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# Le Sueur County, MN

Tuesday, December 22, 2015

Board Meeting

## Item 5

**9:35 a.m. Josh Mankowski, LSC Resource Specialist (15 min)**

*AIS Resolution*

Staff Contact: Kathy Brockway - Environmental and P & Z Director

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LE SUEUR COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**RESOLUTION FOR AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION AID  
RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**WHEREAS**, 2014 Session Law Chapter 308 enacted by the Legislature provides Minnesota Counties a County Program Aid grant for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention. The amount is designated by the number of watercraft trailer launches and the number of watercraft trailer parking spaces within each county. Le Sueur County received approximately \$157,000.00 for the year 2015 and will receive approximately \$157,000.00 each following year, and

**WHEREAS**, the legislation requires that Le Sueur County must establish, by resolution or through adoption of a plan, guidelines for the use of the proceeds, which are to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS at all access sites within the county, and

**WHEREAS**, the county may appropriate the proceeds directly or may use any portion of the proceeds to provide funding for a Joint Powers Board or cooperative agreement with another political subdivision, the Soil and Water Conservation District or lake associations located in the county.

**WHEREAS**, the county must submit a copy of its guidelines for use of the proceeds to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources by December 31, of the year the payments are received, and

**WHEREAS**, AIS is one of the three priority concerns identified in the 2013-2023 State Water plan. A stated goal in the Water Plan is to provide leadership in the fight against AIS by developing proactive solutions aimed at educating and empowering local citizens.

**Whereas**, the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners designates oversight of the Le Sueur County AIS Prevention Program to the Environmental Services Department and delegates to this department the responsibility to prepare, implement and report annually, a plan to allocate the funding in accordance with the above legislation. A comprehensive AIS prevention plan has been completed.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts and begins implementation of its approved Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan drafted by the Environmental Services Department and County Sheriff's Department in conjunction with the Le Sueur County AIS Advisory Committee.

State of MN)  
Le Sueur County) ss

I, Darrell Pettis, County Administrator, Le Sueur County, Minnesota, hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of the resolution of the county board of said county with the original record thereof on file in the Administration Office, Le Sueur County Minnesota, as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said board at a meeting duly held on December 22, 2015, and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original record and of the whole thereof, and that said resolution was duly passed by said board at said meeting.

Witness my hand and seat this 22 day of December 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Darrell Pettis, County Administrator

<b>District/Commissioner</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>1-Gliszinski</b>		
<b>2-Connolly</b>		
<b>3-King</b>		
<b>4-Wetzel</b>		
<b>5-Rohlfing</b>		

# Le Sueur County

## Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan



# STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.

[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

Adopted by Le Sueur County on XX/XX/XXX

Prepared by Le Sueur Co with assistance from the Le Sueur Count AIS  
Advisory Committee.

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# **Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Plan**

## **Executive Summary**

Le Sueur County has 128 lakes, many creeks, streams and rivers within its jurisdictional boundaries. These bodies of water are among Le Sueur County's greatest natural assets. Aquatic invasive species (AIS) now threaten the habitat, ecosystem function and recreational enjoyment of these assets. A number of AIS are already present within the County and surrounding areas. These species are being transferred into the County from infested water from other areas of the State and can travel between your lakes if care is not given to stop their spread. As of 2015, Eurasian Watermilfoil, Purple Loosestrife and Curly Leaf Pondweed are some of the AIS already present within the County.

To reduce the risk of further infestation and address the AIS already in the County, this plan outlines the following key topics:

1. AIS Program Management
2. Education
3. Inspection/Decontamination
4. Assessment and Management
5. Rapid Response Plan
6. Enforcement
7. Risk Reduction

## **Definition of Aquatic Invasive Species**


Aquatic invasive species (AIS) (sometimes called exotic, invasive, nonindigenous or non-native) are aquatic organisms that invade ecosystems beyond their natural, historic range. (US Fish & Wildlife Service)

## **Aquatic Invasive Species in Minnesota**

There are a number of AIS that have infested other waterbodies in Minnesota that have not been introduced to Le Sueur County. The species include zebra mussels, quagga mussels, spiny waterfleas and faucet snails to name a few. Since these AIS are already present in Minnesota waters, an increased risk that they may be introduced to waters in Le Sueur County exists. With continued due diligence, we can keep these AIS from spreading into Le Sueur County lakes.

## Aquatic Invasive Species in Le Sueur County

As of October 20, 2015, nine lakes in Le Sueur County that are currently listed on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) List of Infested Waters. The invasive species documented in Le Sueur County include Eurasian watermilfoil and flowering rush. A number of the lakes within the County also contain Curly-Leaf Pondweed, an invasive species first reported in MN in 1910. Waterbodies containing Curly-Leaf Pondweed are not listed as infested.



