

# Minnesota DNR AIS Advisory Committee

August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Online via Teams

**Members Present:** Will Bement, Shelly Binsfeld, Charlie Brandt, Beto Garcia, Spencer McGrew, Carrie Ohly-Cusack, Mike Sorensen, Patrick Selter

**Members Absent:** Nick Bluhm, Chris DuBose, Chris Magnotto, Christine Maxwell, Ryan Wersal, M. Mahmood Tajbakhsh, Amanda Weberg

**Ex-officio Members Present:** Maddie Hayden

**Ex-officio Members Absent:** Amy McGovern, Nicole Lalum

**DNR Staff Present:** Angelique Dahlberg, Adam Doll, Tina Fitzgerald, Greg Husak, Doug Jensen, Eric Kenney, Kelly Pennington, Katie Smith

**Motion to approve Agenda:** C. Brandt motion, C. Ohly-Cusack, seconded

**Motion to approve Meeting Minutes from April 25, 2024:** S. McGrew motion, C. Ohly-Cusack, seconded

## Meeting Summary

- Introduced to DNR's invasive aquatic plant grant program, received proposed updates for 2025, committee provided feedback on those updates, made suggestions to perhaps improve the process, and plans to discuss further during a deeper dive during December's meeting
- Discussion continued from regarding Communications from April meeting, DNR responded, staff met to provide an initial feedback
- Based on motions from the April meeting and in part on feedback from this meeting, DNR is planning to develop criteria for selection of five priority underserved audiences, based on specific considerations, and present at an upcoming 2024 meeting

## Action Items

- **S. McGrew** volunteers to look into what LCCMR typically funds
- **S. Binsfeld** strongly suggests that members become involved in their county AIS task forces to determine if funding for early detection/rapid response is available through their programs
- **A. Dahlberg** asks that members think about the DNR's grant program, how it serves Minnesotans, and our lakes, considering the various limitations in how much can be done, funded and at what scope
- **S. Binsfeld** recommends that invasive aquatic plant grant presentation slides be again shared with committee members before December's meeting → **D. Jensen**
- **DNR staff** will develop prioritization criteria for selection of five underserved audiences and present them at a future meeting
- DNR invites members to complete surveys regarding funding:
  - [4 The Outdoors | Minnesota DNR \(state.mn.us\)](#)
  - [4 The Outdoors Public Input Questionnaire \(qualtrics.com\)](#)

## Today's Meeting Expectations

- Everyone has the responsibility to contribute.
- Be an active listener and speak honestly.
- Share information in ways that can help others be successful.

- Be respectful and open to new ideas and new ways of doing things.
- Everyone participates, no one dominates.

## Update Invasive Aquatic Plant and Grant Program

Angelique Dahlberg, DNR AIS Grants and Research Coordinator

*PowerPoint presentation attached as pdf.*

- Role: Joined DNR last fall, but experience goes beyond from the St. Croix River Association (now Wild Rivers Conservancy) and the University of Minnesota where she is currently completing her PhD research on zebra mussel control
- Agenda
  - Program background
    - History of the Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Grant Program
    - Funding use by species – how funds have been spent over time
    - 2023 and 2024 project overview – insights over last two years by species and geographical distribution
  - Project components – cover specific requirements to be eligible for reimbursement with examples
  - “Behind the scenes” – grant program processes internally with emphasis on what it looks like holistically
  - Anticipated 2025 grant program – insights into what it will look like
- Program background: Established in 2006 as grant program to fund pilot projects for lake-wide treatment of curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil; grant program today has grown from those early goals to provide funding for well-planned projects aimed at providing ecological benefits
  - ~\$6M in 1,500 grants supported since from 2012-2024
- Support invasive aquatic plant management (IAPM); mostly fund partial-lake treatment based on need; in 2006 there was \$125,000 available to 10 lake associations – all CLPW control, although EWM were eligible; in 2007 funding increased but has been variable since
  - Funds are used for reimbursement of expenses directly related to a traditional control project
    - Pretreatment delineation survey
    - Treatment under an IAPM permit (either chemical or mechanical)
  - Broad eligibility for a large number and wide range of local entities (e.g., lake associations, watershed districts, local units of government including cities and counties, tribes)
  - Map of MN: Heat map shown shows broad need and geographic distribution of projects funded by year (1, 2.5, 5, 7.5, 10 years) and total amount awarded (\$); map does not include locations for those who applied but have not received funding; map really shows where invasive plant species are impacting people, which is what would be expected
- Program background species eligible for funding: Curly-leaf pondweed (CLPW), Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM), flowering rush (FR), starry stonewort (SSW, recently added)
- Curly-leaf pondweed grant-funded projects:
  - Since 2012, ~\$5M across >1,100 grants awarded to projects that included CLPW management; some projects may address other invasive plant species
  - 2012-2024 map showing number of awards split into four categories (1, 2.5, 5, 10 awards) with circles showing locations and amount awarded by color and size (e.g., darker color and size received more funding over time)

