for their commitment to stopping the spread of AIS. Being a County Commissioner I look at the issue of AIS from a different perspective, one of economic impact on a county that has a huge influx of visitors due mainly to our resources, centering mostly on water. As a lifelong outdoors person I have to see the potential of how aquatic invasive species affects the fishing I so enjoy.*

*Keep up the good work. Get out and identify early and often.”*

**Jim Stratton, Committee Chair**

## **Summary of Committee Accomplishments in 2018**

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In 2018, the Committee welcomed nine new members and had seven returning members. All members worked together on a multitude of aquatic invasive species (AIS) topics in collaboration with, and with support from, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It was in the spirit of a multi-pronged approach that the Committee took on these local, state, and national initiatives:

- **Supported the addition of Community-Based Social Marketing into the DNR Invasive Species Program’s communication strategies.**
- **Supported increasing the watercraft registration surcharge to resolve the DNR Invasive Species Program’s budget deficit.**
- **Supported the county AIS Prevention Aid program.**
- **Advocated for continued financial support of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota.**
- **Submitted research ideas to MAISRC for their biennial research needs assessment.**
- **Supported the American Boat and Yacht Council’s AIS Project Technical Committee’s recommendations for boat design changes, which can lead to improvements in watercraft, equipment and trailer design that lower the risk of transporting AIS.**
- **Shared their top legislative agenda items with the Association of Minnesota Counties, including:**
  - Securing sustainable funding for statewide AIS programs such as the DNR Invasive Species Program, MAISRC, and the county AIS Prevention Aid.
  - Mandatory boat operators permit that includes AIS prevention training.
- **Wrote letters to Minnesota legislators to continue federal funding for the National Sea Grant College Program.**
- **Provided review and feedback on DNR invasive species programming, including:**
  - Invasive Aquatic Plant Management and Aquatic Plant Management programs.
  - Technical support provided by DNR to county AIS Prevention Aid programs.
  - Discoveries of bloody red shrimp found in lower St. Louis River, Lake Superior.
  - Clarifying to the public the actions that the DNR takes immediately following the discovery of a new occurrence of starry stonewort in the state.
- **Individual actions of members between Committee meetings.**

## Looking forward to next year

The Committee will develop a list of priorities within each of the four main categories for 2019. The most important initiative will be to support sustainable long-term funding for the DNR's Invasive Species Program, the University of Minnesota's AIS Research Center, and continuation of the county AIS Prevention Aid. Sustainable long-term funding is needed to support effective and efficient programs.

### DNR Invasive Species Program Budget Background

The Minnesota Legislature created the Invasive Species Account in the state treasury to prevent the introduction of new invasive species to Minnesota, prevent the spread of invasive species within Minnesota and to reduce the impacts of invasive species on Minnesota's environment, society and economy. The funds currently come from a \$5 surcharge on each 3-year watercraft registration, a \$5 fee on each non-resident fishing license and a \$750,000 transfer from the water recreation account. In 1990, the Minnesota Legislature authorized a \$2 surcharge on a three-year watercraft registrations to support invasive species management. The Legislature increased the surcharge to \$5 (or \$1.67/year) in 1993, and the surcharge has not increased for 25 years.

Because the surcharge on watercraft registrations has not increased in 25 years, the Invasive Species Account can no longer support as many important activities of the Invasive Species Program. Some of the activities affected by this budget shortfall include DNR watercraft inspectors and invasive species control grants. The Invasive Species Program has provided grants for the control of Eurasian watermilfoil and/or curly-leaf pondweed since 2006 but was unable to offer these control grants in 2018. The one exception was a grant to support the monitoring of starry stonewort control projects which was funded by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant. DNR's watercraft inspection program was cut significantly, with the goal to hire 92 level one watercraft inspectors reduced by half to a goal of hiring 42 watercraft inspectors for the 2018 open water season. The Committee and the DNR are exploring opportunities to find solutions to resolve the Program's budget deficit.

## Legislation

The primary legislative priority for the Committee in 2018 was to secure sustainable funding streams for AIS work in the state. The Committee tracked legislative priorities and stayed informed on AIS-related policy changes. The Committee:

### Continued to advocate for statewide AIS funding, such as:

- Increase the watercraft registration surcharge from \$5 to \$12 to support the DNR Invasive Species Program. A portion of these funds should be used to reinstate the invasive aquatic plant management grants to local organizations. The DNR values this work with partners to manage AIS on local water bodies.
- Preserve the county AIS Prevention Aid.
- Secure sustainable long-term funding for the Minnesota AIS Research Center at the University of Minnesota.

### Continued to advocate for a mandatory boat operator certification

The Committee has long advocated for adjusting the current Watercraft Operator's Permit so that the permit would be required for anyone born after January 1, 2000 and would include an updated and enhanced AIS training module as part of the course. It appeared in the DNR Parks and Trails Division's legislative request early in the 2017 session, but did not pass.

