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# Aquatic Invasive Species Sign Manual

July 2017

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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Ecological and Water Resources Division's Invasive Species Program  
in cooperation with the  
Parks and Trails Division's Public Water Access Program

# Introduction

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This manual is intended for sign planning purposes at any public or private water access. It describes how to obtain aquatic invasive species (AIS) signs, where and how the signs should be posted, which signs are required, and which other signs are available for posting.

## Common Abbreviations:

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**AIS** – Aquatic Invasive Species

**HSAH** – Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers. Refers to signs with this logo (see page 4).

**DNR** – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The DNR has several divisions that own and maintain various land and water accesses throughout Minnesota.

**EWR** – Ecological and Water Resources. This is the DNR division that provides the AIS signs and sign designs and answers AIS questions.

**PAT** – Parks and Trails. This is the DNR division that maintains DNR-owned public water accesses and oversees the posting of signs at DNR-owned facilities. Assistance with site layout and sign placement is available to non-DNR access administrators on request.

## Procedures

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1. **Consult the site administrator** prior to any digging or postings of signs.
  - You can find site administrator information for most accesses using the DNR's [LakeFinder](#) – search and select the lake name and click on “water access sites” on the left navigation bar.
  - If you would like to place signs at a water access owned by the DNR, contact the DNR's Public Water Access Program Coordinator.
  - Unapproved signs can and will be removed by the administrator of the site.
2. **Have a sign plan for the site** (see pages 8-9). First consult with the site administrator and draft a plan if one does not exist.
3. **Install signs as specified** on page 3. Posts and hardware are not supplied.

Follow Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) best practices for sign placement. A person with a disability should be able to approach within five feet of an informational sign without encountering obstacles. Signs should be mounted with centerline at 54”.

4. If you would like **HSAH signs to post** at a private or public water access site, you may request a limited number of signs from EWR, or you may print the HSAH signs on your own. Instructions for requesting or printing your own HSAH signs can be found online at [Aquatic Invasive Species Signs at Water Accesses](#).

*Questions? Contact information can be found on the last page of this document.*

# Safety and Installation Instructions

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Access sites often have utility lines (electric, water, and sewer) running through them.

## **Call before you dig!**

Gopher One	651-454-0002
Gopherstateonecall.org	800-252-1166

Signs and posts can be heavy – use proper lifting techniques and two people when moving or installing. For best practices, use safety equipment along with the correct tools and materials required for the work.

## **Installation Instructions Using Wood or Plastic Posts:**

### **Materials**

- Pressure treated wood or composite plastic posts. Wood should be used for hanging wood signs and plastic for hanging plastic signs. For large signs (3'x4'), two posts are needed.
- A 4' wide x 3' tall x 3/8" or 1/2" thick slab of pressure treated plywood or composite plastic for the backing support for large signs. Without this support, large signs tend to warp/bend.
- Hole digger, lag screws, washer, drill and measuring tape. Attach sign to posts before installing.

### **Instructions when using wood or plastic posts**

1. Attach the outward facing sign to a backer board (e.g. plywood) and attach board to post(s).  
Backer boards keep large signs from bending in the wind and prevents vandalism.
2. Decide location of the sign - ensure the sign is facing the proper direction.
3. Mark where the post hole(s) should be and lay the sign and post(s) down. Dig the hole(s) to match - measure depth.
4. Tip the sign up into the hole(s) and pack the extra excavated soil down in hole and around post(s).

## **Installation Instructions Using Metal Posts for Individual Metal Signs**

### **Materials**

- Metal "U" or channel post(s) - 8' minimum.
- Post pounder, bolts, nuts, washers, and measuring tape.

### **Instructions**

1. Decide location and direction of sign.
2. Use post pounder to sink post into the ground.
3. Attach sign. Large signs (3'x4') should be attached to plywood.

# Aquatic Invasive Species Signs

## Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! Signs

The following brown, white and red “Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!” signs are approved to be placed at the make ready area and/or tie down areas of the access. One, two or three signs may be needed, depending on the size and layout of the access. Boaters should see the sign as they come in and before they pull out of the lot.