- 2024 update: All pesticide applications must be complete before May 15 to qualify for reimbursement to encourage temperature specific treatments; research has shown the treatments are more effective and selective early in the season when temperatures are between 50-60°F; May 15 represents a time when most applicators are available across the state
- Eurasian watermilfoil grant-funded projects
  - ~\$2.8M across 650 grants awarded to projects that included EWM management
  - 2012-2014 map showing number of awards split into four categories (1, 2.5, 5, 10 awards) with circles showing location, amount awarded by color (e.g., darker colors and size received more funding over time)
    - Besides covering reimbursement for delineation and treatment, EWM projects can also include genetic testing to determine if plants are Eurasian or hybrid watermilfoil
- Flowering rush grant-funded project
  - Since 2012, awarded ~\$407k across 45 grants for projects that included FR management
  - 2012-2024 map showing number of awards split into four categories (1, 2.5, 5, 10 awards) with circles showing locations and amount awarded by color and size (e.g., darker color and size received more funding over time)
    - Distribution of funds are more localized because of fewer FR infestations across the state
- Starry stonewort grant-funded projects
  - Since 2016, ~\$313k supported 27 grants awarded for management projects
  - 2016-2024 map showing two awards with circles showing location, amount awarded by color and amounts (e.g., darker color and size received more funding over time)
    - Species newer to the state
- Funding support for traditional control grants (2025)
  - \$400k available, similar to 2024 and 2023
  - On-time and complete applications selected by randomized order until funds are spent; more details are currently under development, but will be relatively similar to last year
  - 2021-2024 award formula:
    - < 10 acres: \$1,500 (minimum)
    - > 10 acres: \$1,500 + \$150 per acre above 10 acres
    - Grant maximum of \$10k (range: \$1,500-\$10,000); some lakes this effort may be supplemented with other funding whereas for other lakes this may be their only source of funding – need very much ranges depending upon situation
  - **D. Jensen** comments via chat: CLPW is much more widespread and predates management activities across the state. EWM has spread less (cumulatively) over time so the greater emphasis on the need for CLPW control makes sense
- 2024 funded projects
  - Funded 99 of 263 applications, applications received last fall, funding distributed this spring
  - \$409,600 award total
    - \$1,500 - \$10,000 (mean: \$4,137)
  - Top applying counties: Crow Wing, Wright, Hennepin, Stearns, Washington, Chisago, Sherburne
    - Pie graph of funding: Mostly CLPW>CLPW & EWM>EWM>SSW>FR>CLP & EWM & SSW>6 other combinations of the four invasive aquatic plant species
- 2023 funded projects
  - Funded 102 of 191 applications

