



Local AIS Plan Framework

**Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan for Cook County
Date December 2, 2014**

Guidelines for using Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid (MN Statute 477A.19)

INTRODUCTION

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are threatening Minnesota waters. These nonnative species harm fish populations, water quality, and water recreation. This plan outlines the efforts that Cook County will undertake to help prevent the spread of harmful AIS within Minnesota.

ACTIONS

Table 1. Actions that Cook County plans to implement in order to prevent the spread of AIS. In the following table, where applicable, related actions and elements from the state plan are cross-referenced.

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Assess the county’s resources and risk of AIS introduction			
Understand the variety of pathways of introduction to local waters.	Knowing the common pathways by which AIS can be spread is essential to effective prevention.	Prevention – Understand Risks	I-1-c
Create a comprehensive list (using MNDNR, USFS and other lists) of water bodies that are designated as infested in the county. Identify linkages to other water bodies. Work with GIS resources to complete this.	Some AIS travel or are more easily transported between infested waters and other connected water bodies; knowing these linkages will help prioritize prevention resources.	Prevention – Understand Risks	I-1-c
Install traffic counters at select public accesses.	This action will help the county prioritize resources in the future by quantifying the frequency of use at different water bodies.	Prevention – Understand Risks	I-1-c
Increase county enforcement resources			

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Ensure that the county’s peace officers, volunteers, water safety patrol staff etc., have been trained to enforce and educate about AIS laws. Increase the number of inspectors within the county.	This action will extend the capacity of local enforcement to ensure compliance with and understanding of AIS laws.	Prevention – Enforcement	I-6-b
Utilize county AIS deputies to patrol public accesses near infested lakes to issue compliance checks with AIS laws.	Compliance checks away from boat launches can be effective at communicating the presence of law enforcement and help to educate lake users on the seriousness of AIS laws and the penalties for infractions.	Prevention – Enforcement	I-6-b
Increase watercraft inspections within the county by hiring authorized watercraft inspectors through a delegation agreement with the MNDNR.	Watercraft inspectors can help spread <i>Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!</i> and other prevention messages to boaters and anglers to help prevent the spread of AIS.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness	II-8-a
Ensure that local authorities are aware of state regulations that prohibit transport and/or harvesting of prohibited invasive species, aquatic plants, and water from designated infested waters.	Consistent enforcement of AIS regulations aimed at containment will help to prevent the further spread of AIS.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Enforcement	II-10-c
Increase public awareness and participation in prevention			
Train county/city field staff (e.g., zoning, septic system, land department) on practices to avoid spreading invasive species. Also train on management practices that will maintain and/or create diverse, native landscapes that are resilient to invasive species.	County staff can take simple steps to prevent AIS spread or new introductions, and can also set an example for and broaden partnerships with businesses and individuals in the county.	Prevention – Research and Technologies	I-7-d
	Making the environment more resistant to AIS can help prevent AIS infestation.	Prevention – Manage for Prevention	I-10-a

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Ensure that local businesses are reducing/eliminating the risk of AIS spread in their operations; for example, lake service providers are now required to be certified by the MNDNR.	The day-to-day operations of some businesses, whether regulated or not, can pose a risk of AIS spread.	Prevention – Research and Technologies	I-7-d
Develop educational materials targeted to buyers and sellers of aquatic plants, animals, boats, docks etc.	Target AIS prevention efforts using developed or existing (e.g. <i>Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!</i>) logos and prevention messages using proven marketing, communication, and education strategies.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness	II-8-e
Develop methods and local training sessions to reduce risk of invasive species introduction through government and business operations.	The county will help prevent AIS spread by developing and sharing new risk-reduction methods and by identifying actions and operations that could contribute to AIS spread.	Prevention – Research and Technologies	I-7-d
Adopt existing programs for schools and informal education materials for events to support youth education about AIS.	Encourage use of K-12 and non-formal education resources (e.g., <i>Nab the Aquatic Invader</i>) in science-based education, and promote community engagement through youth stewardship projects.	Prevention – Public Awareness	I-8-g
Develop and distribute AIS prevention messages targeting those who launch watercraft from their own private residential access.	Many watercraft enter lakes and rivers from private residential property and are not reached by education and prevention efforts directed at public accesses and cooperating private non-residential accesses. Work to enlist lake associations, environmental and conservation organizations, resorts and their associations, and realtors to promote and coordinate AIS prevention messages.	Prevention – Public Awareness	I-8-a & e