### Standard HSAH Sign

- 18” wide x 24” tall.
- One post.

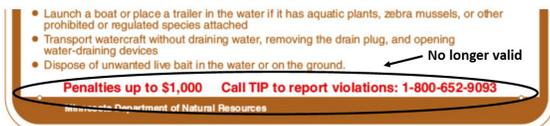
### Large HSAH Sign

- 48” wide x 36” tall.
- Two posts.

One HSAH sign should remain at the access, because it includes regulatory language that is consistent statewide, which allows for easier enforcement of AIS laws.

**Note:** If a standard HSAH sign is removed to install a large HSAH sign, the standard sign should be used at another site or returned to the DNR.

On the Large HSAH sign, the “Call TIP to report violations” is no longer valid – please cover with decal. Request decal(s) from DNR Parks and Trails.



### Standard HSAH



### Large HSAH



## Dispose Here Sign

- 18" wide x 12" tall.
- One post or attached to compost bin.
- This brown sign can accompany a compost bin or stand alone at the tie down area, as a visible reminder for boaters to stop and take time to complete AIS prevention steps.

Compost bins are best suited for access sites that have a higher rate of vegetation removal from boats and trailers and other water related equipment. They are also a good option for bait water disposal if the site is used for fishing. Bins can be misused as trash receptacles at some sites, so removing the bin and posting just the sign can also be effective.

## Invasive Species Alert Sign

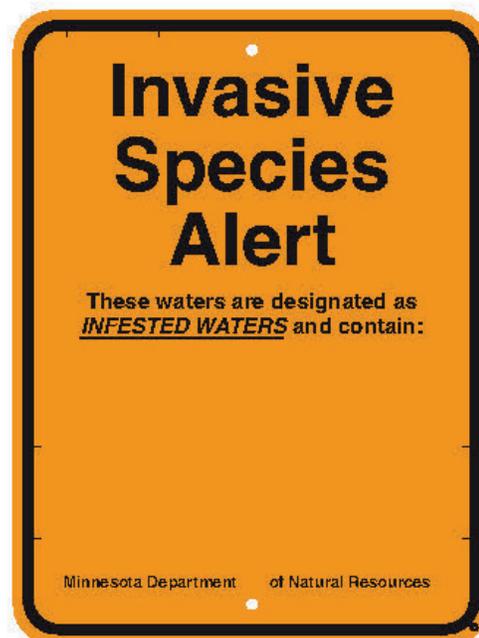
- 18" wide x 24" tall OR 18" wide x 12" tall.
- One post.
- Required by law at listed infested waters.
- This orange sign is to be posted near the boat ramp on its own post – not on the sign board.

DNR staff post this "Invasive Species Alert" sign, along with decals for specific invasive species, to notify access users that the water body is listed as infested with AIS. The [Infested Waters List](#) is available on the DNR website.

Contact DNR staff if this sign is needed at an access to a listed infested water.

### Decals:

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| • Bighead Carp          | • Round Goby       |
| • Brazilian Elodea      | • Ruffe            |
| • Brittle Naiad         | • Silver Carp      |
| • Eurasian Watermilfoil | • Spiny Water Flea |
| • Faucet Snail          | • Starry Stonewort |
| • Flowering Rush        | • VHS              |
| • Grass Carp            | • White Perch      |
| • New Zealand Mudsnail  | • Zebra Mussel     |
| • Red Swamp Crayfish    |                    |



**Note:** The Invasive Species Alert sign was previously posted with a "companion" sign, which listed specific AIS laws (see page 7). These companion signs were discontinued, because the HSAH sign contains the same information.

# Supplemental AIS Signs

The DNR has approved these three supplemental AIS signs for printing by local units of government. Specifications are 0.100 aluminum, reflective or non-reflective surface, rounded edges and 3/8-inch diameter corner holes. These specifications should not be changed. Sign graphics and printing specifications are available from the EWR Senior Planner (see pg. 10). Local governments can get permission to print and post these signs.

