

## Hubbard County's AIS Prevention Aid Program: A Snapshot of Accomplishments in 2023





### Program Summary





Just as in years past, the bulk of the State Prevention Aid was utilized to operate a comprehensive watercraft inspection program that consisted of over 40 DNR certified watercraft inspectors, covering 34 public water accesses across the county. Our inspection season started with the fishing opener in early May, and continued through the end of October.

The goal of the Hubbard County AIS Program is to prevent new introductions of aquatic invasive species through education and public awareness. The County and our contributing partners believe that our watercraft inspection program provides the most effective means of meeting that goal.

Supplementing our watercraft inspection program, prevention aid funding is allocated towards public outreach through radio and billboard advertisements, handouts, newspaper articles, and the distribution of aqua weed sticks at every watercraft trailer launch county-wide.

Hubbard County operates and maintains a stationary decontamination unit, free for public use. The unit is available seasonally, on-call seven days a week.

Category	Metrics
 <b>AIS Prevention Aid Used</b>	<b>\$ <u>262,672</u></b> AIS Prevention Aid used this calendar year
 <b>People Dedicated to AIS Work</b>	<u>1</u> full-time staff with <u>20</u> % of their time dedicated to AIS work <u>1</u> seasonal contracted staff with AIS duties (other than inspectors) <u>42</u> total watercraft inspectors, including: <u>36</u> trained as <b>Level 1</b> and <u>6</u> trained as <b>Level 2</b> <b>\$408,000</b> spent on staff wages, including: <b>\$220,000</b> in AIS Prevention Aid <b>\$188,000</b> in other funds leveraged from <u>local townships, cities, clubs, and lake associations.</u>
 <b>Partnerships Created and Maintained</b>	Local organizations engaged and/or actively conducting aid-funded AIS work: <u>1</u> non-profit organization partner <u>Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations</u> <u>20</u> lake associations <u>17</u> local governments <u>1</u> other group such as <u>Garfield Lake Ice Racers Club Inc</u> Our county has an AIS Task Force or Committee: <u>Yes</u>
 <b>Funds Distributed, Contributed and Leveraged</b>	<b>\$188,000</b> in funds contributed by other organizations that directly support aid-funded work <u>39</u> organizations contributing additional funds

Category	Metrics
 <b>Communities Engaged</b>	<p><u>\$11,000</u> of aid spent on advertisements (billboards, TV, radio, newspaper, social media, etc.)</p> <p>Describe social media and/or advertising reach <u>radio advertisements, billboard rental, handouts, newspaper articles, etc.</u></p>
 <b>Watercraft Inspected</b>	<p><u>\$421,000</u> spent on watercraft inspection and decontamination including:</p> <p><u>\$233,000</u> in AIS Prevention Aid</p> <p><u>\$188,000</u> in other funds leveraged from <u>local townships, cities, clubs, and lake associations.</u></p> <p><u>20,363</u> inspections performed</p> <p><u>14,594</u> hours of inspections performed</p> <p><u>34</u> accesses covered by inspectors</p> <p><u>32</u> water bodies covered by inspectors</p> <p><u>98.7%</u> of watercraft recorded as arriving with drain plugs out</p> <p><u>97.8%</u> of watercraft recorded as arriving free of aquatic plants</p> <p><u>1</u> decontamination unit (hot water, high pressure) operated by Level 2 inspectors</p> <p><u>144</u> decontaminations performed</p>
 <b>Monitoring Conducted</b>	<p><u>11</u> people participated in the University of Minnesota Extension and Minnesota AIS Research Center's "Starry Trek" event</p> <p><u>20</u> lakes monitored for AIS</p> <p><u>22</u> public accesses sampled</p> <p><u>0</u> new infestations found</p>
 <b>New Infestation Response Planned</b>	<p>Our county: Has a response plan developed in <u>2017</u></p>

## Program Spending Summary

Budget Category	AIS Prevention Aid Spent by the County in 2023	Description
Public Outreach and Education	\$15,000	Billboard rental, radio PSA's, aqua weed stick distributions, flyers & information hand-outs.
Watercraft Inspection	\$220,000	Staffing agency costs, extra inspector trainings, etc.
Equipment & supplies	\$20,000	Equipment costs, maintenance, rentals, etc.
Administrative Expense	\$5,000	Trainings, travel, etc.
Totals	\$260,000	

## Plans for 2024

The Hubbard County AIS program will continue to prioritize watercraft inspections as our primary means of outreach while also serving as a tool to combat the spread of AIS. We will continue our aqua weed stick program, while renewing our efforts to spread more awareness of their availability and use. We will continue our targeted outreach to area resorts through AIS spotlights. We plan to continue our efforts to increase the number boat decontaminations after our promising results from 2022 to 2023. With the presence of Starry Stonewort now at the Long Lake South PWA, we will be advertising the CD3 unit obtained by the Long Lake Area Lake Association and Hubbard Township.

## 2023 Highlights

### Success Stories

- There were two instances in early July when our watercraft inspectors stopped watercraft with attached zebra mussels from entering a waterbody. Both instances were a result of new boat owners purchasing used watercraft from infested waterbodies.
- We received positive feedback in regards to our aqua weed stick program. We will continue to monitor overall stick losses and adjust as needed.
- After a disappointing 2022 in terms of the number of boat decontaminations, we used targeted radio advertisements to promote the decontamination unit. We made decontaminations a point of emphasis with our watercraft inspectors. Total decontaminations rose from 83 in 2022 to 144 in 2023.

### Reports and Products

See attached document for the full 2023 watercraft inspection breakdown:

	Inspection Process										Findings and Remediation										Compliance and Reporting																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
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