

Hennepin County

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid Program

2015 Accomplishments



The Three Rivers Park District used AIS prevention grant funding from Hennepin County to purchase a mobile decontamination unit. The unit was located at the access to Lake Independence in the Baker Park Reserve.

Hennepin County
Public Works
Environment and Energy



Introduction

The State of Minnesota began providing funding in 2014 to all Minnesota counties to implement plans to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Hennepin County received \$146,343 in 2014 and \$325,208 in 2015. The county has used the funding to develop a concept plan for a permanent regional boat washing station, enhance public access inspections, support innovative education efforts, research milfoil genetics for possible control strategies, train residents on AIS detection, and fund projects that allow partners to work on a variety of issues at the local level. The following provides a summary of the accomplishments and next steps for the county's AIS prevention projects.

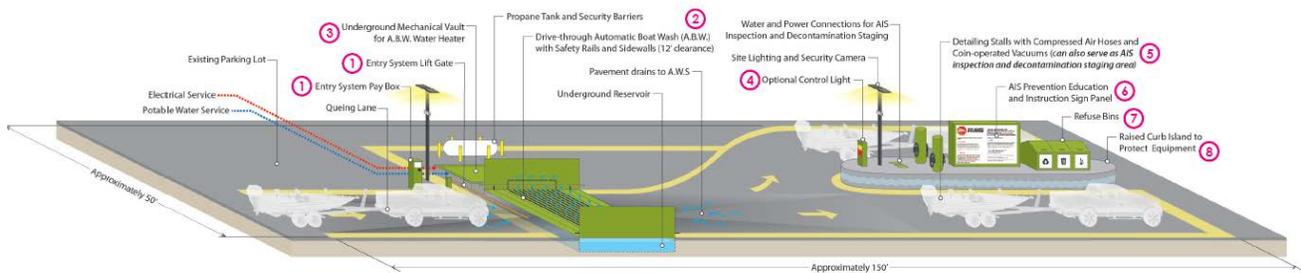
Address pathways of introduction

Regional AIS prevention facility

The regional AIS boat wash concept is a facility that would be available to the public to properly clean all types of watercraft, including personal watercraft, fishing boats and sailboats, as well as boat lifts, docks and other equipment that could transport AIS from one body of water to another. This facility would address almost all types of AIS that can be spread by watercraft.

Accomplishments:

- Barr Engineering completed a conceptual design for a permanent AIS prevention facility in June 2015. Feedback from partners, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, West Metro AIS Taskforce, the Three Rivers Park District and private businesses, was integrated throughout the conceptual design process. Estimated costs for the proposed facility is \$287,500 for construction and \$10,000 for annual operation and maintenance.
- Initiated preliminary discussions with potential partners to gauge interest in siting a facility and to commit to long-term operation.



Conceptual design for a permanent AIS prevention facility.

Next steps:

- Continue informal Solicitations of Interest (SOI). If there is sufficient interest, the county will send out a formal Request for Proposal (RFP).
- If an RFP is approved, the county would develop the final site-specific design and construct and manage the facility for one boating season. The facility would then be turned over to the partner, who would be required to operate the facility at or below cost for a minimum of five to ten seasons.

Watercraft inspections at boat accesses

Accomplishments:

- Provided funding through a 2015 AIS Prevention Grant to the Three Rivers Park District and the City of Eden Prairie for increased inspections at boat accesses. These projects help fill gaps in existing countywide watercraft inspections and address all types of AIS that can be spread by watercraft.

Next steps:

- A report assessing the effectiveness of the enhanced inspection efforts will be available soon.

AIS decontamination equipment

Accomplishments:

- Through a 2015 AIS Prevention Grant, the Three Rivers Park District purchased a mobile decontamination unit that was located at Baker Park Reserve near the public boat access to Lake Independence. The park district also hired inspectors to decontaminate boats when needed.
- The county purchased a hot water pressure sprayer that was located at the Hennepin County Sheriff's Water Patrol. This is used on emergency equipment before it is moved throughout the county and on equipment used in the county's Lake Improvement Program.



Mobile decontamination unit at Baker Park.

Next steps

- A report assessing the effectiveness of these projects will be available soon.

Interactive and innovative education efforts

Accomplishments:

- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board received a 2015 AIS Prevention Grant to create a portable AIS education exhibit. Using a custom bike and trailer, the display will be able to “pop up” at parks, boat launches, fishing docks and more.
- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board received a 2015 AIS Prevention Grant to create two informational short videos that show procedures to take to avoid the spread of AIS specific to Minneapolis lakes. The videos will be shown at boat launches and will be integrated into the curriculum for sailing schools.
- Wildlife Forever implemented a Clean, Drain, Dry digital campaign. Through geo-targeted advertising,



Example of a bike that will be used for the Minneapolis Park Board's AIS education display.

