



## Cass County Environmental Services AIS Prevention and Management Task Force

Meeting Minutes November 27, 2018  
Cass County Courthouse Commissioner's Board Room, Walker, MN  
10:00AM – 12:30PM

**Purpose:** Cass County reconvened the AIS Task Force to reassess the 2013 AIS Prevention and Management Plan, review the 2018 AIS Program Report and discuss the 2019 program budget.

**ESD Staff Present:** John Ringle, ESD Director  
Jessica Manifold, ESD Deputy Director  
Kelly Condiff, ESD Natural Resources Technical Specialist

### Task Force Members Present:

Name	Organization	Phone	Email
Phil Hunsicker	MN DNR	218-203-4355	Philip.hunsicker@state.mn.us
Tanya Roerick	LLBO DRM	218-335-7428	Tanya.roerick@llojibwe.org
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Jim Miller	10-Mile Lake Assn	612-818-4838	jimtenmile@gmail.com
Doug Schultz	DNR	218-547-1683	Doug.w.schultz@state.mn.us
Kathy Wagner	WLBCR/ACCL	218-363-2162	semikatya@arvig.net
Bill Grantges	Itasca SWCD AIS	218-259-8797	coordinator@itascaAIS.info
Bob Holman	CLT AIS Committee	218-792-5492	Outingbob@gmail.com
Chris Evans	Itasca SWCD	218-280-1547	Chris.evans@itascaswcd.org
Dave Sohn	ACCL	763-458-5069	pdsohn@tds.net
Dave Morley	USFS	218-547-5122	Damorley@fs.fed.us
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Cindy Wannarka	LLACC	218-368-7722	cindy@leech-lake.com
Nicole Kovar	MN DNR	218-732-8960 x 222	Nicole.kovar@state.mn.us
Pat Mortale	LLA	218-547-1045	apmortale@live.com
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David Peterson	Cass Co SWCD	218-560-1588	Dpeterson2015@gmail.com
John Sumption	Initiative Foundation	218-363-2942	sumptionenv@gmail.com
Jim Bedell	Pleasant Lake	218-251-4926	jjbdell@tds.net
John Eaton	ACCL and LLA	218-547-4011	eatonjg@arvig.net
Tim Terrill	MHB		timt@mississippiheadwaters.org

Staff and member introductions.

### 1. Review of 2018 AIS work and Budget – ESD reviewed the 2018 AIS Program Report and 2018 Budget

- 30% of the overall inspections take place during peak week activities such as Memorial Day weekend.
- Data indicates that Pine Mountain Lake should have more inspection hours allocated in 2019.

- How many times were AIS found? How is this tracked? How many potentially infested boats were stopped? 2018 data does not clearly represent this information; if possible, determine a way to track this data more effectively moving forward.
- DNR indicated if there is not a decontamination unit available even flushing a boat with running water is better than nothing.
- 2018 lake specific reports are being compiled.

**Action Item:** Generate lake specific reports related to 2018 inspections and decontaminations. Due date: 01/15/19

### General Comments and Questions, 2018 Season Data:

- DNR inspections and decontaminations are conducted at infested lakes only, the goal is to reduce transport.

**Action Item:** Generate comparisons that include DNR data on inspections and decontaminations. Due date: 01/15/19

- The decontamination station location maps need to be updated and reprinted for distribution.

**Action Item:** Update decontamination station location maps prior to the start of the 2019 open water season. Due date: 04/01/19

- Is it possible to get a mobile decontamination unit in Cass County?

**Action Item:** Evaluate the cost, potential locations and who would operate the unit, if a mobile unit was acquired. Due date: 02/15/19

- Lake associations feel there is benefit to car counters being used at select accesses to determine activity level and time of activity.

**Action Item:** Identify list of potential locations for placement of car counters. Due date: 04/01/19

- An evaluation of the private campground next to Leech Lake's Federal Dam launch site is needed to determine if they are interested intaking part in the AIS Resort Ambassador Program.