## Protect Minnesota Waters

- 48" wide x 36" tall.
- Two posts.
- This blue sign could replace one HSAH sign.
- Use at the entrance or make-ready area.

AND/OR

## Stop Here: Clean, Drain and Dispose

- 48" wide x 36" tall.
- Two posts.
- This red, yellow and green sign could replace one HSAH sign.
- Use at the exit/tie down area.

**Important:** If a standard HSAH sign or large HSAH sign is removed to install one of these signs, the HSAH sign should be used at another location at the same site (see pages 8-9), at a different water access (with administrator permission), or returned to the DNR. The Large HSAH sign can be used in place of standard HSAH sign. If installing these supplemental signs, **one HSAH sign (either the standard or large) should remain at the access.** The HSAH sign includes regulatory language that is consistent statewide, which allows for uniform enforcement of AIS laws.

## Attention Anglers

- 12" wide x 18" tall.
- One post.
- Use near shore fishing areas, fishing piers or platforms, to provide direction to anglers on how to best dispose of bait and why.

This blue sign should be placed along natural and developed shorelines used for angling and/or near fishing pier(s) or platforms along a route where anglers most frequently access the waterbody.



These supplemental AIS signs were adapted from signs created by Hennepin County Environmental Services and are not printed by the DNR.

# Best Management Practices for AIS Signs at Water Accesses

Each water access site should have a Sign Plan, a diagram showing the placement of the signs in order to best serve all water access users (see examples on pages 8-9).

## Sign management guidelines:

- The number of signs must be kept to a minimum, in order to maximize the effectiveness of the messages displayed.
- Decide what messages are needed. View the water access from a visitor’s perspective. What would you want to know?
- Place signs in the most appropriate places, based on the type and importance of the message.
- A uniform and consistent manner for posting signs/messages allows users to find information they need.
- Place signs in areas of good sight lines from the user perspective.
- Post signs in locations to limit damage from backing vehicles, parking vehicles, flooding, ice out, erosion, etc. and in locations that can be maintained by mowing/brush removal.
- If there is more than one sign on the same sign post or sign board, the primary message should be on the top with the secondary message below, or the primary message in the center with secondary messages left and right.
- All signs should be hung on posts, not trees or other objects with separate purposes (e.g. light poles).
- All signs must be posted by or with the permission of the owner/administrator of the access.
- Unapproved signs can and will be removed by the owner/administrator of the site.
- With permission from site owner/administrator, remove signs that are:
  - Obsolete
  - Faded or peeling
  - Placed without permission
  - Have unnecessary or negative messages
  - Vandalized/graffiti

## Additional AIS Sign Tips:

- Keep one “Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!” sign at the site. This sign includes regulatory language that is consistent statewide which allows for easier enforcement of AIS laws.
- The DNR will post orange “Invasive Species Alert” signs at infested waters. Suggested posting location is near the boat ramp. Two signs can be used at large sites that have multiple boat launch ramps.