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Collaborate with other counties, watershed groups, and/or jurisdictions whose water bodies connect to the county's to develop a regional approach to AIS prevention.	Because AIS and the individuals who could transport them do not stay inside county borders, effective coordination is necessary to prevent AIS spread. Cross county coordination (e.g. Lake and St. Louis) will help to leverage resources.	Prevention – Regional Approaches	I-9-a
Hire seasonal educators, trained by the MNDNR and/or Minnesota Sea Grant, to distribute educational materials at selected public access points, and enlist additional volunteers to support this effort, particularly at high priority landings during peak usage times (holidays and weekends).	Targeting educational efforts (e.g. <i>Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!</i>) to the users of a water body may help prevent AIS spread from or into that water body.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness	II-8-a
Work with the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers campaign to strengthen awareness of AIS issues in the county.	Consistent messaging such as that from the <i>Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!</i> ads will help educate individuals about their role and actions for AIS prevention.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness	II-8-d
Explore partnership opportunities with existing outreach efforts developed by the MNDNR and the Minnesota Sea Grant Program.	Leveraging existing communications materials ensures that the public receives accurate messages about rules and best practices related to AIS prevention.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness	II-8-d
Develop tailored messages aimed at lake-related businesses (e.g., home builders, developers) and local government staff (e.g., county planners) regarding AIS prevention.	Ensuring that individuals are aware of AIS prevention measures that they can take in the course of their daily work will help to reduce the risk of AIS spread.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness	II-8-f

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Complete an AIS prevention outreach campaign with local appeal. Utilize WTIP North Shore Community Radio, Boreal website, Northern Wilds, local paper etc. Also include targeting non-residents in the outreach campaign.	Ensuring that individuals (both residents and non-residents) are aware of AIS prevention measures that they can take in the course of their daily activities will help to reduce the risk of AIS spread.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness	II-8-d
Coordinate with the MNDNR, Cook County, and USFS to publicize new infestations at access sites, in lake association newsletters, and other local publications.	Timely and accurate notice of new AIS infestations empowers the public to help prevent the further spread of AIS.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Public Awareness Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Risk Reduction	II-8-i II-15-c
Increase available resources and leverage partnerships			
Assist with funding local outreach and monitoring efforts by entities other than the county including (but not limited to) volunteers, DNR, USFS, Lake Associations, Minnesota Sea Grant, Grand Portage, outfitters, universities, colleges, wilderness camps, NRRI, commercial fisherman and special interest fishing groups.	Overall AIS prevention efforts can be strengthened by building the capacity of other local organizations (and nearby counties) to conduct AIS outreach and monitoring activities.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Detection	II-1-h
Investigate the possibility of a grant program to support local efforts to prevent the spread of AIS.	By leveraging existing capacity of other local organizations, the county can maximize the effectiveness of its AIS prevention funds.	Leadership and Coordination - Local	IV-3-c

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Develop and maintain contacts with other local organizations, businesses, lake associations, environmental and conservation organizations, resorts and their associations, realtors, and government entities including Lake and St. Louis Counties.	The participation of local partners is necessary for a county’s AIS prevention plan to be effective.	Leadership and Coordination - Local	IV-3-a
Support the viability of local organizations such as County Coalitions of Lake Associations to create partners in implementing the county’s AIS prevention plan.	Additional partnerships among local organizations will increase the county’s capacity to implement its AIS prevention plan.	Leadership and Coordination - Local	IV-3-b
Seek additional funds to implement unfunded actions in county prevention plan. Be conscious of matching funding opportunities.	The effectiveness of AIS prevention actions can be limited by inadequate financial resources.	Prevention – Funding Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Funding	I-11-a II-11-a II-11-b
Broaden knowledge of and participation in early detection and rapid response activities			
Obtain and distribute Watch ID cards from the Minnesota Sea Grant Program. Reach out to bait shops.	Finding new infestations of AIS early is key to preventing further spread, and ensuring that many people who use water resources know what, where and how to look for AIS maximizes the chance of early detection.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Detection	II-1-b
Encourage county staff, businesses, and individuals to submit samples of suspected AIS to the MNDNR.	The county can support early detection and prevention efforts by helping the MNDNR to quickly confirm new infestations of AIS.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Detection	II-1-d