**Action Item:** ESD staff to reach out to owners of the private campground to attempt to involve them in the Resort Ambassador Program or work out a plan to ensure boats are being inspected and or decontaminated appropriately. Due date: 02/15/19

- Based upon 2018 information and comments, a larger public Outreach Campaign is needed to get the message out to help change behavior. Consensus is that additional outreach needs to happen in schools or learning centers.

**Action Item:** Develop a list of outreach and education projects for presentation to the SWCD Board for review and approval. Due date: 02/15/19

- Cass County should look to reengage the dive team to help conduct underwater surveys at select locations.

**Action Item:** ESD will reach out to the Dive Team to determine availability and desire to take part in survey work. Due date: 02/15/19

## 2. Discussion on amending/revising the Cass County AIS Management and Prevention Plan

- A complete review and edit will be conducted to reflect the current program.
- The Problem Statement will be rewritten to reflect the current program.
- The Vision Statement to be revised to be more concise.
- Task Force members will be updated.
- Regulatory requirements will be reviewed and updated.
- Risk assessment to include reevaluation of High-Risk Lakes.
- Cass County to work with DNR to get some necessary information.
- Potentially review public accesses and parking spaces to try and get additional funding.

**Action Item:** Update the Cass County Prevention and Management Plan. Due date: Revision 1, 1/25/19.

## 3. Priorities for 2019 Budget

### **Inspections and Decontaminations:**

- Increase in pay rate for returning inspectors. (DNR fish interns make \$15hr + fringe (=approximately \$18hr))
- Paying mileage to and from work locations.
- Rotate inspectors and possibly look at new accesses to station inspectors.
- Hire a lead inspector seasonally
- Promote decontamination stations more to increase visibility.
- Supplemental trainings for inspectors should continue and be enhanced.

\$343,000 is adequate for this Budget Item with modifications to inspector pay rate or paying mileage.

### **Law Enforcement Inspections:**

- Budget money to pay local law enforcement to respond to AIS enforcement issues, not to do inspections.
- Consider paying local law enforcement for activities that overlap such as pulling buoys and inspecting equipment in the fall.
- DNR will train local law enforcement personnel for free; it's the DNRs policy that local law enforcement should be contacted first.

Add to Budget \$5,000

### **Information and Education:**

- Form possible partnerships with schools, county fair, community gatherings, Deep Portage Learning Center, etc.
- Continue and expand the Social Marketing Campaign i.e. Changing Social Norms.
- Potential development of an AIS YouTube video challenge for students with a "reward" for the winner (idea).
- Update Cass County webpage to include training links, other relevant information and countywide AIS projects.
- Civic Governance Weevil Project working with schools, coordinate with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.
- Outreach to ACCL on funds available for AIS treatment. i.e. Girl Lake EWM treatment.

- Continued participation in the Mississippi Headwaters Board (MHB), Minnesota Traditions, social media outreach campaign is encouraged. MHB presented a snapshot of their 2018 efforts and results.
- Provide information to rental businesses and fishing guides.
- Target young scientists funding research projects, possible AIS day camp for kids working with DNR, Leech Lake annual scout project.
- Cass County Zebra Mussel mascot to travel around town, attend fairs etc. Outreach to the younger generation.

Increase from \$16,000 to \$24,000 (50% increase)

**Lake Association Partnerships:**

- Work more with ACCL to help identify viable projects.
- Develop a potential grant program.
- Lake associations are encouraged to work with the County and DNR to identify viable projects related to AIS treatment, management or prevention. AIS funds are available for viable projects contingent upon SWCD review and approval.
- Provide an updated list of Lake Association contacts to interested parties, Cass County ESD working with ACCL to update.
- Create a list of service providers who do lake surveys, AIS control or monitoring practices.
- This money needs to be used or reduced, \$32,000 remaining in 2018.

