



# Rice County Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

Adopted: October 28, 2014      Updated December 7, 2015

## **Background Information:**

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are threatening Minnesota waters. Aquatic Invasive Species (sometimes called exotic, invasive, nonindigenous or non-native) are defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as: “aquatic organisms that invade ecosystems beyond their natural, historic range. Their presence may harm native ecosystems or commercial, agricultural, or recreational activities, depending upon their ecosystems.” Their presence can be harmful to fish populations, water quality, as well as water recreation. This plan outlines the efforts that Rice County will undertake to help prevent the spread of harmful AIS within the state of Minnesota.

This initial Rice County Plan has the main objectives broken into two areas: 1) Assessing County’s Resources & Risk of AIS Introduction, and 2) Increasing Public Awareness & Participation in Prevention, & Early Detection and Rapid Response Identification. The tables shown below include actions that Rice County plans to implement in order to prevent the spread of AIS. The current main focus areas are to assess the current status of public accesses, educational efforts and provide training to various entities/individuals in Rice County. The plan also involves developing an Ambassador Program to provide training to potential partners in an effort to increase the resources and educational efforts throughout the county in a wide array of avenues. The plan will be reviewed annually and adjusted based on needs and available funding.

## **Action and Implementation Tables**

### **Assessment of County’s Resources & Risk of AIS Introduction**

| <b>Action Item</b>   | <b>How Action Supports AIS Prevention</b>   | <b>Element in State Plan</b>  | <b>Timeline/Status</b> |
|--|---|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Develop and Establish a County AIS Technical Committee which will function as a subset of the Water Plan Technical Committee | This action will help provide additional communication and education to necessary committee members | Prevention – Understand Risks | Ongoing                |
| Work with MNDNR to   | This action will help the   | Prevention –                  | Ongoing                |

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| determine existing impairments within waterbodies  | county prioritize resources in the future   | Understand Risks              |                 |
| Analyze existing public launches to determine if additional or improved signage is necessary                               | This action will help the county determine if educational efforts at boat launches in the county is sufficient  | Prevention – Understand Risks | Completed 2015. |
| Using MNDNR’s list of water bodies that are designated as infested in the county, identify linkages to other water bodies. | Some AIS may travel or be more easily transported between infested waters and other connected water bodies; knowing these linkages will help prioritize prevention resources. | Prevention – Understand Risks | 2016            |
| Assess usage of resources at public accesses.  | This action will help the county prioritize resources in the future by quantifying the use at different water bodies.   | Prevention – Understand Risks | 2016/2017       |

### **Increase Public Awareness & Participation in Prevention, and Early Detection & Rapid Response Identification**

| <b>Action Item</b>  | <b>How Action Supports AIS Prevention</b>  | <b>Element in State Plan</b>           | <b>Status</b> |
|---|--|--|---------------|
| Train local government staff, including Rice County Water Patrol, on practices to avoid spreading invasive species. | County staff can take simple steps to prevent AIS spread or new introductions, and can also set an example for businesses and individuals in the county. | Prevention – Research and Technologies | Ongoing.      |
| Research curricula for schools and informal education materials.  | Young people can help prevent the spread of AIS through their own actions and by modeling their knowledge and actions to their families.                 | Prevention – Public Awareness          | 2016 & 2017   |
| Provide educational materials at events such as county fairs to support education about AIS.                        | Education is the key to preventing the spread of AIS.  | Prevention – Public Awareness          | Ongoing.      |
| Develop and distribute AIS prevention messages targeting  | Many watercraft enter lakes and rivers from  | Prevention – Public Awareness          | Ongoing.      |

