

Part Two: Pilot Test Implementation Tasks and Deliverables

Crow Wing County implemented our pilot program test in the summer of 2021. This pilot program targeted anglers at fishing tournaments and high-use public landings. Watercraft inspectors then discussed the County's pilot program to educate them on proper ways to dispose of live bait correctly and cleaning watercrafts properly. Once anglers heard about the pilot program they would be asked to make a commitment to dispose of live bait correctly and clean watercrafts properly. The anglers would either make a verbal or written commitment which would be considered as a pledge to receive a watercraft equipment starter kit.



Figure 1 – Watercraft equipment starter kit

Watercraft equipment starter kit includes:

- Equipment checklist
- Towel
- Sponge
- Flashlight
- Bait bag
- AIS watch cards
- AIS contact information
- AIS educational materials
- Decontamination Hotline card

Pilot implementation: The County contacted registered MN DNR fishing tournaments organizers, emailed over 250 lake association members, and trained watercraft inspectors on this pilot program. The County had watercraft inspector's work around 8 different tournaments in 2021. The County implemented the pilot program at 3 fishing tournaments in July – August at the following locations: Whitefish chain on July 18th, Rice Lake August 14th, and Platte Lake August 21st. In total, the County handed out 69 watercraft equipment starter kit at these 3 tournaments and 181 watercraft equipment starter kits at high-use public landings.

- **Successes:** The County had inspectors scheduled around 8 fishing tournaments in the 2021 season. Out of those 8 fishing tournaments; 380 inspections and 7 decontaminations were performed. The pilot program had more success passing out angler kits at high-use public landings without a fishing tournament present. Fishing tournaments had 69 total commitments and high-use landings had 181 total commitments. The watercraft equipment starter kits were well received by anglers. Out of 250 commitments, 107 were written commitment and signed up to receive email updates about AIS information. According to a survey in the fall of 2021, 87% of angler's found the kit useful in AIS prevention.

- **Challenges:** We didn't receive items due to shipping delays until late June. This meant that we were putting 250 kits together during our busiest time of the year for watercraft inspections which was very time consuming. Another challenge was working with fishing tournaments, some fishing tournament organizers were willing to work with me on this pilot program but a lot didn't respond. The organizers that did respond found that it was difficult to find a good time during the tournament to educate anglers on the pilot program. This is why we were only able to work around 3 fishing tournaments with our pilot program. Also, when we worked around these fishing tournaments anglers were focused on the tournament and not our pilot program. Finally, the County trained our lead inspector and 10 watercraft inspectors to educate anglers on this pilot program, but some inspectors were better than others on educating anglers.
- **Fishing Tournaments:** (spreadsheet of fishing tournament metrics also attached to this email)
 - White Fish Chain Tournament July 18th – educated anglers at their meeting the day before the tournament. The tournament organizer didn't show up to open up the building. This caused confusion and anglers not wanting to participate. The day of the fishing tournament we had the lead inspector, a level 1 and 2 inspector with our mobile decontamination unit at the lower hay public landing. Also, had inspectors staffed at other public landings on the whitefish chain.
 - Rice Lake Tournament August 14th – educated anglers at the end of their fishing tournament. The anglers were more focused on getting their boats out of the water and to the weight in site. The day of the fishing tournament we had the AIS specialist, a level 1 and 2 inspector with our mobile decontamination unit down the road from the public landing.
 - Platte Lake Tournament August 21st – educated anglers before their fishing tournament started. Some anglers were already in the water by the time we got there and didn't have much interest. The day of the fishing tournament we had the lead inspector and a level 1 inspector at the access.

Potential improvements to this pilot program: To order all items for the watercraft equipment starter kit before the AIS inspection season started and put them together by early June. Also, there was a gap working with fishing tournament organizers and how to engage them to communicate better in these types of activities. It would be helpful when organizers register fishing tournaments through the MN DNR, they are required to include AIS prevention information in their communications with participants, which could include cooperating with local organizations running AIS programs. Finding the perfect time to educate anglers on disposing live bait correctly and cleaning watercraft properly during a fishing tournament was difficult. Lastly, training inspectors to keep consistent messaging when promoting our pilot program.

Expenses: Estimated cost is \$16 per watercraft equipment starter kit.

