

Iowa Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Invasive Species Program

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Invasive Species Program (DNR-AIS) is responsible for monitoring and managing aquatic invasive species (AIS) in Iowa. Iowa has several high risk AIS within its waters: Eurasian watermilfoil, brittle naiad, purple loosestrife, zebra mussels, bighead carp, silver carp. The DNR - AIS focuses on public awareness to prevent the spread of AIS, monitoring state waterbodies for AIS introductions, and control of AIS infestations. Following is a sample of activities that were accomplished in 2005.

- Conducted 687 watercraft inspections reaching approximately 1,790 people.
- Surveyed 68 waterbodies, including 33 with past AIS infestations.
- Treated 2 waterbodies for Eurasian watermilfoil.
- Treated 7 waterbodies for brittle naiad.
- Treated 1 waterbody for parrot feather.
- Responded to zebra mussel discovery in Clear Lake.
- Sampled for zebra mussel veligers on Mississippi, Wapsipinicon, Cedar, and Iowa Rivers.
- Monitored silver and bighead carp in Iowa.
- Supported cooperative regional projects on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.
- Sponsored Invasive Species Awareness Month and 2 Invasive Species Field Days.
- Maintained aquatic invasive species prevention signs at public boat accesses in Iowa.
- Displayed 2 billboards with aquatic invasive species prevention message on state highways.

The transport of AIS results in introductions of nonindigenous species to new waterbodies. Fragments of aquatic vegetation cling to boats, trailers, boating equipment, and hunting equipment. Zebra mussels attach to boats, aquatic plants, and other objects in the water. Plant fragments, zebra mussel larvae, and larval fish can be transported in the water in livewells and bait buckets. Once established in a new location, AIS can

- reduce economies of water-dependent communities.
- decrease waterfront property values.
- reduce populations of native fish, wildlife, and plants.
- cause stunted fish populations or reduce fish spawning areas.
- interfere with boating, fishing, swimming, and other forms of water recreation.
- clog and increase the operating costs of drinking water plants, power plants, and dams.
- cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to treat a single waterbody.
- affect human health.
- be impossible to eradicate.

Aquatic invasive species can spread easily – and new species can enter from other states – if we do not take measures to prevent their spread. An increase in funding for the DNR - AIS will be used to

- increase the number of seasonal aides conducting watercraft inspections.
- apply additional public outreach including radio public service announcements, newspaper advertisements, rest area displays, traveler information systems, and gas pump toppers.
- control AIS infestations.
- support research that identifies pathways to limit the spread of AIS and identifies new AIS control methods.
- add permanent staff working on public outreach and volunteer programs.

For more information about aquatic invasive species, contact:



Kim Bogenschutz
Aquatic Invasive Species Program
1436 255th Street
Boone, Iowa 50036
515-432-2823

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Aquatic Invasive Species Program
Proposed Budget with Boat Registration Fee Increase
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The Iowa Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Invasive Species Program (DNR – AIS) currently expends approximately \$170,000 annually. The additional money appropriated to the DNR - AIS from the increase in boat registration fees (~\$480,000) will be used to increase public outreach to prevent the introduction and spread of AIS and to control AIS infestations in Iowa. The DNR – AIS will use the additional funding along with its current funding to meet as many of the following goals as possible.

- The DNR – AIS currently hires 2-3 seasonal aides to conduct watercraft inspections on weekends and holidays at boat accesses throughout Iowa. These same seasonal aides also survey lakes and rivers to monitor for AIS during the week. It costs approximately \$5,000 per aide annually for salary, vehicle, and travel to average 2.5 days per week conducting watercraft inspections. Increasing the number of seasonal aides to 12 conducting watercraft inspections 5 days a week will amount to approximately **\$120,000** annually.
- Prevention is the key to controlling the spread of AIS in Iowa and that requires a substantial amount of public outreach. Watercraft inspections conducted during the past few years have indicated that only about half of the boaters contacted were familiar with Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels, and Asian carp, and less than one third knew about the law prohibiting the transport of aquatic invasive species in Iowa. Boaters need to be made aware of the threat of AIS in order to prevent the spread of these species in Iowa. The DNR – AIS currently expends only about \$20,000 annually for hosting 2 billboards, posting signs at all boat accesses, and printing brochures. Additional expenditures on public outreach may include billboards (\$70,000), radio public service announcements (\$30,000), newspaper advertisements (\$10,000), rest area displays (\$40,000), traveler information systems (\$20,000), gas pump toppers (\$20,000), printing brochures (\$20,000), updating signs (\$5,000) for an approximate annual total of **\$215,000**.
- The DNR – AIS uses selective herbicides in an attempt to eradicate Eurasian watermilfoil and brittle naiad infestations in Iowa waters. Single Eurasian watermilfoil treatments have ranged in cost from \$1500 to \$40,000 depending upon the size of the infested waterbody. Multiple treatments are often necessary to contain infestations that cannot be eradicated. Iowa has had 30 Eurasian watermilfoil, 24 brittle naiad, and many purple loosestrife infestations across the state to date. The cost to control AIS infestations will continue to increase. Additional funds up to **\$175,000** annually may be necessary to help manage AIS infestations in Iowa.
- Ongoing research is needed to identify pathways to limit the spread of AIS and to identify new AIS control methods. Universities and colleges depend on natural resource agencies to help fund research at their institutions. The DNR – AIS can support research projects and students at Iowa colleges and universities at **\$75,000** annually with additional funds.
- The DNR – AIS currently has 1 full-time employee to coordinate all watercraft inspections, surveys, public outreach, and AIS control for the state of Iowa. One additional permanent employee working on the public outreach and volunteer programs at approximately **\$65,000** annually will help ensure that public outreach remains a top priority for the DNR – AIS.