AIS prevention messages were sent to mobile device users around Lake of the Isles and Lake Minnetonka. The campaign received more than 2.3 million impressions and generated more than 8,000 clicks between June 1 and September 9. The campaign also tested different messages and found that positive messaging had greater public appeal than negative or threatening messages.



Wildlife Forever's "Clean, Drain, Dry" ad.

Next steps:

- The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's pop-up bike and trailer display is scheduled for completion in early 2016. Once the project is complete, photos and purchasing instructions will be available to other partners.
- Outreach and messaging products, data and capabilities will be analyzed to determine if additional innovative and interactive education projects should be developed.

Boat access redesign

To help boaters understand the actions they need to take to prevent the spread of AIS, Hennepin County redesigned the North Arm public access on Lake Minnetonka in 2012 with instructional signage. That signage is being installed at additional boat launches throughout the county.

Accomplishments:

- The county started installing signage and redesigning the Spring Park public access on Lake Minnetonka. A programmable message board that will display AIS and safety messages has been installed through a partnership with the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District, the City of Spring Park, Hennepin County Sheriff's Water Patrol and the Hennepin County Emergency Management Department. If this pilot project is successful, additional programmable message boards may be installed around Lake Minnetonka and throughout the county
- The City of Eden Prairie is developing AIS signage for public boat accesses on Riley, Mitchell and Red Rock lakes. This should be completed by the spring of 2016.



The Spring Park Public Access is being redesigned with AIS signage (top) and a programmable message board (bottom).

Next steps:

- Hennepin County will install AIS prevention signage at the public access on Lake Sarah in Greenfield in spring 2016.
- The county will continue to identify potential partners for public access redesigns targeting AIS prevention.

Assess AIS introduction risk

Analysis of alternative pathways

Accomplishments:

- Hennepin County hired Fortin Consulting, Inc. to analyze the risk of AIS reaching bodies of water through plants and animals sold at pet stores (aquarium trade) and nurseries (aquatic plants) in the county. To conduct the analysis, Fortin Consulting anonymously visited stores and nurseries from a compiled list.
- No Minnesota prohibited species were found in the stores inspected. One store used a prohibited scientific label for a plant, but this plant was identified to be a similar species that is not listed as an AIS. Many of the retailers – 88 percent of pet stores and 94 percent of nurseries – carry Minnesota regulated aquatic plant species. Goldfish were sold in 20 of the stores, and koi were sold in six stores. Two species (water lettuce and yellow floating hear) targeted for early detection were found.

Next steps:

- Expand education of the AIS threat from pet owners and water gardeners by partnering with a local consultant and possibly partnering with the National Sea Grant program, “Get a Habitattitude.”

Study the occurrence and distribution of hybrid watermilfoil in Lake Minnetonka.

Accomplishments:

- The county partnered with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, University of Minnesota and Montana State University to study milfoil types and management methods within Lake Minnetonka. Invasive milfoil has been known to hybridize with native milfoil, resulting in a plant that is more tolerant of herbicides and biocontrol agents. The aim of the research is to establish a preliminary characterization of milfoil genetics in relation to herbicidal and biological control efforts that have already occurred. This could lead to the development of more detailed studies that will improve control strategies.

Next steps:

- Pursue recommended next steps based on the preliminary findings and partnership opinions of the hybrid watermilfoil study.

Early detection and rapid response

Training for early detection of AIS

Accomplishments:

- Hennepin County and Fortin Consulting, Inc. staff held three AIS early detection workshops targeted to lake association members and residents. Through these training sessions, 40 residents got a hands-on look at AIS not yet in their lake.
- As a result of these workshops, two new AIS were identified and reported back to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Eurasian Watermilfoil was identified in Magna Lake in



Fortin Consulting staff conducting an AIS early detection training.

Hennepin County, and Chinese Mystery Snails were identified in Buck Lake in Itasca County.

Next steps:

- Hold additional workshops for lake association members and residents in 2016.
- Expand early detection efforts by having a trained limnologist conduct on-lake investigations with lake association leaders.

Funding for rapid response to new AIS

Accomplishments:

- A portion of the AIS Prevention Aid funds have been reserved for future rapid response to new AIS introduction as needed. Rapid response efforts would be a joint efforts with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources directing the actions to be taken.



AIS early detection workshop attendees get a hands-on look at various AIS.

Next steps:

- Continue to reserve funds for future rapid response actions.

AIS prevention grants

Accomplishments:

- Hennepin County developed the AIS Prevention Grant Program in 2015 to give the county and partners an opportunity to work on a variety of issues at a local level. In the first funding round in 2015, the county received 20 grant applications with a total funding request of \$365,000. The county awarded six grants totaling nearly \$100,000.

Next steps:

- In response to the overwhelming interest and innovative applications, the county is conducting a second funding round in 2016 with up to \$200,000 available.