



PRESS RELEASE

**Mark B. Liedl, Director
Land Services Department**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 23, 2017

Contact: Chris Pence

Phone: (218) 824-1010

CROW WING COUNTY APPROVES 2017 AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION PLAN

The Crow Wing County Board unanimously approved the 2017 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Plan for the treatment and prevention of invasive species in county waters. Crow Wing County was able to reduce the amount of monies spent on administrative personnel costs as part of this local aid from 15% to 9.9%, making Crow Wing County the lowest spending (on a percentage basis) county on administrative personnel costs in the region.

This decrease in administrative costs will result in increased inspector training and result in an increase of 875 hours of watercraft inspections on 17 lakes / chains of lakes that are already infected with AIS. The County will provide over 17,700 hours of watercraft inspection hours in 2017. According to a 2016 survey provided to watercraft users at public landings in three northern Minnesota counties, 75% of respondents indicated that inspectors and volunteers at public landings are the source of information that most informed them of AIS. In addition, 67% of those respondents felt inspired to use AIS prevention practices in the future because of that information.

In 2016, County or DNR inspectors on 55 landings within the County conducted approximately 43,000 watercraft inspections for AIS. Of all watercraft inspected, 98% were AIS free or in conformance with state laws regarding the transport of AIS.

“Inspecting boats entering or leaving a lake is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species”, stated Land Services Supervisor Chris Pence. “The numbers show that folks are getting the message to clean, drain and dry their watercraft.”

Building upon the 2016 plan, the 2017 plan focus on strategies proven to be effective at prevention, treatment, and behavior changes through boat landing inspections, watercraft decontamination, Eurasian water milfoil control, education / awareness, and innovative special projects.

Funding for local AIS prevention efforts is allocated by the state legislature since 2014 as part of local aid given to Minnesota counties.

Land Services would like to remind people about the important role they can play in preventing the spread of AIS. Draining all water, removing plants, mud and other debris, and inspecting trailers and watercraft as you move from lake to lake can minimize the risk of spreading AIS. Additionally, 21 days of drying time is needed when purchasing used docks, lifts, or swim rafts before locating them in a different water body.

The Land Services Department is committed to providing excellent customer service while helping landowners make wise choices that protect Crow Wing County’s extraordinary natural resources. Citizens are encouraged to contact the Land Services Department at (218) 824-1010 or landservices@crowwing.us to discuss AIS or other land use related activities.

END#

Our Vision: Being Minnesota’s favorite place.

Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.