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| riparian landowners who launch watercraft from their own private residential access   | private residential property and are not reached by education and prevention efforts directed at public accesses and cooperating private non-residential accesses                                   |   |          |
| Work with the Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker campaign to strengthen awareness of AIS issues in the county.   | Consistent messaging such as that from the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers ads may help educate individuals about their role in AIS prevention   | Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment- Public Awareness  | Ongoing. |
| Distribute Watch ID cards via of a variety of mechanisms including through the Rice County Water Patrol.                                    | Finding new infestations of AIS early is key to preventing further spread, and ensuring that many people who use water resources know what AIS to look for maximizes the chance of early detection. | Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment- Detection   | Ongoing. |
| 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  | Ongoing. |
| Coordinate with the MNDNR 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<br>II-8-i<br>Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Risk Reduction<br>II-15-c | Ongoing. |
| Cultivate partnerships with organizations interested in AIS prevention (e.g., lake associations, sportsmen clubs) to support AIS surveys in | Leveraging the resources of existing organizations will help to find new AIS infestations more efficiently and to prevent   | Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment- Prioritize  | Ongoing. |

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| water bodies (infested and non-infested) and on docks and lifts.  | further spread of those AIS.  |   |                    |
| Develop tailored messages aimed at lake-related businesses (e.g., home builders, developers) and local government staff 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 | Ongoing.           |
| Encourage county staff, businesses, and individuals to submit samples of suspected AIS to the MN DNR.   | The county can support early detection and prevention efforts by helping the MN DNR to quickly confirm new infestations of AIS.                                 | Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment-Detection          | Ongoing.           |
| Conduct inventory of existing signage via GPS/GIS.  | Ensuring that individuals are aware of existing impairments and necessary protective measures   | Containment - Public Awareness                                      | Completed in 2015. |
| Develop plan for improved signage at public accesses.   | Ensuring that individuals are aware of existing impairments and necessary protective measures   | Containment - Public Awareness                                      | In progress.       |
| Work with Rice 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                                 | Ongoing.           |
| Establish an Ambassador Program with lake associations and sportsmen's clubs 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                                 | Ongoing.           |
| Ensure that local businesses are reducing the risk of AIS spread in their operations. Provide training and education as needed.                   | The county will help prevent AIS spread by developing and sharing new risk-reduction methods and by identifying actions and operations that could               | Prevention – Research and Technologies                              | Ongoing.           |

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|   | contribute to AIS spread.  |   |          |
| 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. | Prevention- Regional Approach                                       | Ongoing. |
| 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. | Targeting educational efforts 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 | Ongoing. |

### **Increase Available Resources and Partnerships**

| <b>Action Item</b>   | <b>How Action Supports AIS Prevention</b>   | <b>Element in State Plan</b>  | <b>Status</b> |
|--|---|---|---------------|
| Utilize existing programs offered by the MN DNR  | The effectiveness of AIS prevention actions can be limited by inadequate resources.   | Prevention- Funding<br>Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment Funding | Ongoing.      |
| Assist with funding local outreach and monitoring efforts by entities other than the county. | Overall AIS prevention efforts can be strengthened by supporting the capacity of other local organizations to conduct AIS outreach and monitoring activities. | Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment – Detection                    | Ongoing.      |

### **UPDATING AND AMENDING THE PLAN**

This plan will be reviewed annually and amended as needed based on available funding.

### **APPENDICES**

Appendices shown below include relevant information pertaining to plan participants and partners, existing water resources, and current invasive species profiles.

