

2024 Online AIS Workshop Series

Hosted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in March 2024

Contact: DNR AIS Planners Tina Fitzgerald Tina.Fitzgerald@state.mn.us and Doug Jensen Doug.Jensen@state.mn.us

Background

A series of four online workshops each focused on a specific topic of interest that will include a handful of short presentations primarily from local programs and facilitated discussions.

Why attend?

- Network with local AIS program managers across the state.
- Share information about your AIS prevention and management strategies, so that others can learn from your experiences.
- Learn about new AIS initiatives locally, regionally and statewide.
- Engage in active discussions about the successes achieved and challenges encountered while coordinating a county-wide AIS prevention program.

Who should attend?

- Staff and stakeholders involved in developing and implementing local AIS programs. This includes, but is not limited to: tribal and local government staff overseeing a county's AIS Prevention Aid or local AIS program, watercraft inspection staff, local AIS task force/committee members, state and federal agency staff, regional and statewide partners, non-government organizations, businesses, Minnesotans active in AIS work, etc.

New Approaches

Friday March 1st from 9:30AM – 12PM

Collaborative County Networks for Aquatic Invasive Species Management

- **Amy Kinsley, Minnesota AIS Research Center at the University of Minnesota** carr0603@umn.edu
- In this presentation, I will discuss the development and application of a decision-support tool and analytical framework aimed at optimizing prevention efforts across counties in Minnesota. I will share insights into the efficiency of inter-jurisdictional strategies, focusing on key AIS species such as Eurasian watermilfoil, spiny waterflea, starry stonewort, and zebra mussels.

Understanding the cost-benefit of your management decisions with the AIS Explorer's new Intervention Impact app

- **Nick Phelps, Minnesota AIS Research Center at the University of Minnesota** phelp083@umn.edu
- The AIS Explorer has been built on robust models, forecasting the spread of AIS in Minnesota. However, the models have made the assumption that management across the state was static - an assumption we know is not true. We have created a new Intervention Impact application to allow managers to develop management scenarios and visualize the cost-benefit of those decisions.

Cruising through P.I. Charter, MAISRC's new app devoted to point-intercept aquatic plant surveys

- **Alex Bajcz, Minnesota AIS Research Center at the University of Minnesota** bajcz003@umn.edu
- In early 2023, MAISRC launched P.I. Charter (z.umn.edu/PICharter), a web application dedicated to the celebration, visualization, and submission of point-intercept aquatic plant survey data collected throughout the state. In January 2024, MAISRC released P.I. Charter Version 2.0, a substantial overhaul that improves

data visualization, app navigation, and the submission process. It also added a new "Records" tab that permits retrieval of the data from any survey in our database. In this talk, we will briefly highlight the features and usage of P.I. Charter, with a focus on the 'Overview' and 'Records' tabs. We will also solicit suggestions for new features that could be added to expand the app's usefulness and appeal.

Permanent Decontamination Station

- **Mike Bolinski, DNR Region 1 Watercraft Inspection Supervisor** michael.bolinski@state.mn.us
- I'll be presenting on the first of its kind permanent on demand decon unit in the state. I've got a slideshow with pictures of the unit and can describe how it works, a bit about the process of how we got the unit built, and goals going forward.

eDNA Illuminates aquatic invasive species introduction and spread

- **Courtney Larson, EPA Duluth** Larson.Courtney@epa.gov
- Environmental DNA (eDNA) is a powerful new tool in early detection monitoring for aquatic invasive species for certain contexts, but it needs to be used at the right time, right place, and using the right techniques. Through case studies of zebra and quagga mussels and invasive fish, I describe how eDNA has been used effectively to examine new pathways of introduction and spread for invasive species. I also discuss new frontiers that show promise with the eDNA technology implementation in management settings.

Response to the first known signal crayfish, *Pacifastacus leniusculus*, occurrence in a Minnesota lake

- **Don Eaton, DNR Invertebrate Biologist** Don.Eaton@state.mn.us
- In September 2023, signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) native to the Pacific northwest were discovered for the first time east of the Rocky Mountains in Lake Winona, Douglas County, MN. We'll talk about potential environmental and economic impacts of this fast-growing, highly productive, omnivorous invasive species in Minnesota and the Upper Mississippi basin. We'll outline our response plans to determine the current spatial extent and abundance of signal crayfish in Lake Winona and nearby water bodies, and to assess and deploy effective removal measures. We'll show how you can distinguish signal crayfish from our 5 native crayfish species and widespread invasive rusty crayfish.

Engaging bait shops on AIS prevention

- **Tina Fitzgerald, DNR AIS Prevention Planner** tina.fitzgerald@state.mn.us
- In 2023, local partners helped pilot a statewide initiative using community-based social marketing approaches to engage bait retailers and their customers on AIS prevention, especially the proper use and disposal of live bait. Learn how you can be involved in 2024!