**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - List of Infested Waters - October 20, 2015**

Water body name	County or counties	Listed for aquatic invasive species	Year listed as infested	Year species was first confirmed, or connected water body	DOW number
East Jefferson	Le Sueur	Eurasian watermilfoil	2007	2002	40-0092
German	Le Sueur	Eurasian watermilfoil	2007	2002	40-0063
Horseshoe	Le Sueur	flowering rush	2013	2013	40-0001
Jefferson	Le Sueur	Eurasian watermilfoil	2015	part of Jefferson chain	40-0092
Middle Jefferson	Le Sueur	Eurasian watermilfoil	2010	2010	40-0092
Ray's	Le Sueur	Eurasian watermilfoil	2009	2008	40-0056
Swede's Bay	Le Sueur	Eurasian watermilfoil	2015	part of Jefferson chain	40-0092
Tetonka	Le Sueur	flowering rush	2009	2008	40-0031
Upper Sakatah	Le Sueur	flowering rush	2009	2008	40-0002
West Jefferson	Le Sueur	Eurasian watermilfoil	2015	part of Jefferson chain	40-0092

## Economic Impacts

Potential impacts caused by AIS within the Cities, Townships and County are not precisely known. AIS have the potential to cause both detrimental economic and environmental impacts. Infrastructure that has been in use for years may become unusable. Depending on the type and severity of an AIS infestation, there may be reduced use for recreation, thus reducing the number of individuals that use our water resources. This would result in loss of potential revenue for local businesses. There could also be an increased cost to reduce or maintain current AIS populations. When AIS infest a lake or other waterbody, it becomes very difficult or impractical to treat the entire waterbody for removal. Treatment would then only be pursued in areas that have

higher success of local removal or higher environmental and economic importance. It is less costly to prevent AIS infestations than it is to treat established populations.

### **Environmental Impacts**

The introduction of AIS into an ecosystem has the potential for unknown, widespread impacts. Many of the native flora and fauna have adapted life strategies to reduce pressures from competition in their current environment. Introducing new species can add new, unknown pressures to which native species may not be capable of adapting. Competition for resources such as light, nutrients and space can increase. There can be unknown impacts on local food-webs, shifting the interactions of these organisms within the environment. Competition for space needed for successful spawning may increase. The changes in the habitat can also lead to increased stress on different species, increasing the susceptibility of disease, another factor that can decrease population sizes of native species.

### **Plan Goals**

The goals set forth in this plan are listed below (they are not listed in order of priority):

- ◆ Increase the number of inspections at access sites.
- ◆ Have most if not all inspections performed by level 1 authorized watercraft inspectors and licensed peace officers.
- ◆ Promote public awareness and education on AIS and strategies to stop their spread.
- ◆ Support current AIS management efforts
- ◆ Work with Lakeshore property owners, lake associations, campgrounds, marinas, and dock/boat lift installers/sellers on AIS prevention.
- ◆ Stop the spread of AIS in the County.
- ◆ Reduce the economic and environmental impacts caused by current and future AIS infestations.

### **Strategy**

#### 1. AIS Program Management

It will be the responsibility of Environmental Services and the County AIS Committee to set in place the County AIS Plan. Environmental Services and the AIS committee will review the Plan annually to determine its effectiveness and update this plan as deemed necessary. Environmental Services, the AIS Committee and local Lake Associations will work together to enact different aspects of this plan.

## 2. Education

The Education aspect of the County AIS Plan will focus on raising public awareness as well as both adult and child education.

- i) Boat launch signage will be used to cover DNR, Township, City, County Park and Resort Launches.
- ii) Awareness will be promoted for all private parties and businesses purchasing, selling and maintaining docks and lifts within the County.
- iii) Plans for large, roadside signage will be pursued.
- iv) Public service announcements will be made on local radio stations and printed in local news sources when applicable.
- v) Adult and child education opportunities will be developed and pursued.
- vi) AIS informational displays will be presented at high traffic events.
- vii) Support for stiffer penalties for AIS transport may be pursued.
- viii) The County will explore opportunities to partner with existing efforts for outreach that have been developed by MN DNR, MN Sea Grant, Wildlife Forever and others as they are developed.
- ix) Work with local businesses to reduce the risk of AIS introduction by providing training and education as needed.
- x) Distribute educational materials at public accesses, functions and events.