## Continued to advocate for more federal support of AIS prevention programs in Minnesota

Federal AIS legislation and rulemaking impacts Minnesota and so do federal grant dollars that support state AIS programs. The Committee appreciates the impact that federal funding, like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, has had on Minnesota's AIS landscape, but feels that more federal support – financial and rulemaking – is warranted.

The Committee wrote letters to Minnesota's representatives in the United States Senate and House of Representatives in support of the programmatic request to the Appropriations Committees to fund the National Sea Grant College Program at a level of \$85 million in fiscal year 2019. Adequately funding Minnesota Sea Grant is critical to Minnesota's statewide AIS efforts.

## Engaged with elected officials on AIS issues

- The Committee, through its member Jim Stratton, presented their 2019 AIS legislative priorities to the Association of Minnesota Counties.
- Jeff Forester with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates led a discussion with the Committee about how to use civic governance to get active citizen involvement and ownership in AIS prevention activities at the local level.

## Review DNR Programs

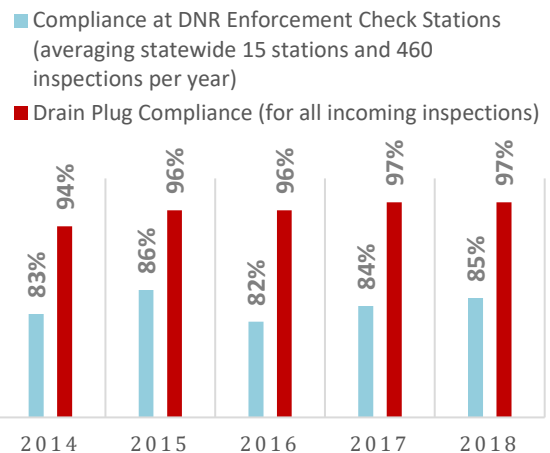
There is a mutually beneficial relationship between the Committee and the DNR. The Committee provides feedback to the DNR to help the Invasive Species Program respond to citizen needs. They also communicate the results of those conversations back to the organizations they are affiliated with. In addition, the Committee acts as a sounding board to listen to the DNR's ideas and then provide recommendations for improving the DNR's Invasive Species Program. The ultimate goal of the Committee, as well as this category, is to help the DNR maintain strong relationships with AIS stakeholders. The Committee addressed the following DNR programs in 2018:

### Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) and Aquatic Plant Management (APM)

- Recommended that the two DNR programs be more transparent about internal permitting processes to meet the requests of lake associations and individual property owners. There were questions about how IAPM and APM work to distribute permits within the maximum 15% littoral treatment area of a lake. The DNR plans to host internal meetings with IAPM and APM staff in the winter of 2019, to facilitate coordination and communications between programs.
- Recommended the DNR continue to host public meetings with stakeholders about the invasive aquatic plant management program. A component

## Clean In, Clean Out

### COMPLIANCE WITH AIS LAWS



Compliance with AIS laws continues to increase. The DNR and partners' enforcement and education efforts have helped to push compliance above 94%, based on more than 470,000 watercraft inspections in 2018.

#### Minnesota law requires boaters and anglers to:

- **Clean** aquatic plants and prohibited invasive species from watercraft.
- **Drain** lake or river water from all equipment and keep drain plugs out during transport.
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash, not in the water.

of these meetings could include local managers showcasing their projects and lessons they have learned through their work to control invasive aquatic plants. The DNR plans to host these meetings in 2019.

### Technical support provided by DNR to county AIS Prevention Aid programs

- Reviewed and commented on DNR's strategies to provide technical support and bring together counties and their partners multiple times per year to allow them to share information, learn from each other, and increase their knowledge base about AIS issues.

### Responding to and communicating about new infestations

- Received information on the new discovery of the bloody red shrimp in the Duluth-Superior Harbor. This included reviewing how the DNR convened a group of involved stakeholder organizations to facilitate communication and coordination, plans for continued monitoring and response, and how the DNR coordinates its news release process for announcing new discoveries of AIS in the state to the public.
- Recommended that the DNR create a short and simple document that explains to involved stakeholders and the public the actions that the DNR takes immediately after a new infestation of starry stonewort is discovered. The DNR created and shared a document entitled "Initial Response to a New Occurrence of Starry Stonewort."

## Research

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The Committee views research on AIS prevention and management as a critical component of preventing the introduction of new AIS into Minnesota, preventing the spread of existing AIS within Minnesota, and reducing the impacts of AIS on Minnesota's environment, economy, and society. The Committee advocates for a holistic approach to research that integrates biological, environmental, economic, and social sciences. The Committee:

- **Maintained a close connection with the Minnesota AIS Research Center (MAISRC) at the University of Minnesota** by receiving updates and discussing topics of concern with the ex-officio at each meeting.
- **Supported sustainable long-term funding for MAISRC.**
- Discussed, compiled and submitted **a list of priority research topics to MAISRC** as part of the Center's biennial Research Needs Assessment. A majority of the recommendations were incorporated into the official request for proposals.
- **Advocated for more research to inform starry stonewort management and prevention decisions and actions.** Multiple starry stonewort research projects are now underway.
- **Continued to advocate for research on the economic impacts of AIS in Minnesota.**
- **Many members attended the Aquatic Invaders Summit III, MAISRC's Showcase, and Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference – North American Invasive Species Management Association Joint 2018 Conference** to gain insight on current projects and new findings which will improve AIS prevention and management.

