

**AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) PLAN TASK FORCE
5:00 P.M.**

**Wednesday, October 3, 2012
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Office
Lower Level Meeting Room
18202 Minnetonka Boulevard
Deephaven, Minnesota 55391**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Acceptance of September 19, 2012, Meeting Notes**
- 3. Discussion about Additional Activities for Plan for Enhanced AIS Management in 2013**
- 4. Discussion about Identifying and Setting Priorities**
- 5. Update on 2013 Workplan and Budget**
- 6. Other Matters**
- 7. Reminder of Next Meeting – October 17**
- 8. Adjournment (by 6:30 p.m.)**

Agenda Materials:

- Meeting Notes, September 5, 2012, Task Force Meeting
- Memo re Discussion of Priorities (from Craig Dawson)
- Meeting Notes, September 27, 2012, Technical Advisory Committee
- Note – Staff will distribute materials re Possible Additional Activities for 2013 at the Task Force Meeting

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is committed to a leadership role in protecting, improving and managing the surface waters and affiliated groundwater resources within the District, including their relationships to the ecosystems of which they are an integral part. We achieve our mission through regulation, capital projects, education, cooperative endeavors, and other programs based on sound science, innovative thinking, an informed and engaged constituency, and the cost effective use of public funds.

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
AIS PLAN TASK FORCE

Meeting Notes
5:00 p.m., September 19, 2012

AIS Plan Task Force Members Present:

Steve Gunther, Lake Minnewashta Preservation Association
Sara Wyatt, Three Rivers Park District
Tom Frahm, Lake Minnetonka Association
Kurt Zuppke, Pierson Lake Association
Ken Gothberg, Citizens for the Minnehaha Creek Corridor
Jerry Moja, Carver County Parks Commission
Vern Wagner, Anglers for Habitat
Jay Green, Anglers for Habitat
Tom Niccum, Minnetonka Portable Dredging
Gabriel Jabbour, Tonka Bay Marina
Tom Casey, MCWD Citizens Advisory Committee
Lee Keeley, MCWD Citizens Advisory Committee
Joe Shneider, Christmas Lake Association (arrived 5:10 pm)
Doug Babcock, Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (arrived 5:35 pm)

Not Present: Dave Oltmans, Friends of Diamond Lake
Bob Fine, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Tim Latterner, Dock & Lift, Inc.

Also Present:

Craig Dawson, AIS Program Director
Louis Smith, District Counsel
Eric Fieldseth, AIS Specialist
Eric Evenson, District Administrator
Dave Mandt, Director of Operations and Programs
Jim Calkins, MCWD Board and Hydrodata Committee Member
Sherry White, MCWD Board and Hydrodata Committee Member
There were also several residents in the audience.

1. Call to Order

The meeting began at 5:00 p.m. Louis Smith announced agenda would re-ordered so that Discussion of Plan for Additional Activities in 2013 would become Item 4, and the Discussion regarding Priorities would become Item 5.

2. Acceptance of September 5, 2012, Meeting Notes

Tom Casey clarified that he seconded the motion made by Joe Shneider on Page 4 of the Meeting Notes.

3. Review of 2013 AIS Workplan and Budget

Craig Dawson reviewed the additional and inadvertently omitted items in the approved 2013 proposed budget. All were research projects that were in funds not directly managed by AIS staff. Task Force members requested that further discussion be delayed until Joe Shneider, who had requested this information, arrived at the meeting. (This item was not returned to during the meeting.)

4. Discussion about Additional Activities for Plan for Enhanced AIS Management in 2013

Eric Evenson reviewed a staff memorandum in which several areas were identified to enhance AIS management activities for 2013. The 2013 proposed budget includes \$100,000 for cost-sharing activities; when the contingent \$250,000 levy for 2013 is added in, then a \$350,000 AIS management activity budget is possible.

2013 is still a year of stop-gap measures. They may or may not be continued into 2014 and beyond. The MCWD will be building on the work of others regarding stop-gap measures. The MCWD will work with others who want to work with the District; efforts will not be pursued with unwilling partners. Additional activities identified for 2013 included:

Early detection/monitoring	Self-certification inspections / passes
Volunteer monitoring	Decontamination (cleaning) grants
Watercraft inspection	Education

Several comments were made indicating agreement with the proposed outline of activities.

Among individual comments noted:

- More funding should be placed in education, and less for inspections
- Licensure of boat operators is the best education; licenses need to be revocable
 - Evenson noted that this initiative will be proposed for the Board's 2013 legislative agenda. The District will look for partners and other organizations for support.
 - One commented that the licensure issue will take several sessions at the Legislature. DNR will require testing regarding AIS in 2015 for boat registration. It was pointed out that this regulation will affect only boat owners, not all persons who may operate watercraft.
 - Sara Wyatt agreed with the licensure proposal, and indicated she would bring it up at Three Rivers Park District as a legislative issue.