Partnerships

Monday March 4th from 1PM – 3:30PM

The AIS Boundary Waters Collaborative (ABC)

- **Carrie Ohly-Cusack - Member of ABC and Board Member of MLR** cohlycusack@gmail.com
- **Jon Utecht – AIS Program Coordinator, North St. Louis SWCD** jon@nslswcd.org
- **Liz Anderson – AIS Program Coordinator, Lake County SWCD** Liz.Anderson@co.lake.mn.us
- The purpose of the ABC is to: “develop the civic imagination, leadership, and infrastructure needed to organize sustainable partnerships between government and community with the capacity to address the complex public policy issue of Aquatic Invasive Species spread in America’s premier water wilderness.” It is a network of agencies, lake associations, non-profit organizations, businesses, concerned individuals, and community groups organized under the civic governance model. We’re excited to provide an overview on what we are about, what we’re working on, and how this fits in with the work we do in our local AIS programs.

Community Based AIS Detection Efforts

- **Steve Henry, Cass County AIS Lake Technician** steve.henry@casscountymn.gov
- Engaging your community as a resource in AIS detection and education efforts. Tracking the results using technology.

Working with Local Enforcement on AIS Issues

- **Susanna Wilson Witkowski, Chisago County** Susanna.Wilson@chisagocountymn.gov
- Each year, Chisago County Sheriff Officers provide enforcement inspections for watercraft at public water accesses located in Chisago County. Since 2014, Chisago County Water Resources staff has developed a relationship with the Sheriff Office to provide these inspections.

Invasive Species + Local Brewery 4 EVA

- **Amanda Weberg, Cook County** amanda.weberg@co.cook.mn.us
- The Cook County Invasives Team and the Voyageur Brewing Company in downtown Grand Marais have joined together in the mutual desire to promote and keep excellent water quality.

Panel on Partnerships

- **Holly Bushman, Le Sueur County** hbushman@co.le-sueur.mn.us
- **Amanda Weberg, Cook County** amanda.weberg@co.cook.mn.us
- **Sarah Soderholm, Murray County** SSoderholm@co.murray.mn.us
- **Spencer McGrew, Otter Tail County** smcgrew@ottertailcounty.gov

Learn from an Expert

Wednesday March 13th from 9:30AM to 12PM

Call to Action: Revitalizing Biological control Efforts for Purple Loosestrife

- **April Londo, DNR Region 3 South Invasive Species Specialist** april.londo@state.mn.us
- There are several ways to manage Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) but one way has been shown to decrease expansive growth: the leaf-eating (*Galerucella* spp.) beetle. Multi-party rearing and propagation efforts in the early 1990s offered years of reprieve from nuisance growth. With Purple Loosestrife populations rebounding within the last ten years, we are calling on partners to attend DNR-lead biological control workshops, rear and release beetles for management and help to establish local rearing programs.

Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Workshop-Le Sueur County

- **Holly Bushman, Le Sueur County** hbushman@co.le-sueur.mn.us
- I will be presenting on Le Sueur County's efforts in 2023 to host a Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Workshop. Information that will be covered includes: obtaining DNR permits, rearing beetles, setting up/preparing for the workshop, hosting the workshop, and releasing the loosestrife beetles.

Observations and Assessment of Tool Uses at Public Water Accesses

- **Adam Doll, DNR Invasive Species Prevention Consultant** adam.doll@state.mn.us
- The DNR hired a consultant in 2023 to assess the use of self-serve cleaning tools by boaters provided at public water accesses in Minnesota to prevent the spread of AIS. The assessment included observations and interviews of boaters at public water accesses as well as costs and sources for tools and stations. Local site managers and AIS coordinators can use this information on tool use, location, and costs to help them make informed decisions for local boat accesses to help promote adoption of desirable AIS prevention behaviors.

Keep it Clean Law

- **Joe Albert, DNR Enforcement Communications Coordinator** joe.albert@state.mn.us
- During the 2023 session, the Minnesota Legislature passed and the Governor signed a new law aimed at combatting the growing problem of litter and sewage left on the ice. The law requires people to properly store and secure all trash – including live bait after it’s been used – at all times when they’re on the ice, not just when they leave. People also may not place trash directly on the ice or in the water. The law simplifies enforcement, and, as importantly, prescribes exactly how everyone can remain law-abiding and do their part to protect Minnesota’s natural resources.

