



PRESS RELEASE

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Crow Wing County Seeks Comments on Proposed 2020 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department is requesting public comments on the proposed 2020 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Plan. The 2020 AIS prevention plan can be viewed and comments may be submitted on the County website at www.crowwing.us/ais. Written comments on the plan will be accepted until Saturday January 18th, 2020 at 5:00pm and may be submitted to Crow Wing County at landservices@crowwing.us or mailed to 322 Laurel Street, Suite 15 Brainerd, MN 56401, Attn: AIS Prevention Plan Comment.

The public is also invited to attend a Crow Wing County hosted 2020 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention presentation on January 3rd starting at 9:00 am, located at the Land Services Building in Brainerd, MN. Attendees at this presentation can learn more about Crow Wing County's AIS prevention plan for 2020. Topics to be highlighted include watercraft inspections, decontaminations, education & awareness, milfoil treatments, and early AIS detection.

Crow Wing County has been allocated \$441,715 by the State of Minnesota to assist in the prevention of the spread of AIS within County lakes and rivers in 2020. The AIS prevention plan proposes to accomplish this through several approaches, including:

- Watercraft inspections
 - Crow Wing County has partnered with the University of Minnesota – Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) and the United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service to develop an optimized model for locating DNR trained watercraft inspectors on Crow Wing's County's public watercraft access landings. The model was developed to specifically maximize the number of inspected watercraft that move from infested (AIS) to uninfested waterbodies. Approximately 17,240 hours of inspections will be conducted on 42 landings in Crow Wing County in 2020.
- Decontamination units
 - The County plans to operate the AIS decontamination station at the Crosslake Joint Highway Maintenance Facility that will be open Thursday through Monday. The County also plans to purchase a mobile decontamination station located throughout the County that will be open Friday through Sunday. Both decontamination stations will be open from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September, free of charge. Watercraft decontamination consist of a very hot water rinse to kill Zebra Mussels and if needed a high pressure spray to remove AIS from boats, motors, trailers, and personal gear.

- Treatment of Eurasian water milfoil
 - Crow Wing County has 12 lakes that are infested with milfoil that also have a public access. As in previous years, funds will be allocated for chemical or biological treatment of milfoil in these lakes.
- Education & Awareness
 - Since 2014, Crow Wing County has allocated approximately \$35,500 directly to lake associations to conduct an education outreach campaign to the general public. Over 30 lakes have participated. In 2020, the County plans to again offer this program. In 2020, the County proposes funding 18 lakes for lake association public awareness campaigns. In addition, other proposals are education and awareness initiatives include partnering with bait shops, printed media, and other targeted advertising. Since 2014, approximately \$175,400 has been allocated to covering the costs of AIS related education and awareness programs.
- Early AIS Detection
 - The County plans to continue to work with area lake associations and an environmental lab to conduct Zebra Mussel veliger and for the first time Spiny waterflea testing in 2020. Also, the County will buy supplies to build Zebra Mussel samplers to hang off docks for Lake Associations who don't have funds to afford the supplies needed to conduct Zebra Mussel veliger testing.

In 2019, Crow Wing County allocated 16,700 watercraft inspection hours on 43 public access landings across the County. Lake Associations also financially contributed to 5,104 hours of expanded coverage requests that the County scheduled beyond its allocated hours.

No infestations of Zebra Mussels occurred on Crow Wing County lakes in 2019. According to Nicole Erickson, Environmental Services Specialist with Crow Wing County, “we are hopeful that the enhanced Optimized Model developed by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center and USDA Forest Service and implemented by Crow Wing County along with our other outreach and education efforts contributed to low levels of new infestations in 2019”.

Information about Crow Wing County AIS prevention efforts, including interactive maps to search for the statuses of area lakes can be found on the web at www.crowwing.us/ais.

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

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.