Ken Gothberg moved, and Steve Gunther seconded, that the MCWD include licensing and testing regarding AIS be included in the long-term AIS Management Plan and be placed in the immediate legislative agenda. Motion approved unanimously.

Comments continued:

- It was clarified that funding for watercraft inspections would be supplemental to what an organization had already planned; some match would be required.
- Some expressed concerns with reports by inspectors that many boaters remain unaware of the laws. Others commented that inspections provide major educational benefits, and result in greater compliance with laws.
- A park ranger approach is likely to be more effective than a law enforcement approach, and this is how inspection programs generally are run.
- In the self-certification program, certification should be removed if one is found to be transporting AIS.
- Several comments were made supporting decontamination, although with several concerns. A key wording change would be to refer to this activity as “watercraft *cleaning*”.
 - There is a distinction between decontamination and boat washing. It is very difficult to perform decontamination completely, and much of what is occurring today is actually boat *washing*.
 - Decontamination is a misused and misunderstood word. It needs to be better defined, and have protocols established.
 - ** Private operators need to have immunity or limited liability for a cleaning / decontamination service. **
 - There may be a need to consider a size limitation on boats that can be decontaminated. It was noted that anything over 30 feet long is difficult to do.
- There needs to be more lake-service provider training – in-person, not just on-line – and more means at least more frequently offered, and to include refresher courses. Such additional training regarding inspectors is also needed. It was agreed that this additional training be added to the enhanced 2013 activities plan. It will require more DNR involvement.
 - Instructor-led training has wide variability.
 - DNR inspection materials are not thorough or well-targeted for different types of watercraft.
- Development of information/education materials unique to the District or a water body is duplicative of the work already done by others; we should rely on State materials and resources.
- What has been discussed at this meeting are not really new activities or new opportunities to learn about what is effective or can be done more effectively.
- There should be something considered that addresses multi-lake needs or activities simultaneously.

- One idea was to offer boat cleaning for tournaments and events.
 - The LMCD adopted an ordinance in the mid-1990s in which event sponsors had to certify on a daily basis that participating boats were clean. Over time, it was determined that sponsors could not meet this obligation, and the ordinance was repealed.
 - One commented that event participants have a very small number who come from outside the immediate region, and it would be a large undertaking for a very small target.
- The DNR is creating a permanent AIS Stakeholder Committee, and many things that are being talked about here should or will be handled at that level.
- The District should work on new ways to bring the message of personal responsibility and AIS laws effectively to a broader audience.
- 2013 stop-gap measures should be broad, rather than focused on a few activities
- Education activities should be targeted
 - Ice-out (for docks and lifts); Fishing Opener and Memorial Day weekend (for boats)
 - Be at boat shows
 - Provides visibility and opportunities for education
 - Look at having a celebrity sportsman/outdoorsman for MCWD activities
 - Have more informative in-person interactions and literature at boat inspections. Provide tools for boaters to remove stuff from their boats & trailers
 - Promote boat hygiene – these are good practices for existing and future AIS
 - Have events that are more community-based and include demonstrations
 - Develop a package of information delivered to each shoreline resident, and don't rely on property owners associations for distribution of information

Steve Gunther moved, and Lee Keeley seconded, to adopt the staff memorandum as a skeleton framework for the enhanced 2013 AIS activities plan, and to include the additional measures identified during Task Force discussion this evening. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion about Identifying and Setting Priorities

This item was not discussed; it will be continued to the next meeting.

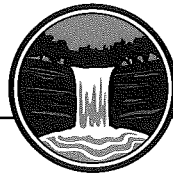
6. Other Matters

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, **October 3.**

8. Adjournment took place at 6:35 p.m.

Submitted by: Craig Dawson, Recorder



MEMORANDUM

TO: AIS Plan Task Force
FROM: Craig Dawson, AIS Program Director
DATE: August 15, 2012, Task Force Meeting
SUBJECT: Things To Consider in Discussions about Priorities

At the first Task Force meeting, members were asked to identify topics that they thought would be important in the development of the Management Plan. Establishing priorities among AIS was one of them put on the list. At the August 1 meeting, there was discussion about whether other priorities should exist, and came up when looking at language in other plans about “priority waters” or “key ____”. Some members commented that the finitude of financial resources will necessarily limit choices and, from at least a risk management consideration, would push decisions toward priorities. It was suggested that the Task Force have some longer discussion about priorities generally, and this item has been placed on the agenda of the August 15 meeting.

For purposes of starting discussions, what follows are a number of things—and by no means a comprehensive overview—of ways at looking at or setting priorities (while trying to keep it on one page).