- \$400k awarded total
  - \$1,500 - \$10,000 (mean \$3,922)
- Top applying counties: Hennepin, Stearns, Crow Wing, Wright, Washington, Chisago; applications received from a total of 37 counties
  - Pie graph of funding: CLPW>CLMW + EWM>SSW>CLPW + FR>EWM + SSW>6 other combinations of the four invasive aquatic plant species
- Grant project components
  - Pre-treatment delineation
  - IAPM permit
  - Treatment and/or harvest (or combination thereof)
- Pre-treatment delineation survey – gathers data on location and abundance on invasive as well as native aquatic plants in a given area; ensures that invasive plants are actually in the treatment area
  - Required for grant work plan, award, supports survey expenses
  - Must be conducted by qualified third party (i.e., not the treatment contractor)
    - Avoids conflicts of interest issues (list of surveyors via link below)
    - In some cases, delineations from previous year can be used, which would be approved by the regional AIS specialist
  - [https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/invasives/surveyors\\_aq\\_plants.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/invasives/surveyors_aq_plants.pdf)
  - <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/invasives/guidance-delineating-iap.pdf>
- Invasive Aquatic Plant Management (IAPM) permit
  - Projects conducted under an Invasive Aquatic Plant Management permit
    - Selective treatments in offshore public waters that minimize impacts to aquatic habitat, including water quality
    - Legal limits on proportion of total littoral area treated
  - <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/iapm.html>
  - <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mpars/index.html>
  - <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/shorelandmgmt/apg/value.html>
  - Part of MNDNR Permitting and Reporting System (MPARS)
- Treatment and/or harvest – every lake has different needs, species, requirements, etc.
  - Herbicidal, mechanical (harvest, hand-pulling, DASH or some combination of treatment methods)
  - Must be conducted under and according to an IAPM permit, which considers treatment selectivity and adverse non-target effects
  - [https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/fish\\_wildlife/fisheries/apm/commercial\\_aquatic\\_pesticide\\_applicators.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/fish_wildlife/fisheries/apm/commercial_aquatic_pesticide_applicators.pdf)
  - [https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/fish\\_wildlife/fisheries/apm/commercial\\_mechanical\\_control\\_companies.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/fish_wildlife/fisheries/apm/commercial_mechanical_control_companies.pdf)
- IAPM grant annual calendar (what happens internally)
  - Planning: Mid-August to mid-November
  - Application development: Early September to mid-November
  - Communications: October 1 to mid-December
  - Application period: Mid-November to mid-December
  - Website updates: Mid-November to mid-December
  - Calculate award amounts: Mid-December to mid-January
  - Issue grants: Mid-January to mid-March (unofficial early notices/official award notices)
  - Project work: July through October and mid-March through June

- Reimbursements: Year round
  - July 1: All year end requests to be completed
  - June: DNR sends year-end reimbursement request reminders
- IAPM grant-program planning (see flow chart for activity and role details)
  - Note: Activities are at the top of the flow chart (x-axis) and staff along the left side (y-axis)
  - The details are not necessarily important; what may be worth noting is the number of different staff that are involved with these grants, and the distribution of tasks and interactions throughout the year but with “clusters” of work that happen around when the application period opens and when award decisions are made.
- IAPM grant-application development process (see flow chart as above)
- IAPM grant-website updates process (see flow chart as above)
- IAPM grant-application acceptance process (see flow chart as above)
- IAPM grant-calculating award amounts process (see flow chart as above)
- IAPM grant-issuing Grant Award Notices (GANs; see flow chart as above)
- IAPM grant-reimbursement requests (see flow chart as above)
- 2025 program details
  - \$400k in grant funds to award
  - Early application period planned to allow for more planning
    - Possibly: November 8, 2024 – December 9, 2024
    - Unofficial award notice to grantees in mid- to late-January
    - IAPM permit application will be part of the grant work plan
  - “Traditional” control grants
  - Delineation + IAPM-permitted treatment

## Discussion

**S. Binsfeld** asks if the process has always been randomized? Has ranking been done? **A. Dahlberg** responds that it is newer, but previously it has been first-come-first served, which created some challenges including anxiety among applicants. Yes, in 2022, there was some extra funding available so chose to fund through an evaluation component. Current program can provide “weighting” of projects, but it is really not a ranking process. For example, if a lake did not receive funding the previous year, the grantee may be given some preference for selection over others the next cycle. **S. Binsfeld** responds that then, the process is not complete randomization. **A. Dahlberg** agrees and adds that additional weighting was given to starry stonewort management for removal at public water accesses. Six out of 12 applications were funded. Other six did not come up in the random order. So yes, selection is not completely random.

