

Becker SWCD Behavior Change Grant

During the summer of 2020 and 2021, Becker SWCD worked to implement a behavior change intervention pilot project to test a method of increasing awareness of Minnesota's 21-day water-related equipment drying law. This project also tested a method to incentivize the use of licensed Lake Service Providers when moving used water-related equipment intended for sale. A postcard (page 5-6) was sent to 740 shoreline property owners on Sallie, Melissa, White Earth, and South Twin lakes (Becker and Mahnommen Co.) This postcard explained the 21-day drying law in clear terms and offered shoreland property owners up to \$400 in reimbursement payments for hiring lake service providers to remove and store equipment intended for sale. In September 2020, Becker SWCD shared a digital version of this postcard on Facebook with the Melissa/Sallie and White Earth Lake association. A similar post was published on the Becker SWCD Facebook page in July 2021 to offer the reimbursement payments to all lakeshore property owners in Becker County.

The \$400 reimbursement payment was offered to lakeshore residents who agreed to hire a licensed Lake Service Provider to remove or install used equipment intended to be sold and installed on another lake. This incentive was promoted on the original postcard and Facebook message sent to Sallie and Melissa lakes in 2020. The reimbursement payments were promoted to all Becker County lakeshore property owners in 2021 via Facebook, in-person presentations at 4 lake association meetings, a radio program, informal conversations and at the Becker County fair, where a new Shoreland Owner Training video was displayed. This video was produced by Wildlife Forever, in cooperation with Le Sueur County and other partners.

Lakeshore residents who received our postcard and/or social media posts did report greater awareness of the 21-day law than the awareness levels seen in DNR's 2019 survey of shoreline residents. Post-intervention awareness was measured with a survey emailed to the Melissa/Sallie association members on 12/11/20. 52 individuals completed this survey. Lakeshore residents who reported receiving the postcard reported high awareness (87.5%) of the 21-day law. Respondents who reported not receiving the postcard reported less awareness (66%). These results show that this tool was effective at increasing awareness. Since baseline awareness was low, increasing awareness is a necessary first step for future behavior change intervention strategies to be successful. A summary of this survey can be found on page 2 of this report.

Challenges that were seen during this project included a low number of completed evaluation surveys (52) and a low level of interest in reimbursement payments. This project was designed using public parcel data to develop a list of shoreland property owners, but the evaluation survey was distributed via email to members of the Melissa/Sallie Lake association. There is an unknown number of parcel owners who received the postcard but were not reached by the evaluation survey because they are not association members. The high reported awareness level was based on a sub-group of the population who are lake association members and may have learned about this law previously through unrelated efforts. Future efforts to measure the effect of a postcard mailing should be designed to allow for evaluation of all recipients.

Our office received six calls related to the \$400 incentive program, but no payments were distributed. Three of the callers were seeking clarification on what types of activities were eligible for

reimbursement. Three other callers were seeking payment but did not qualify due to their equipment already sitting out for 21 days or because the equipment was being moved to a different location on the same lake. Based on the results of the evaluation survey, many (67%) of the lake association members reported not receiving or not remembering if they received the postcard that promoted the reimbursement payments. It is possible that this postcard did not reach enough people to generate interest in the payments. It is also possible that there is not a great deal of used dock and lift sales. Future efforts could be improved by looking at other information channels to promote this incentive, or by focusing resources on using the postcard tool only. Those who received the postcard reported greater awareness of the 21-day law, and postcards can be produced and distributed to a large population at low cost.

The complete survey used for this project is available at the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YB99TL6>

The work plan for this project identified 5 metrics to be used for evaluating this project:

1. Comparison of the target population's behaviors, attitudes, and awareness of AIS in Minnesota with data from DNR's Shoreline Resident Survey.
2. Comparison of the target population's awareness of Minnesota's 21-day drying law with data from DNR's Shoreline Resident Survey.
3. The number of reimbursements distributed.
4. Interactions on social media
5. The number of photos/testimonials submitted.

Metric 1. Comparison of the target population's behaviors, attitudes, and awareness of AIS in Minnesota

When asked about human behavior and AIS, responses were similar those seen in DNR's Shoreline Resident Survey. In this survey, a large majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that taking action to prevent the spread of AIS is the right thing to do, that other people act, and that individuals both contribute to the spread of AIS and play a role in its prevention. In DNR's survey, less than 5% disagreed with these statements. No members of the Melissa/Sallie Association who received the postcard disagreed when asked to agree or disagree with the same statements.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how strongly do you agree with each of the following statements? Please select for each statement.