Priority-setting should be defined by guiding principles. It may be difficult to make a decision among competing choices. What factors should be considered and how should they be weighted?

- Prevention of introduction
- Ability to contain, possibly eradicate, infestation
- Cost to manage (short- and long-term)
- Maintenance of access to waters
- Use of waterbody
 - High public recreational use
 - High quality natural environment
 - Economic impact on businesses and residents along or near particular waterbodies
- Connectedness to other waters; how much downstream is there that can be impacted
- Public & District-wide benefit vs. private benefit of management activities
- Relative importance/threat of particular species
- Ability to leverage other public and private resources

Undoubtedly, you will have other considerations to add.

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Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
AIS Technical Advisory Committee
September 27, 2012, Meeting Notes

Present: Deb Pilger, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Keegan Lund, DNR
Greg Nybeck, LMCD
Tim Sundby, Carver County
Tony Brough, Hennepin County
Dick Osgood, Lake Minnetonka Association
Lt. Art Saunders, Hennepin County Water Patrol
Craig Dawson, MCWD
Eric Fieldseth, MCWD
Dave Mandt, MCWD

1. Welcome

Craig Dawson opened the meeting at 10:40 a.m. and welcomed those in attendance. He apologized for posting the meeting at 10:30 a.m., rather than checking his calendar and the last meeting notes, where it was decided that the meeting should begin at 11:00. (A few people arrived closer to 11:00 am.) New to the group was Tim Sundby, who is a water quality specialist with Carver County.

Given the incomplete nature of attendance at the start of the meeting, items were taken up based upon the interest of those present, rather than following the prepared agenda. These meeting notes are organized based upon the prepared agenda, rather than as they were taken up during the meeting.

2. Progress on AIS Plan Process

Craig updated the group on the progress of work by the AIS Plan Task Force. The MCWD Board had conditionally increased the proposed 2013 tax levy by \$250,000, with those funds to be used on AIS management measures in a plan that would be developed by the Board's Hydrodata Committee and reviewed along the way by the Task Force. If the Board did not approve the plan, the additional levy would be removed for 2013. The Task Force had reviewed several activities identified by staff, and at its September 19 meeting approved the framework as a skeleton on which to develop additional details.

A meeting had been scheduled for Saturday, September 29, for those Task Force members willing to attend in order to develop details of proposals to forward to the Hydrodata Committee.

3. Comments and recommendations on plan for additional AIS activities in 2013

MCWD staff had developed further details on the framework presented to the Task Force on September 19. The approach was to address AIS broadly, and not necessarily to focus on a particular activity or species. They were considered “stop-gap” activities, as long-term measures would not be undertaken until the long-term AIS Management Plan was in place; however, the activities could ones that might continue or have benefit beyond 2013.

- Early detection monitoring/baseline data for zebra mussels

The TAC viewed this activity favorably. It was noted that monitoring equipment may not be the best technique, but in practicality may be the only method for zebra mussels. Samplers may not pick up zebra mussels until a year or two after introduction.

- Volunteer monitoring program

The TAC viewed this activity favorably. All agencies are looking at ways to incorporate volunteers into their information gathering, and using volunteers also had education/prevention benefits.

- Watercraft operator education and inspection program

The TAC viewed this activity favorably. It agreed that there was benefit in using inspectors to provide further education and information to watercraft operators. One commented that in the additional operator training, inspectors should learn to give positive reinforcement (and more often) for people doing the right things. The District would provide financial assistance to agencies that augmented their inspection schedules. The idea of “roaming inspectors” was supported, as they would be mobile, be able to go where they were needed, and provide education and inspection services to some accesses that otherwise would not have inspections performed. The idea of having a central site(s) for inspections was also supported; boats having been inspected would be given some sort of pass to forgo an inspection the next time they were launched.

- Self-certification program

The TAC viewed this activity favorably, and several agencies had been considering such a concept. By attending a training session (and paying a fee), boaters would be issued some form of certification after passing a test. It would essentially give them a pass for an inspection, but they would be subject to random inspections. The certification would also be revocable. As the District did not control any access, its system would need to be approved by agencies/jurisdictions having authority over an access. A goal would be to

have all agencies in the District agree to the self-certification program, that the program would be developed and used consistently by all throughout the District, and that it could serve as a pilot project for the DNR. All noted that an honor system is a large part of this program, it is not a foolproof prevention measure, and would be operate in a “low-frequency, high-risk” situation regarding the introduction of AIS. It does promote personal responsibility and provides education (which could also be passed on from certified boaters to others).

- Clean boats program

Everyone has been frustrated with the reality of needing to tell someone that their boat needs to be cleaned (decontaminated), but not being able to tell them where they could go for this service. There was support among the Committee to make a meaningful effort to make boat cleaning possible and predictable.