**S. Binsfeld** knows that some projects are funded through SWCDs. Has it been working out that there are two pots of funding? Or, should it be considered that the funding go directly to the SWCD to help streamline the process rather than having two different efforts by agencies at the same time and for the same purpose? **A. Dahlberg** is unsure of how to answer that question. She is not familiar with what all of the different counties are doing. She says that not all counties fund this type of work. **D. Jensen** responds that many counties are conducting invasive plant control work, but we do not necessarily track where the additional funding is coming from. **T. Fitzgerald** adds from our 2022 metrics summary report that 28 counties conducted control projects using AIS Prevent Aid funding. This includes invasive carp management as well. Not all counties fund control for a variety of reasons. Discretion is up to the counties on how they spend their funds. It is up to the counties on how

they fund control. Some will only fund control for certain AIS or special projects. It is not consistent, whereas the DNR's program is consistent, how we fund or do not fund control. **D. Jensen** adds that our snapshot reports do not reflect in any way what the DNR funds; it is only about how the counties spend their AIS Prevention Aid funds. **S. Binsfeld** responds that the DNR's grants program provides support for control across the state, not just through the SWCD.

**S. McGrew** comment: Are any of the funds available through the Lessard-Sam's Outdoor Heritage Council via LCCMR for public lakes? **K. Pennington** has not surveyed what they have funded. **S. McGrew** expresses the need to elevate this need because costs generally fall, for the most part, to lake associations. For example, Lake Koronis spent \$100,000 to treat 100 acres of starry stonewort (lake is 6,000 acres). **S. Binsfeld** adds that a lot of single lakeshore property owners are conducting control at costs to themselves. Individuals can get funding to restore an acre of prairie but cannot get individual funding for invasive plant control in a lake. **P. Selter** says LCCMR funding is generally emphasizing water quality improvements over AIS control, even though there is evidence that some of these invaders can have water quality impacts. For example, managing CLPW can help improve water quality. However, there has not been an emphasis on this issue. **D. Jensen** suggests that we examine their review criteria to determine if they might be open to receiving such applications for invasive aquatic plant management/control projects. **Action Item: S. McGrew volunteers to look into this more.**

**C. Ohly-Cusack** is curious how long it takes to get funding for rapid response to emerging issue? Is there another avenue to get rapid response funding from the DNR outside of this application process? Emphasize for early response for local infestations is critical. **A. Dahlberg** responds that this program is for continued management. Some of the funded projects are for early infestations, most are not. If it works out, that is great, but it is really not designed for early response. **S. Binsfeld** emphasizes that each year many counties hold back a small portion of Prevention Aid funding to accrue a larger pool of funding for rapid response. Lake associations can contact counties for assistance to quickly treat. It also depends upon the strength and expertise of the SWCD, some are stronger than others. Does DNR have a program to "back stop" if a local county program does not have the resources or interest to respond? **K. Pennington** answers that use of local funds is preferred and are more accessible for quick response treatment. There is precedent for DNR partnering and helping to pay for local treatments. If a new AIS is spreading into the state, there is a pattern and benefits to the state by preventing further spread (e.g., secondary spread), developmental effort or pilot an eradication method, DNR could consider stepping in to help fund. That said, however, there has been little success in eradicating established AIS. DNR receives funds each biennium and cannot accumulate funds for rapid response. There is a federal rapid response fund, states and tribes are eligible to apply. This is a relatively new opportunity through the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force via funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. It is intended to be a more responsive source for federal funding. DNR was successful in receiving funds for the new signal crayfish infestation near Alexandria, MN, for monitoring via trapping for additional specimens. Getting funding was probably successful because the signal crayfish finding is a major range expansion on a national scale – first time found east of the Rocky Mountains. It is more of scale issue. Again, if it has a statewide significance/benefit, then DNR might consider supporting based on available funding. It never hurts to ask! The federal funds are more for national scale and impact issues and would probably not be used for the types of projects that the DNR grants program funds, which are mostly on limited scales.