Public Engagement

Thursday March 21st from 9:30AM to 12:30PM

Opportunities to Connect Local Programming to Statewide AIS Efforts at the University of Minnesota

- **Megan Weber, Minnesota AIS Research Center and University of Minnesota Extension** mmweber@umn.edu
- The Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Detectors program at the University of Minnesota launched as a partnership project between the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center and UMN Extension in 2017. The program offers a variety of opportunities for community members and professionals to engage in volunteer, participatory science, and educational programs focused on building capacity to respond to aquatic invasive species problems in Minnesota. We'll focus on two of the programs with opportunities to connect local AIS programs to our statewide efforts: Starry Trek and the AIS Detectors Volunteer Program. Starry Trek is a one-day volunteer aquatic invasive species early detection effort centrally coordinated by the AIS Detectors Program with local hosts offering training sites for volunteers to participate in local search efforts. The AIS Detectors Volunteer Program offers annual training for community members and professionals alike to become Certified AIS Detectors. Community members build a volunteer network ready to volunteer locally to help address aquatic invasive species issues. Come learn about these programs, how you can connect locally, and share feedback on how else we can help support local efforts!

Panel: Hosting a Local Starry Trek Training Site

- **Dan Cibulka, Sherburne County** dcibulka@sherburneswcd.org
- **Justin Townsend, Ramsey County** justin.townsend@co.ramsey.mn.us
- **Karl Koenig, Becker County** kikoeni@co.becker.mn.us
- **Bill Grantges, Itasca County** Bill.Grantges@ItascaSWCD.org

Zebra Mussel Monitoring

- **Jessica Leverty, Anoka County** Jessica.Leverty@anokacountymn.gov
 - **Zebra Mussel Spotters Program**
 - Anoka County Parks partner with Coon Creek Watershed District to start the “Zebra Mussel Spotters Program” in 2017. The program has continued to grow and is currently on 9 lakes in Anoka County and 50% or more response rate every year.
- **Camden Droppo, Chisago County** Camden.Droppo@chisagocountymn.gov
 - **Chisago County: Zebra Mussel Monitoring**
 - In Chisago County, zebra mussel monitoring is done through a variety of in-house and volunteer efforts. These efforts consist of early detection methods and programs such as watercraft inspections, zebra mussel plates, veliger tows, water access monitoring, Zebra Mussel Watch, and the Fall Zebra Mussel Check program.

Adapt a Habitattitude: An Overview of Teaching Tools for Youth

- **Doug Jensen, DNR AIS Prevention Planner** doug.jensen@state.mn.us
- Educating youth on AIS prevention is critical for protection of Minnesota's waters. They need to know about AIS to be responsible and effective decision-makers and leaders. Education tools have been developed including: activity lessons, community stewardship projects, backpacks, traveling trunks, and websites. Several tools are grade-specific, but all are adaptable for use with younger or older grade students. Adapt a Habitattitude is a series of classroom-tested, electronically available activities designed to be used by teachers and informal educators for grades 6-12, - activities which are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core State Standards and Great Lakes Literacy Principles. Join in learning how youth education can be integrated into your communities.

Strategic, Targeted Marketing Using Traditional and Digital Media

- **Erika Gilsdorf, Leighton Broadcasting** egilsdorf@Leighton.Media
- **Holly Lee, Leighton Engage** hlee@leightonengage.com
- Erika Gilsdorf with Leighton Broadcasting and Holly Lee with Leighton Engage will be talking about the video production process around AIS messaging and how to maximize reach using partners, public media, and digital marketing. Holly will explain the different components of video marketing like pre-roll and streaming, audience targeting, and how and where messages are displayed. They will show analytics from the 2023 AIS series campaign that spanned multiple MN counties using these methods.

Minnesota Traditions

- **Tim Terrill, Mississippi Headwaters Board** timt@mississippiheadwaters.org
- While local efforts have done well to research, prevent, and remove AIS in their local counties; it takes a combined, coordinated approach to have an impact. The Miss. Headwaters Board created a social media campaign called Minnesota Traditions to complement the local campaigns going on in each individual county. Social media was a tool created to influence and engage the masses on issues, and MN Traditions goal is to produce consistent messaging that influences behavioral change to prevent the spread of AIS. Learn how this targeted approach has increased engagement by creating value added engaging posts.

AIS Cleaning Stations & Tools

- **Nick Bluhm, Association of Cass County Lakes (ACCL)** treasurer@acclakes.org
- **Steve Henry, Cass County** Steve.Henry@casscountymn.gov
- The ACCL board worked with DNR, Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District, numerous Lake Associations, private Resorts, Service Providers, and private access landowners to place 100 AIS Cleaning Station Signs & Tools at Cass County public water access locations in 2023 and 2024. DNR provided the AIS sign design and text specifications. Discuss Multi-county AIS Tool study which guided ACCL tool selection. Discuss the location permission and approval process working with various water access owners. Discuss the vendors and pricing used to purchase the materials.