Item Description	Unit Cost	Number of Units	Grant Funds	Grantee Funds	Matching Funds and In-Kind Services – Grantee
Sponges	\$2.20	250	\$548.00	NA	
Flashlight	\$4.05	250	\$1,012.00	NA	
Towels	\$2.29	250	\$572.50	NA	
Bait Bags	\$0.20	1,000	\$144.90	\$75.10	Grantee pays \$55.10 + \$20 in shipping costs
Equipment Bags	\$3.30	250	\$822.60	NA	
Graphic Design of Campaign	NA	NA	\$760.00	NA	
Project Mangement	NA	NA	\$1,140.00	NA	
Stickers	\$159.99	1	NA	\$181.07	1,000 stickers (I will Clean. Drain. Dry. Dispose.)
Decon Stickers	\$117.29	2	NA	\$262.56	2,000 stickers
AIS Rack Cards	\$2.54	500	NA	\$743.09	Design and Printing
Extra AIS materials	NA	NA	NA	\$81.50	Mumltiple DNR watch cards
Equipment checklist	\$2.50	250	NA	\$100.00	Cost of Printing
Spiny Water Flea Towels	\$1.14	150	NA	NA	donated by MAISRC
Watercraft Inspector hours	NA	NA	NA	50 hours	level 1 and level 2 scheduled at fishing tournaments passing out kits
Lead AIS Inspector hours	NA	NA	NA	50 hours	Putting kits together, training insptors, passing out kits.
Environmental Service Specialist hours	NA	NA	NA	100 hours	Ordering, putting kits together, communcation, scheduling, reports, etc.

Pilot Program Evaluation:

The pre-intervention data summary is provided in the MN DNR Angler Survey Summary Report. Prior to this pilot program there were no record of anglers making commitments on disposing of live bait correctly and clean watercrafts properly. In total, the County received 250 commitments from anglers would take these actions to stop the spread of AIS. Once the angler made a commitment they received a watercraft equipment starter kit.

Watercraft inspectors highly encouraged anglers to make a written commitment but a lot of anglers didn't want to provide their email address. 107 anglers made written commitments and 143 anglers made verbal commitments. In fall 2021, a survey was sent to all 107 anglers that made a written commitment and 31 anglers responded to this survey.

Survey Results: (spreadsheet of survey results also attached to email)

1. Do you participate in any fishing tournaments or fishing clubs?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	10
● No	21



2. Do you use live bait or artificial bait while fishing?

[More Details](#)

● live bait	14
● artificial bait	17



3. Have you released live bait in a waterbody in your lifetime?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	24
● No	7



4. Are you aware of how to dispose of live bait properly?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	31
● No	0



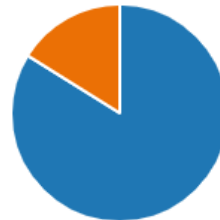
5. Have you ever been to multiple lakes in one day?

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6. Were you aware of the recommend dry time of 5 days before entering another waterbody?

[More Details](#)



7. Have you ever used a decontamination station?

[More Details](#)



8. Do you find the angler kit you received useful in AIS prevention?

[More Details](#)



Anglers Behaviors:

Live Bait: According to the MN DNR Angler Survey Summary report, 92% of respondents indicate that they use live bait for fishing and 1/3 of anglers report releasing live bait at some point of time. The pilot program survey results show that 45% of anglers use live bait while fishing and 77% of anglers have released live bait in a waterbody in their lifetime. I think this actually shows that while they may not have practiced good bait disposal behavior in the past, the pilot was successful because 100% reported knowing how to properly dispose of bait.

Conclusion:

The long term goal for this pilot program is to get anglers to dispose of live bait correctly and cleaning watercraft property. Also, to create a contact list of all anglers that made a written commitment and received watercraft starter kits. The County doesn't have funds in 2022 to purchase more watercraft starter kits for anglers. Watercraft inspectors reported positive feedback from anglers on the watercraft equipment starter kits.

In 2022, The Environmental Services Specialist will provide AIS updates to anglers monthly in the winter months and bi-weekly in the summer months. The County will continue to work inspectors around fishing tournaments in 2022 and educate anglers on disposing of live bait correctly and cleaning watercraft properly. The County will add contacts to the list based on fishing tournaments and AIS events in the summer season. Also, we will continue to purchase AIS education materials for inspectors to hand out at the landings to anglers.