**S. Binsfeld's** main take aways from this discussion are: 1) Local level funding is probably the best option available and, 2) With the DNR seeking funding for statewide control provides another layer for protection. **Action Item: S. Binsfeld strongly suggests that members become involved in the county AIS task forces to determine if funding is available through their programs.**

### A. Dahlberg's Final Slides:

What she has talked about for 2025 is what is planned, at this time. That does not mean that there will not be changes in the future. She has been thinking a lot about the purpose of this grant program. She is planning to join SAISAC during December's meeting. The purpose would be to have an informal discussion about funding issues more broadly. In the meantime, she asks you to do some homework. **Action Item: A. Dahlberg asks you to think about this program, how it serves Minnesotans, and our lakes considering the limitations in how much can be funded and at what scope.**

Purpose of these grants relate back to statutory language below. What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of program and funding? What could be done that still falls within the confines of the language?

- Grant program purpose (slide title)
  - 84D.02 INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR AQUATIC PLANTS AND WILD ANIMALS.
  - Subd. 2. Purple loosestrife, curly-leaf pondweed, and Eurasian watermilfoil programs.
  - (a) The program required in subdivision 1 must include specific programs to curb the spread and manage the growth of purple loosestrife, curly-leaf pondweed, and Eurasian watermilfoil. These programs must include:  
  
[...]
  - (4) managing the growth of Eurasian watermilfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and purple loosestrife in coordination with appropriate local units of government, special purpose districts, and lakeshore associations, to include providing requested technical assistance.
  - <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/84D/full#stat.84D.02>

What comes up a lot in discussions with DNR staff are below. There is probably no easy answers, but she is curious to know what this group thinks. Two scenarios below have pros/cons. She explained why mid-size grants are not appealing because they do not provide any more advantages than more or less grant scenarios. She is not looking for in-depth feedback today. Please have these scenarios in the back your mind for the future meeting planned for December:

- Upcoming: discussion (slide title)
  - The more grants we award, the smaller the award and the more people served.
    - High staff time requirement, lower impact
    - Greater coverage of communities and species
- The fewer grants we award, the larger the award and the fewer people served
  - Potentially high impact
  - Low coverage of communities and species
  - Mid-size grants have lower staff time requirement, high-end grants have high staff time requirement and more obligations for the grantee
- Who are we serving? How are we serving them?

### Discussion:

**C. Brandt** says this is one thing he has been thinking about, but has lacked the knowledge about such things like management goals based on funding. What are the individual goals of these entities? What are trying to get from them? Maybe more than conducting a random approach, weighting for positive impacts, are they trying to

stop spread via watercraft? Are certain programs having greater impacts? Can weighting be linked/compared to goals or outcomes among grant applications? **S. Binsfeld** thinks this is worthy of further discussion.

**K. Pennington** appreciates **A. Dahlberg** preparing the committee for discussion to come. During DNR's update, we will discuss proposed increase in the DNR's boater registration surcharge and to increase these invasive aquatic plant grants. With today's discussion, we have a little more background. **A. Dahlberg** deeply thanks the committee for their time and thoughts. This was part 1, she looks forward to meeting again for part 2. **Action Item: S. Binsfeld recommends that these slides be again shared with committee members before December's meeting.**

## Recommendations for DNR's AIS Communication Program

**Greg Husak, DNR Communications Lead**

**S. Binsfeld** reminds members that we met with **G. Husak** last April, provided lots of ideas – hope he has sifted through those ideas and come back today to discuss some more.

**G. Husak** responds that the work since we last met goes far beyond him. AIS coordinators have met at least twice to discuss a summary of April's meeting. DNR staff carefully considered the committee's recommendations and developed responses to both motions (attached).

### *Recommendation 1 Discussion:*

DNR response to both recommendations were shared online for committee members to view/discuss. **G. Husak** led an overview. Lots of good input from the DNR's Coordinators. Community-based social marketing was identified frequently as a basis for next steps. There was discussion on where we could have the greatest impact. He noted that there is a list of pathway vectors that had been identified through previous CBSM work by DNR, including a workshop. Several committee members were involved at that time. Those that have been used for internal purposes could be used as a basis for prioritization externally.

**G. Husak** says, as DNR looked through the broad ideas that the committee proposed, we thought it would be most useful if we developed a shorter list, ~five pathway vectors, that could brought forward based on risk for introduction and spread. Several pathway vectors that the committee put forth were deemed low risk, at this time. On that basis, addressing them may not be as effective or be of high value. Still, it was very good to see what committee members are thinking about. It gave us the opportunity to pause and think about the risk of spread by other AIS pathway vectors.