Decrease from \$47,000 to \$35,000 (25% decrease)

**Resort Ambassador Project:**

- Develop an AIS information packet that resorts can email with reservation information to visitors.
- The Resort Ambassador Project, Initiative Foundation grant funds, has been extended to help get the program up and running. High traffic lakes should be targeted first.
- Develop a more aggressive campaign in 2019 working with Itasca County and Lake Vermillion.
- Provide additional training opportunities and follow-up with resorts related to online training programs.
- To legally deny access at a private launch, inspectors must be trained by the DNR.
- Coordinate with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe on how they can participate.
- These funds should be used or reduced.

\$19,000 is appropriate.

**Cass County Sheriff's Department (Dive Team):**

- Practice dives that include an AIS search component can be billed to AIS funds.
- Use to inspect lakes and rivers for AIS.

\$10,000 is appropriate.

**Inspector Support (facilities at launches):**

- Porta Potties are important at boat launches.

\$8,000 is appropriate.

**AIS Coordinator/Administration:**

- Add funds for special projects.
- Provide a full time AIS Coordinator with a 4-year degree in management or biological sciences.
- Hire an assistant or lead inspector for seasonal work (6 months).

Increase from \$62,000 to \$68,000 (10% increase)

**Budget Evaluation:**

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Spent 2018</b>	<b>Allocated 2018</b>	<b>Proposed 2019</b>
Inspections and Decontaminations	\$261,111	\$343,000	\$343,000
Information and Education	\$18,029	\$16,000	\$24,000
Lake Association Partnerships	\$15,000	\$47,000	\$35,000
Resort Ambassador Project	\$0	\$19,000	\$19,000
Cass Co. Sheriff's Dive Team	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Law Enforcement Inspections	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Inspector Support (Facilities)	\$6,790	\$8,000	\$8,000
AIS Coordination/Administration	\$62,000	\$57,605	\$68,000
	\$358,535	\$505,000	\$512,000

**4. Discuss Staffing requirements for AIS program –general options and needs.**

- The group consensus is that the AIS Coordinator needs to be a full-time position at the county to help secure a higher quality staff person.
  - Specific job duties and expectations need to be clearly defined in the job description.
  - This position might work best as a salaried position to accommodate the weekend inspection schedules and potential meetings.
- A contract position might work if the right person was found, but retention may be harder.
- Both full time or contract employee, it was felt a seasonal lead inspector or assistant would be a benefit.
- Inspectors have expressed concerns about their current pay, travel time, consistency in scheduling and the need for improved communication.

<b>Action item:</b> Draft a job description for the AIS Coordinator. Due date: 12/15/18
<b>Action item:</b> Evaluate pay rates of the Inspectors and possible mileage reimbursement. Due Date: 12/21/18
<b>Action item:</b> ESD to set-up a meeting with Penmac Staffing. Due Date: 12/15/18

**5. Other Items**

- **Chippewa National Forest**
  - Knudson Dam boat launch – DNR resurveying
  - Wildlife Forever – Grants exist for the CD 3 Decontamination Units; CNF would like to partner with AIS Program for Leech Lake. Dane Hunter is USFS contact.
- **ACCL (2018 goals)**
  - Lake associations are being urged to update their AIS plans for 2019.
  - DNR has lots of good education curriculum for classrooms – goal is to target the kids.

**Action Items (Cass County):**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Generate lake specific reports	Kelly	01/15/19	
Include DNR data on inspections and decontaminations.	Kelly	01/15/19	
Update decontamination station maps	TBD	04/01/19	
Evaluate mobile decon units	TBD	02/15/19	
List of locations for car counters	TBD	04/01/19	
Federal Dam access camp ground contact	John and Jessica	02/15/19	
List of education and outreach programs	TBD	02/15/19	
Reach out to dive team re AIS	Kelly	02/15/19	
Update AIS Prevention and Management Plan (draft)	Jessica and Kelly	01/25/19	
Draft a job description for AIS Coordinator	Jessica and John	12/15/18	
Evaluate inspector pay rates or mileage reimbursement	Jessica and John	12/21/18	
ESD to set-up meeting with Penmac	John, Jessica and Kelly	12/15/18	