#### **Appendix A: Plan participants**

**Table 2.** Organizations partnering with Rice County to implement the AIS prevention plan, include:

| Type of Organization                         | Name of Organization  |
|--|---|
| Federal government                           | USFWS, USFS, NPS, USACE, NRCS   |
| State Government                             | MNDNR, MDA, MPCA, BWSR, University of Minnesota Extension   |
| County Government                            | Rice County Environmental Services & Rice County Water Patrol   |
| Neighboring counties                         | Scott and Dakota to the north,<br>Goodhue to the east,<br>Steel and Waseca to the south,<br>Le Sueur to the west  |
| Townships                                    | Wheatland, Webster, Erin, Forest, Bridgewater, Northfield, Wheeling, Cannon City, Wells, Shieldsville, Morristown, Warsaw, Walcott and Richland   |
| Cities                                       | Faribault, Northfield, Dundas, Lonsdale, Dennison, Morristown, and Nerstrand  |
| Non Profit Water Related Organizations       | Cannon River Watershed Partnership<br>Zumbro River Watershed Partnership  |
| Water Quality Boards                         | SE MN Water Resources Board   |
| Lake Associations                            | Circle Lake Association, Cannon Lake Association, Shields Lake Association, Roberds Lake Club   |
| County coalition of lake associations (COLA) | Rice County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA)   |
| Resorts and Campgrounds                      | Winjums Shady Acres, Roberds Lake Resort and Campground, Nerstrand Big Woods State Park, Le Mieux's Resort, Camp Faribo, McCullough Campground, Maiden Rock, Camp Maiden Rock West, Hoy's Resort, Doc's Dock, Bulrush Bay Resort, Knotty Pine Resort, Cannon River Wilderness Area, The Lodge Campground, Vollbrecht's Campground, Camp Omega |
| Water oriented businesses                    | LaCanne's, John's Bait and Tackle, Lake Country Convenience and Bait, Nagel's Live Bait Fishing Shop, Nugents, Quality Marine, Le Mieux's Tackle  |
| Chamber(s) of Commerce                       | Faribault Chamber of Commerce, Northfield Chamber of Commerce, Lonsdale Chamber of Commerce   |
| Youth groups and clubs                       | Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H  |
| High schools                                 | Faribault High School, Northfield High School, Tri-City United Schools, Shattuck Saint Mary's   |
| Colleges or Universities                     | Carleton College, Saint Olaf College, South Central Technical College   |

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| Environmental learning centers            | River Bend Nature Center   |
| Realtors                                  | Weichert Realty, Keller William Realty, Coldwell Banker South Metro, Century 21, Professional Pride Realty, Edina Realty, Re/Max, Cannon Realty, Coffman Realty, Pinpoint Realty LLC, Northfield Home and Realty |
| Property owners                           | Lake shore homeowners, Farmers, Railway Owners, Utilities  |
| <i>Other organizations as appropriate</i> |  |

### Appendix B: County water resources

**Table 3.** Characterization of Lakes in Rice County.

| Lake Information   | Number                      |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Number of lakes more than 10 acres in size                           | 41                          |
| Number of lakes designated as infested with aquatic invasive species | 9                           |
| Number of public water accesses owned or operated by the MNDNR       | 32                          |
| Number of public water accesses owned or operated by MnDOT           | 0                           |
| Number of public water accesses owned or operated by the county      | 6                           |
| Number of public water accesses owned or operated by a township      | 0                           |
| Number of public water accesses owned or operated by a city          | 6 (carry in)<br>1 (trailer) |

### Appendix C: County water resources

**Table 4.** Invasive Species Profile

| Invasive Species      | Lake   |
|-----------------------|--|
| Eurasian Watermilfoil | Mazaska Lake<br>French Lake<br>Fox Lake<br>Circle Lake<br>Cedar Lake   |
| Flowering Rush        | Cannon River (Tetonka Lake to the Woolen Mill Dam in Faribault)<br>Wells Lake<br>Cannon Lake<br>Sprague Lake<br>Horseshoe Lake |

**Appendix D: Glossary of Acronyms used in plan:**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| BWSR:  | Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources |
| MNDNR: | Minnesota Department of Natural Resources   |
| MnDOT: | Minnesota Department of Transportation      |
| MDA:   | Minnesota Department of Agriculture         |
| MPCA:  | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency          |
| NPS:   | National Park Service                       |
| NRCS:  | Natural Resources Conservation Service      |
| SWCD:  | Soil and Water Conservation District        |
| USACE: | United States Army Corps of Engineers       |
| USFWS: | United States Fish and Wildlife Service     |
| USFS:  | United States Forest Service                |