Effectiveness for intervention with a particular group was considered along with strategies, channels or tools we would use to reach those audiences, including mass media, social media, advocacy groups, networks, etc. An inventory of what has already done could be an important next step in this process. Different entities conducting outreach may be using different types of strategies, channels and tools. It would be good to know these things. Capacity of DNR and time was considered – what more could we do given current or future capacity? What can be reasonably done?

**D. Jensen** emphasizes that several of the projects that he has previously led included inventories as large as at a national scale. They proved very valuable information in knowing what has been tried and what messages are being conveyed associated with those strategies, channels and tools, and new efforts could build off those messages to improve them for the future. **G. Husak** agrees that this is important, especially what counties are



doing through their Prevention Aid efforts. He knows that there is continual contact with them and that several members of the committee are local AIS program coordinators or regularly meet with others. He feels that we have a pretty good picture of efforts, but there may be things on-going that we do not know about that are effective.

**G. Husak** goes on to say that evaluation is important, what has been done, what has worked, has it resulted in changes in behavioral actions. It was exciting to hear diversity, equity and inclusion considerations discussed during this committee's meeting in April. It is important to include language access, other forms of accessibility to foster inclusion in the work that we do. **E. Kenney** added that the short list that we are thinking about creating, we are thinking about how best to reach existing and new audiences that we may not have considered. We would really appreciate your feedback on this. He will be able to help with this effort until the term for his position ends in December. Another year of funding is available to hire another CCM intern to help in FY25. **G. Husak** thanked **E. Kenney** for offering his fresh perspective, adding capacity, and reviewing our web and social media presence, adding suggestions based on his audits – resulting in a deep dive in a very short time.

**D. Jensen** offers something he just thought about: what about media training? Most natural resource professionals have received very little to no media training. Media training that he has taken has been invaluable. **G. Husak** responds that DNR has various forms of media training tools and resources available that can be shared. It is an important consideration here, something that could be added and pursued at any point. He will add this point to the DNR's response.

**G. Husak** goes on to the point about the need for developing a brief summary on outreach efforts, especially in-person events by all DNR invasive species staff. This will give a better understanding of what already is being done and include in annual report. There was considerable discussion of DNR's AIS outreach with consideration as to its effectiveness. There is a terrific challenge in terms of capacity. Being able to ramp up efforts with just DNR invasive species staff requires commitment to staff full day or multiple day events the entire time. In many cases, that is not possible. Too much conflict with other responsibilities. At larger shows, staff may take shift and distribute DNR produced AIS outreach materials to offer a broader presence to those audiences. The Minnesota State Fair is coming up where dozens of DNR staff will take shift at the Info booth located outside and invasive species program exhibit located inside the DNR building.

**T. Fitzgerald** shows images of last year's "Muck Hunt" interactive pressure washing game, which has been improved for durability and usability for this year's fair. She showed images of a new display and described the three invasive species table, and what they will offer. Fish tanks along a wall of the building includes, for the first time this year, goldfish awareness with a sign describing why they are invasive. Goldfish are increasing being reported by concerned citizens across the state and beginning to be recognized as a problem. Large goldfish will be on display which were caught in Apple Valley by Fisheries staff. Main message: Do not release them! Super exciting, she thinks it will be very eye catching. New temporary tattoos for starry stonewort, Play-Clean-Go, and goldfish. Hundreds of visitors are educated each day via our exhibit where they can ask questions from experts. Thousands of pieces of DNR materials are distributed.

**D. Jensen** via chat: Last year, I staffed an afternoon session which educated over 300 visitors! **M. Hayden** via chat: MAISRC is hosting a table during Wednesday Water Day outside the DNR building.

**G. Husak** mentioned that there is a daily media briefing which typically has a lot of invasive species content. All TV stations that cover develop 1-2 stories on the invasive species exhibit and/or interview invasive species staff at the fair.