It was noted that there are many more pathways and vectors for the introduction of AIS, and that there are more AIS than currently of concern in the District. Given the one-year nature of the stop-gap plan, and that a long-range plan was being developed, it was understandable that there is an emphasis on boats and trailers at this time.

- Education/communications

The District already plans to do quite a bit in this area in 2013. The additional effort here would provide more focus on a broad range of audiences re AIS. There is an idea to provide additional in-person training of lake service provider staff, and such a fully-trained staff would merit a “Lake Service Provider – Plus” identification by the MCWD. Committee members stated their support for education efforts generally as an important prevention strategy.

In general, Committee members believed the activities in and the breadth of the proposal was very good.

4. Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board planning process

Deb Pilger related that MPRB is getting a technical advisory committee in place for its 2013 program. MPRB is looking at longer-term planning, but with things in the field of AIS and management evolving so rapidly, it is focusing only on 2013 at this time. Public outreach and a public meeting would likely occur in November.

Inspections will be part of the 2013 activities, but the hours of inspections and the time accesses would be open have not been determined. Staff plans to present several alternatives to the Board. Inspections are done primarily for public education and access control.

The added inspections and restriction of hours of access began on July 13. They were to last through October, but were being terminated on September 30. Among other things, most of those trained to be inspectors were moving on to other jobs and wouldn't be available.

Data were collected since the July 13 start; Deb noted they were not comprehensively taken, and estimated that they captured around 75 percent of the boat inspections performed. Most of the watercraft at launches were fishing boats; however, most of the boating is done by sailboats, as there are 400 buoys among the three lakes. The busiest days were Friday through Sunday. Just over 1,000 boats had been recorded, not considered a large number of boats (about 13 per day). No zebra mussels had been detected on any of the boats inspected.

MPRB staff was considering a "home lake" program, where a boat would be used on only one lake during the season. Nokomis might be used as a pilot. A drawback of the home-lake concept is that it is done on an honor system; its self-policing nature makes it problematic as a fully-effective prevention measure.

Early Detection / Rapid Response: Deb pointed out that early detection/rapid response (ED/RR) is something that MPRB has been developing. Tony Brough related that Hennepin County is developing a rapid response plan, for both aquatic and terrestrial invasives, and that it's being designed to be use by and/or with jurisdictions throughout the County. Among other things, it would identify local resources and businesses that would be available. Keegan Lund stated that the DNR is also developing an ED/RR plan or protocol, and that it will be worked on over the upcoming winter. Eric Fieldseth mentioned that he had been working on a rapid response plan for the MCWD. There was agreement that the preparation of these plans should be coordinated, or at least follow a similar format, so that they would work well together and avoid duplication of effort in putting plans together.

5. Current AIS-related Activities by Committee Members' Organizations

Just notes made on what everyone related ...

MCWD: Eric Fieldseth presented information from the Christmas Lake inspections. Like MPRB, the data set was not 100 percent of all the information that could (should?) have been recorded. There had been an average of 11.5 boats a day; there were a lot of repeat users of the launch. A plurality of users (>40%) were fishing boats; wakeboard boats were 6% of those launched. There was at least 90 percent compliance with the drain-plug law.

Hennepin County Sheriff: Art Saunders said that most of the Water Patrol efforts focus on education. Over time, there were fewer complaints they received regarding inspections and dock installations. Water Patrol has not been called on a report of a boat being launched after being denied access by an inspector.

Carver County: Tim Sundby related that Carver County is starting a zebra mussel monitoring program. It's using the same equipment and protocols as MCWD and MPRB.

Dick Osgood: He shared information from contacts at Lake Mead that early detection for zebra mussel veligers is ineffective and not reliable. Sampling is just too hit-and-miss.

DNR: Keegan Lund did not have much in the way of new information to share. A few cases of water hyacinth had been found, and were likely the result of aquarium dumps. Chemical treatment has been effective.

LMCD: Greg Nybeck related that the LMCD's comprehensive aquatic vegetation management plan is nearly complete. The LMCD has funded a net \$30,000 for watercraft inspections in recent years, and is proposing to use that same amount for inspections *and* chemical treatments. So, it may be that the LMCD will reduce (somewhat or altogether) its inspection program on Lake Minnetonka.

In other general discussion, the Committee members generally give strong support to education as a primary prevention measure. They are concerned about the sustainability (i.e., long-term on-going cost) of conducting inspections.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held during the week of October 22. MCWD will send out an inquiry to determine what time will work best for the most Committee members.

7. Adjournment occurred at 12:55 p.m.

Craig Dawson
Recorder
Director, AIS Program