

Natzel honored for her critical AIS work



Natzel

BY SHANNON GEISEN – PARK RAPIDS ENTERPRISE

Sharon Natzel, president of the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA), is the recipient of a 2022 Research Partnership Award from the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC).

According to a news release, the award “recognizes people, groups and organizations who have gone above and beyond to contribute to MAISRC’s mission: advancing aquatic invasive species (AIS) knowledge, and inspiring action to protect and restore Minnesota’s cherished lakes, rivers and wetlands.”

The news release describes Natzel as “one of MAISRC’s most engaged and dedicated community leaders. A long-time AIS Detector, she has engaged with every MAISRC outreach opportunity available and worked to bring other local partners to the table. She led the local charge in multiple recent pilot projects: spiny water flea surveillance and zebra mussel safari pilot programs as well as the Stop Spiny Campaign, Starry Trek and other AIS detectors activities. She is extremely attentive to the research outcomes and is always thinking about how to apply research findings to Hubbard County lakes.”

It continues, “In 2022, Sharon worked with many other local partners to help

host a daylong AIS conference with MAISRC in Detroit Lakes. Her feedback and participation in MAISRC's research programs as a volunteer and local leader have made research on AIS more productive." Natzel said she felt honored by the award.

"The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center team's ability to outreach and engage volunteer citizens like me in pilots, projects and programs, like AIS Detectors, provide excellent personal growth opportunities.

I enjoy learning and being involved in these activities that help to protect and preserve our healthy lakes and rivers!

MAISRC is an important partner for COLA and our lakes area as they advance AIS knowledge," she said.

MAISC also recognized the Association of Cass County Lakes and Dan Cibulka, senior water resource specialist with the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District.

MAISRC launched the Research Partnership Awards in 2021 "to acknowledge the critical work that community partners have contributed to the field of AIS research and management."

Funding for MAISRC is provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as recommended by MAISRC, the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, the state of Minnesota and private donors.

Shannon Geisen can be reached at sgeisen@parkrapidsenterprise.com.