## Communication and Education

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The Committee's overarching goal for communicating AIS prevention is to promote a clear, consistent, and positive message to all water resource users in the state and across the region. The Committee:

- **Shared activities and information gained through Committee meetings to the organizations and groups with which they are involved.**
- **Members and Minnesota DNR staff continue to participate on a national AIS Project Technical Committee for the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC).** They recently released the final technical report "ABYC T-32: Design and construction in consideration of aquatic invasive species." The recommendations will be introduced to the whole industry at an upcoming conference and implementation of the design recommendations is the next phase.

- **Stayed informed on the DNR's Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) AIS Project.** CBSM has been shown to be very effective at bringing about behavior change among recreational audiences. This is done by removing barriers, identifying motivators, and using prompts and commitments to promote social norms. The project aims to better promote the adoption of desirable AIS prevention behaviors while creating positive social norms around AIS prevention in Minnesota.
- **Investigated a new approach being used to address the movement of used docks and lifts.** The Committee learned about a new Dock and Riparian Ordinance being implemented in Otter Tail County – which requires registering used equipment with the County before moving it to another water body. They discussed the important data being collected, the process for amending the current county shoreline ordinance, challenges encountered so far, and opportunities to learn from this pilot project for potential statewide implementation.
- **Provided input to organizations (outside the DNR) working on AIS issues,** such as MAISRC and the Association of Minnesota Counties.
- **Provided input on streamlining and improving communications about new infestations** at local, regional and state levels with impacted organizations and agencies.
- **Learned about the pilot projects in Cass and Ramsey Counties using Civic Governance to address AIS issues at the local level.**
- **Discussed how the Committee might assist the DNR with facilitating public meetings on AIS issues with anglers and lakeshore property owners in 2019.**
- **Promoted the work of the Committee:** shared agendas, meeting notes, letters, etc. on the Committee's DNR webpage.

**Do your part to protect Minnesota waters.**

For more information about how to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species go to [mndnr.gov/AIS](http://mndnr.gov/AIS)





## 2018 Committee Members

| Name                              | Location      | Title   |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Kelsey Wenner                     | Duluth        | Invasive Species Coordinator for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa   |
| John Deurr                        | Wyoming       | Premier Marine, Inc.  |
| James Johnson – VICE CHAIR        | Dayton        | Aquatic Ecologist / Owner of Freshwater Scientific Services, LLC  |
| Norman Baer                       | Maplewood     | President for North Browns Lake Association   |
| Mary Alverson                     | Minneapolis   | CEO/Operator for Wings Over Water Seaplane Training   |
| Tera Guetter                      | Detroit Lakes | Administrator for the Pelican River Watershed District  |
| Barb Halbakken Fischburg          | Detroit Lakes | Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations  |
| Paul Hamilton                     | Orono         | Curriculum and Development Leader in the Orono Public School District and President of the Norway Lake Association of Cass County   |
| Justine Dauphinais                | Maple Grove   | Water Quality Coordinator for the Coon Creek Watershed District   |
| Jim Boettcher                     | Chanhassen    | Angler and member of the Chanhassen Parks and Recreation Commission, Carver County Park Commission, Carver County Water Management Organization Advisory Committee, and Riley/Purgatory/Bluff Creek Watershed District Advisory Committee |
| Jim Stratton - CHAIR              | Alexandria    | Douglas County Commissioner   |
| Donovan Strong                    | Tower         | Member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Lake Service Provider, Wild Rice Harvester   |
| Paul Thiede                       | Pequot Lakes  | Crow Wing County Commissioner   |
| Eric Johnson                      | Rainy Lake    | Owner and Operator of Voyageurs Outfitters, Inc.  |
| Jaime Jost                        | Alexandria    | Owner and Operator of Lake Carlos Marina and HanglooseMN  |
| Richard Lipke (Jan. through July) | Blaine        | Angler  |

## 2018 Ex-Officio Members

| Name             | Location      | Title   |
|------------------|---------------|---|
| Nick Phelps      | St. Paul      | Director of the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center at the University of Minnesota |
| Nicole Lalum     | Brainerd      | Central Region Manager for Explore Minnesota  |
| Vacant           |               | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  |
| Doug Jensen      | Duluth        | AIS Program Coordinator at the University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program                          |
| Norman Deschampe | Grand Portage | Tribal Chairman of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa                               |