**D. Jensen** says that he has probably mention this previously, but he has hosted and co-hosted hundreds of exhibits at events over his career. 1) He has found that outdoor and indoor events where the public is being served is extremely effective, both in terms of reach previously exposed audiences, but for opportunity to reach out to new audiences who have not been previously exposed to invasive species prevention messages. He thinks about three audience segments: doers, sometime doers and don'ters. 2) Early in his career he scheduled booths at multi-day events which really taxed program staff in terms of having sufficient capacity to cover while attending other job responsibilities. As new local partners came on and felt like they had skin in the game, we began to invite them to co-host our event booths. Across Northeast MN, we had up to 13 partners to ask help to staff booths at over a dozen events each. They would take different shifts over the course of the event so that we would have a consistent presence. This worked extremely well for two reasons: a) they felt like they were contributing to a valuable effort, and 2) we provided on-the-job training through updates on various AIS, they learned from us, we learned from them – about various issues that they were dealing with.

**G. Husak** summarizes the topic of communications that we discussed many big things: state fair, big shows and expos, but also county fairs and festivals where a great deal of AIS outreach is offered by county staff. From a CBSM research perspectives, we know that local outreach conducted by people that they know and recognize that this is most effective.

#### *Recommendation 2:*

- **Action Item: DNR will develop prioritization criteria for selection of five underserved audiences.**
- DNR is continuing support for AIS surcharge (more discussion below)
- DNR is continuing to improve staff capacity to address underserved audiences via grants
- DNR has made accessibility a priority, they are planning to translate language content into Spanish, Somali, Hmong, and Karen to have information accessible for all

**E. Kenney** offered a summary concerning audiences identified in April. From the long list, DNR is prepared to create a short list of five priority audiences using points raised as bullets in our response as reference. He helped to close out discussion by reiterating that DNR will use our expertise to develop a list of priorities based on our expertise and bring back to the committee for thoughts and further discussion. Focus on language is a major priority for DNR, so there are already plans for this in the future.

#### Communications Discussion (cont.)

- Conversation focused on first motion and set of steps – what is something you heard from the DNR presentation from **G. Husak** that spiked your interest/thoughts
  - Discussed different languages and providing watercraft inspectors materials that could be translated
- AIS specialists provide incredible value when it comes to interactions with citizens. Is it possible for them to track this type of information? As an example, AIS detectors log time spent with various groups. If there's a simple place to put what they're doing to highlight the amount of work happening
- DNR AIS unit reviewed the white board discussions and have a few preliminary topics that were highlighted to bring them back to the committee

- Initial 5 bullets seem reasonable
  - One not covered on here is rickers – trying to contact them would be nice as zebra mussel infestations are now present in some rice harvest areas
  - First bullet is vague compared to the others (short list of priority new audiences for outreach efforts)
  - There are multiple sub bullet points present here not on the other ideas
- Is there value in this group providing input on what sort of groups we could partner with to group some of the outreach ideas from the white board?
- DNR is looking for ways to develop new partnerships – e.g. OIT staff within DNR are working to develop a relationship with surrender events

## AIS Surcharge Discussion

*AIS Surcharge Increase Proposal summary is at the end of these minutes*

- Increase outreach and engagement to traditionally underrepresented audiences
- Additional CCMI help in the future
- Increasing proposed amount of grants to help treat AIS (IAPM)
- These things need to increase to keep pace with inflation and increasing costs
- Committee members expressed agreement on surcharge increase
- This is specifically speaking to watercraft registration surcharge
- Members discussed the potential to increase the frequency of the charge coming due as opposed to raising the fee
- A question was raised regarding non-motorized craft and comparing the cost of a kayak/canoe vs the price of a new boat, and how the impact of an increase in fee would be felt to this audience?
- Current phase that DNR is at is to share this proposal with key stakeholder groups like this committee, there are still more steps to be approved before it moves to legislative consideration
- Has there been any discussion about treating the surcharge in a similar manner to car insurance, with more expensive watercraft having a larger surcharge compared to something like a kayak?
  - Could also slice this a variety of ways and focus on risk of species (e.g. large boats on one lake only vs. smaller boats moving to multiple lakes)
- Question regarding boat registration numbers over time – how sustainable is a user-based fee model long-term with a decrease in user groups
- Comment about varying funding by watercraft – there maybe some people wanting to put some value on watercraft that do not use fuel
- Question – Is there a way to require visiting boats to display a sticker saying that they've paid a water use surcharge? – they only contribute if they buy fishing license