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Approve an early detection and rapid response program with county acting in a resource support agreement with the MNDNR.	This program will ensure that new infestations are properly reported and rapid response is deployed, if required.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Detection	II-1-d
Augment communication and reporting mechanisms for citizen monitoring of lakes and rivers.	Ensuring that local discoveries of AIS are quickly communicated to the right people will maximize prevention efforts related to new infestations.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Detection	II-1-j
Cultivate and maintain partnerships with organizations interested in AIS prevention (e.g., lake associations) to support AIS surveys in water bodies (infested and non-infested) and on docks and lifts.	Leveraging the resources of existing organizations will help to find new AIS infestations more efficiently and to prevent further spread of those AIS.	Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Prioritize	II-3-b
Manage existing populations of aquatic invasive species			
Support efforts in integrated pest management to control populations of high priority aquatic invasive plant species.	Effective management of existing AIS populations may reduce the likelihood of further spread.	Management of Invasive Species – Implement IPM Plans	III-3-a
Coordinate with the MNDNR and Minnesota Sea Grant for information on management of AIS, and adopt control plans utilizing safe and cost-effective techniques.	Effective management of existing AIS populations may help prevent further spread.	Management of Invasive Species - Coordination/ Communication	III-4-b
Evaluate AIS prevention efforts and cooperative relationships for possible improvements. Use post event evaluations.	Participants at all levels can share input and new ideas to continuously improve the AIS prevention plan for the local area.		III-6-a, b, c
Address specific pathways of introduction			

Action for county plan	How action supports AIS prevention	Element in state plan	Action in state plan
Investigate the cost and feasibility of renting decontamination trailers for use in cleaning boats and equipment used in infested lakes within the county during special events (e.g. fishing tournaments). Promote boat washing with a simple garden hose when possible.	Boat washing and decontamination of watercraft is a key tool in preventing AIS spread.	N/A	N/A
Investigate new tools and ideas (such as log books for boats) for identifying AIS pathways.	Identifying pathways is a key tool in preventing AIS spread.	N/A	N/A

IMPLEMENTATION

It is the intent of the plan development committee that at least in its first few years, administration and oversight of this plan should require a certain percent of county full-time equivalents. In cooperation with the County and the plan development committee this percentage will be determined.

UPDATING AND AMENDING THE PLAN

This plan will be reviewed annually by the plan development committee and updated as needed.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Plan participants

Multiple organizations are partnering with Cook County to implement the AIS prevention plan. A list including contacts and their roles is in development.

Appendix B: County water resources

Table 3. Characterization of Lakes in Cook County.

Number of lakes more than 10 acres in size	836
Number of lakes designated as infested with aquatic invasive species	14 DNR designated lakes, additional 29 reported, confirmed, or presumed to hold AIS
Total number of public water accesses	42 Carry-in accesses <u>+49 Trailer launches</u> 91 Total
Number of public accesses owned or operated by MNDNR	28
Number of public accesses owned or operated by MnDOT	1
Number of public accesses owned or operated by Cook County	5
Number of public accesses owned or operated by a township	3
Number of public accesses owned or operated by a city	1
Number of public accesses owned or operated by US Forest Service	52
Number of public accesses owned or operated by Grand Portage Band	1
Estimated number of non-public water accesses	Currently unknown

Appendix C: Glossary of Acronyms used in plan:

MNDNR:	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
MnDOT:	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MPCA:	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
SWCD:	Soil and Water Conservation District
USFS:	United States Forest Service
GIS:	Geographical Information System
NRRI:	Natural Resources Research Institute