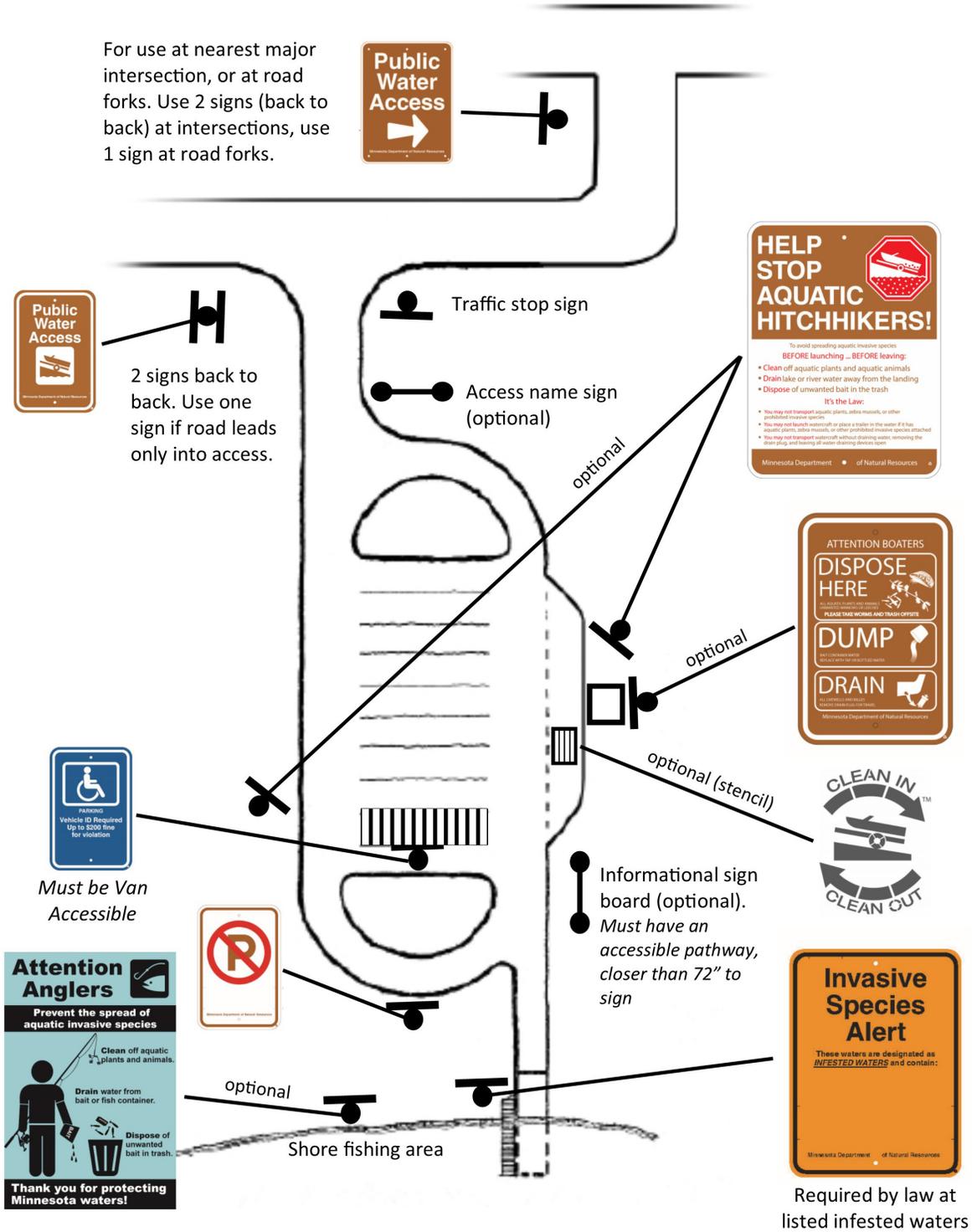
## Obsolete Signs

All other signs dealing with invasive species should be removed and recycled, with permission from the site administrator. Example obsolete signs are shown here – they contain messages that are out of date (e.g. use the word “exotic” or are species specific) and/or have been discontinued (e.g. green with stop sign and far right orange invasive species alert companion sign).



For more information, refer to the guidelines provided on the MN DNR’s [Boat Clean and Drain Areas](#) webpage.

# Sign Plan Diagram: Example A





## Contact Information

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For AIS sign questions, EWR Senior Planner:

Tina Wolbers  
EWR, Central Office  
651-259-5146  
[Tina.Wolbers@state.mn.us](mailto:Tina.Wolbers@state.mn.us)

For public water access questions, Public Water Access Program Coordinator (interim):

Erik Wrede  
PAT, Central Office  
651-259-5624  
[Erik.Wrede@state.mn.us](mailto:Erik.Wrede@state.mn.us)



500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040  
888-MINNDNR or 651-296-6157  
[www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov)

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