## DNR Updates

**Kelly Pennington, DNR Invasive Species Unit Supervisor**

- Funding updates – \$12M over the next 5 years to install a carp deterrent at Lock and Dam 5 (LD5). We have an interagency partnership that helps guide this project – USFWS, USGS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), WIDNR
  - LD19 on the Mississippi River and Barkley Lock and Dam in KY are existing sound-based deterrents for invasive carp
  - USACE is the owner of LD5 and will have significant role to play

- Gates open to control the flow of water regularly throughout the season, this year it happened during late spring high water conditions and it was open for almost 3 weeks
- There's a lock that boats navigate through as well as a dam across the remaining portion - this area is where gates can be opened to create a more free-flowing river system
- DNR would like to install something similar to a trap and sort system – traps fish downstream of the deterrent that can filter out invasive fish from the system - the deterrent won't remove them
- DNR is working through the scoping phase with federal partners at this time (timing, impact on navigation, etc.)
- Follow up on CCMI and Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC)
  - Starting with IDEC: this has been a project funded by LCCMR for several years now funded through this year (or maybe next)
  - Program places students at agencies - DNR ISP had 2 interns through this program
  - CCMI started originally as part of DNR and spun off later as a non-profit, but still remains a strong partner - appropriations are from general fund and natural resource fund
- 2 of our 10 specialist positions were vacant at last meeting: Camden Droppo is new specialist in Region 2 and Garrett Miller is based out of St. Paul working with April Londo

## Member and Ex-Officio Updates

- **M. Hayden**, MAISRC Ex-officio
  - Working on returning the AIS Showcase to an in-person event (<https://maisrc.umn.edu/showcase>)
  - SAISAC leadership are planning next meeting in September to be in-person at U of M the day after, more info coming
  - Working through Strategic Plan (expires 2025)
- **M. Sorensen**, Member
  - Delineations for milfoil harvesting program
  - Staff looking at phragmites sites that were treated and they're looking really good
- **B. Garcia**, Member
  - Have been captaining cruises down around Stillwater
  - Spent several weeks on Pool 8 and 4 doing side scan mapping for USGS and ACOE
- **P. Selter**, Member
  - Have had some great opportunities to team up with MN state for a new CLPW product which is less expensive than historical products being used
- **S. Binsfeld**, Member
  - Point intercept survey on her lake
  - Done some spiny waterflea sampling
  - Participated in Starry Trek
  - Found one golden clam at a different lake

## Discussion Time for Committee

- September meeting in-person at U of M campus with online option
  - Maddie will send an email with some instructions ahead of time for the meeting including lunch orders
- Possibly discuss signage at remote accesses where inspectors aren't often (or ever) present
  - What proper signage could we have there or tool stations
  - Possibly a budget compiled to understand what costs would be associated with this

**Adjourned 2:48 PM. Next Meeting September 26, 2024 at University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus and online via Teams.**

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**AIS Surcharge Increase Proposal**

The DNR is considering a proposal to increase the aquatic invasive species (AIS) surcharge on watercraft registrations to \$20 for a three-year registration among its many proposals and significant list of funding needs.

Since 1993, watercraft users have supported the DNR’s AIS prevention and management efforts through this surcharge, which was last increased in 2019 from \$5 to \$10.60. The proposed AIS surcharge increase would address the structural deficit in the Invasive Species Account and make needed investments in AIS prevention and management. Specifically, we would propose increasing funds available each year for invasive aquatic plant management (IAPM) grants from \$400,000 to \$800,000. In addition, it would increase the DNR’s ability to respond to new and existing AIS populations, address pathways of AIS introduction in spread including recreation and trade, increase outreach and engagement of traditionally underrepresented and new audiences, and provide technical assistance to lake associations and other stakeholders on long-term lake vegetation management plans.

As we continue to consider and prioritize the potential legislative proposals, we wanted to share this with you as a key stakeholder group for the invasive species program. We will make time at the August AIS Advisory Committee meeting to discuss this further.