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither Disagree or Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree		N/A		Total	Weighted Average
I am concerned about aquatic invasive species in Minnesota	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	18.75%	3	81.25%	13	0.00%	0	16	4.81
Individuals are contributing to the spread of aquatic invasive species in Minnesota	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12.50%	2	25.00%	4	62.50%	10	0.00%	0	16	4.5
Individuals have a role to play in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	25.00%	4	75.00%	12	0.00%	0	16	4.75
People I know are helping to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12.50%	2	25.00%	4	56.25%	9	6.25%	1	16	4.47
Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species is the right thing to do.	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	6.25%	1	93.75%	15	0.00%	0	16	4.94
													Answered	16
													Skipped	0

Metric 2. Comparison of the target population's awareness of Minnesota's 21-day drying law with data from DNR's Shoreline Resident Survey.

DNR's 2019 Shoreline Resident Survey found that only 49% of respondents reported knowing about the 21-day dry law.

Q28. Did you know that Minnesota law requires docks and boat lifts to be out of the water for at least 21 days before putting them in another lake or river?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	49%
No	46%
Unsure	5%

Of the 16 respondents who reported that they had received Becker SWCD's postcard and/or Facebook post, 87.5% answered "yes" to the same question.

Did you know that Minnesota law requires docks and boat lifts to be out of the water for at least 21 days before putting them in a different lake or river?

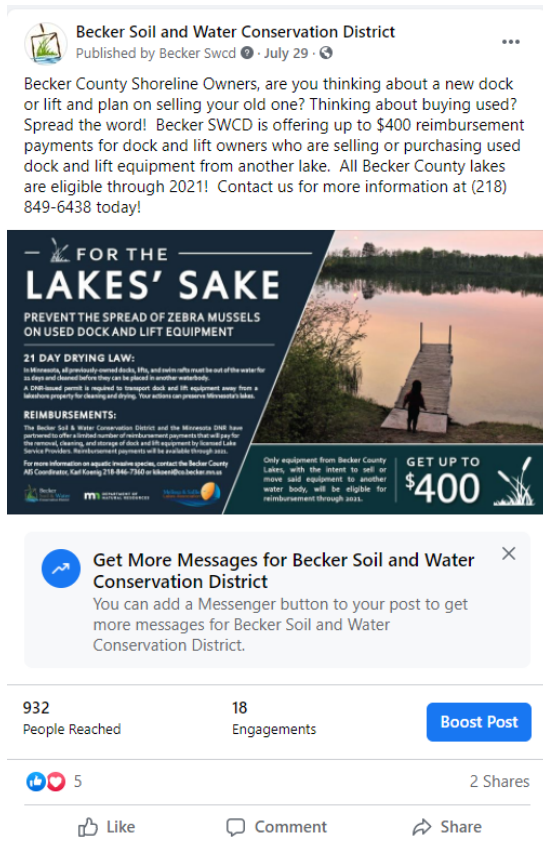
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	14 (87.5%)
No	2 (12.5%)
Unsure	0

Of the 18 respondents who reported **not** receiving the postcard, awareness was somewhat less:

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	12 (66.67%)
No	6 (33.33%)
Unsure	0

Of the 18 respondents who reported that they were **unsure** if they received the postcard, awareness was similar to those who reported that they did receive the postcard:

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	13 (72.22%)
No	4 (22.22%)
Unsure	1 (5.56%)



Respondents who received the postcard did report knowing about the 21-day law at a greater rate than those who reported not receiving it, and all groups reported greater awareness than those surveyed in DNR’s 2019 Shoreline Residents Survey.

Metric 3. The number of reimbursements distributed

No reimbursement requests were received.

Metric 4. Interactions on social media

As of 12/28/20, this project reached 552 people via the Melissa/Sallie post and 133 via the White Earth Lake association. Also, these posts generated 15 comments, shares, and reactions.

The post pictured here, published on 7/29/2021 offered reimbursement payments to all Becker County shoreland owners. It reached 932 people and generated 7 shares and reactions.

Only 4 of the survey respondents reported seeing the original Facebook post from this project. Each of these respondents reported knowing the 21-day dry law. 40 respondents reported that they did not receive the Facebook post, and 29 of these individuals (72.5%) reported knowing the 21-day dry law. 8 respondents reported that they were unsure if they received it or not, and 6 (75%) of these individuals reported knowing the 21-day dry law.

Metric 5. Submitted photos/testimonials

As no reimbursement requests were received, no photos or testimonials were submitted in 2020 or 2021

Figure 1 Melissa/Sallie postcard, front



Figure 2 Melissa/Sallie postcard, rear



Figure 3 White Earth Postcard, front