## 3. Inspection/Decontamination

The inspection component of the County Plan will utilize the County Sheriff's Department and DNR authorized Level 1 watercraft inspectors when possible. In order to conduct authorized watercraft inspections, the County will keep a current Delegation Agreement with the DNR. The DNR Watercraft Inspection Program provides the training and authorizes individuals to inspect water-related equipment. With the aid of local Lake Associations, it may be possible to provide more inspections at access sites and help educate individuals on the importance of AIS prevention. Volunteers may be utilized to assist boaters on site, but they do not have authority over boaters. A boater may choose to ignore the information provided by the volunteer and launch their boat, potentially introducing new AIS to the lake. It is because of this lack of authority that Level 1 authorized watercraft inspectors and peace officers will be the primary avenue for inspections. Additional training may be provided to the County Sheriff's Department to ensure that individuals conducting inspections are educated to the most current means of AIS inspection and prevention.

Another strategy to reduce the spread of AIS is the use of a decontamination unit. A decontamination unit reduces the chances of spreading AIS by utilizing heated pressurized water to kill and remove AIS from boats and trailers. The



success of a decontamination unit is dependent on the individual that is using the equipment, usually a DNR authorized Level 2 watercraft inspector. At this time there are no plans for the County to provide and manage a decontamination site. Plans may be pursued in the future if there is sufficient interest and funding.

4. Assessment and Management

The County will work with the MN DNR on listing and managing AIS within the County. The List of Infested Waters will be checked minimally once a year to identify lakes within and in areas surrounding the County that may act as a source for the spread of AIS. Signage will be placed and maintained at public access sites to help inform boaters on the current state of AIS within the lakes.

Work will be done to explore linkages between waterbodies in and around the County as possible avenues for AIS movement. A waterbody that is downstream from infested water may need increased monitoring to quickly identify the movement of AIS. These links between lakes may also be a logical location for management practices that can hinder or stop the movement of AIS between the waterbodies, thus reducing the chance of AIS movement.

Lake studies will be conducted to determine a risk assessment for lakes located within the County. These studies will be utilized to better direct management efforts as well as allow the County and AIS Committee to track population changes of AIS. The County may also continue to fund seasonal surveys. Surveys will be used to determine the current growth of AIS already known to be infesting a water body or utilized to scout for the introduction of new AIS not already known to be present in a lake. These surveys may be utilized to better direct AIS control efforts and used to determine if a reported introduction of new AIS is creditable.

5. Rapid Response Plan

A Rapid Response Plan will be developed for use within the County. This plan will be developed to address new, localized infestations in an effort to keep AIS from becoming established within the water body. The current statewide plan will be utilized as a template for the development of a local plan. This will ensure that local efforts coordinate with established protocol. This plan will be utilized solely to deal with new, isolated introductions and not with AIS that have already become established. A localized communications action plan may also be created to establish local contact lists to help ensure a speedy response to any new threats.

6. Enforcement

Enforcement of AIS prevention within the County will be handled by licensed peace officers and authorized watercraft inspectors. Environmental Services will be responsible for administration of the grant dollars. With the continued spread of AIS within the State of Minnesota, it is becoming more important to enforce prevention if we hope to reduce or halt the spread of these organisms and protect our waters for future generations.

Enforcement of the County's AIS will be conducted on two main fronts, at access sites and on the road. Boats will be inspected as they enter and leave the access. By inspecting before a boat enters a waterbody, we can prevent new introductions. By inspecting as a boat leaves, we can prevent the unlawful transport of AIS from infested lakes.

7. Risk Reduction

The plan includes a number of strategies and ideas that may be implemented to reduce the risk of AIS infestation within the County. This is not a comprehensive list. There are many other strategies that could be implemented within the County.

Allocation of AIS funding will be managed through a Request for Proposals process (RFP). All RFPs will be reviewed and awarded by County staff. Other groups (Lake Associations, Lake Improvement Districts, community organizations, Schools, etc.) may submit proposals to the County for review. Proposals will be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis and will be awarded funding based on the size, scope and benefits associated with the project.

**DNR Grants and Programs**

Grants for Watercraft Inspections by DNR Staff

The DNR Invasive Species Program offers grants for watercraft inspections by DNR staff. These grants are intended to help prevent the spread of AIS, especially zebra mussels, into Minnesota waters. This grant program is designed to assist local organizations that would like additional watercraft inspections (beyond what is done by the DNR Watercraft Inspection Program) at particular water accesses.

### DNR Signs at Water Accesses

The DNR provides a limited number of Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! signs at no cost for lake associations, local governments, and other groups to post at water accesses. You may also print your own signs.

### AIS Control Projects Grant

The AIS Control Projects Grant provides funding to help cover the cost of curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil and flowering rush control projects. The grant assists in covering the cost of herbicide, mechanical control or a combination of both treatment types.