# Isanti County Aquatic Invasive Species Report

2024

ISANTI COUNTY
EST. 1857

Isanti
Soil and Water
Conservation District

Isanti County and Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District have worked in partnership to complete actions that will prevent and mitigate the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and provide education and outreach to the public.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Every year the state of Minnesota provides counties with funding to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species through Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid. Isanti County Commissioners then approve an annual work plan and budget. In this report we will highlight the actions completed in 2024.

## For questions contact:


Isanti County Zoning
763-689-5165
555 18th Avenue SW
Room Number 1101
Cambridge, MN 55008

Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District
763-689-3271
110 Buchanan St N
Cambridge, MN 55008


*Would you like to get involved in preventing the spread of AIS in Isanti County?*
The Isanti SWCD is always looking for volunteers excited to learn about and advocate for AIS prevention. If you want to know ways you, or your group, can get involved please contact the Isanti SWCD.

Image from MN DNR.

## Watercraft Inspections

Isanti County contracts with Water Guards to provide watercraft inspectors to public accesses during peak use. Watercraft inspectors prevent new AIS infestations by catching species attached to watercraft before they enter or leave a lake.

- 2,535 hours were spent protecting our lakes by watercraft inspectors from May to September
- Inspections occurred at the following lakes: Fannie, Skogman, Spectacle, Green, Blue, Long, Lory, Florence, Francis, and Little Stanchfield.
- All Level 1 staff was provided training.

## Spectacle Lake's CD3

A CD3 machine is installed at the Spectacle Lake Boat Access to help boaters effectively clean their watercraft. Due to the presence of zebra mussels in Spectacle Lake, it is important lake users thoroughly clean their boats after leaving the lake.

- The CD3's tools have been used a total of 5,328 times. Its use has doubled since last year!

## AIS Early Detection

If an AIS infestation does occur, early management can slow the spread and prevent further ecological damage. Therefore, every year we inspect public lakes for new invasive species. *If you believe you have found a new AIS please report it online to EDDMaps and contact Isanti County Zoning.*

- 11 public lakes monitored for AIS with no new infestations found. Inspected lakes included: Blue, Green, Skogman, Spectacle, South Stanchfield, Long, Florence, Elms, Fannie, Francis and Baxter.
- This year existing populations of Chinese Mystery Snail was reported to provide more comprehensive state-wide data. The snails are present in Blue Lake, Spectacle Lake, and Green Lake.

*Chinese Mystery Snails are classified as a regulated invasive species by the DNR. Regulated invasive species are illegal to introduce into public waters but may be bought, sold, and transported. These snails are popular in aquariums, contributing to their spread and accidental spread through watercraft.*

## Contingency Fund Annual Contribution

Every year Isanti County allocates money towards a contingency funds to assist lake groups reacting to a new AIS infestation. Funding provides cost-share to do assessments, mapping, and treatments for AIS. No contingency funds were used in 2024.

# Education and Outreach

Public AIS education is an effective tool for preventing the spread of invasive species. Therefore, AIS outreach is a key strategy in Isanti County's AIS work plan.

## Climb Theatre

Climb Theatre was contracted to offer interactive educational performances aimed at children about AIS. This year CLIMB Theatre provided in-school AIS education to Cambridge and Isanti Primary Schools.

- In total 460 children in first grade were educated about AIS prevention.

## Outreach Targeted at Bait Distributors

Concentrating outreach to bait distributors allows us to reach those frequenting lakes. Furthermore, unused bait released into waterbodies can encourage the spread of invasive species and damage our waterbodies.

- Branded bait bags distributed to local bait shops.
- "Clean, Drain, Dry" education posters provided for local bait shops and popular gas stations.

## Social Media and Online Efforts

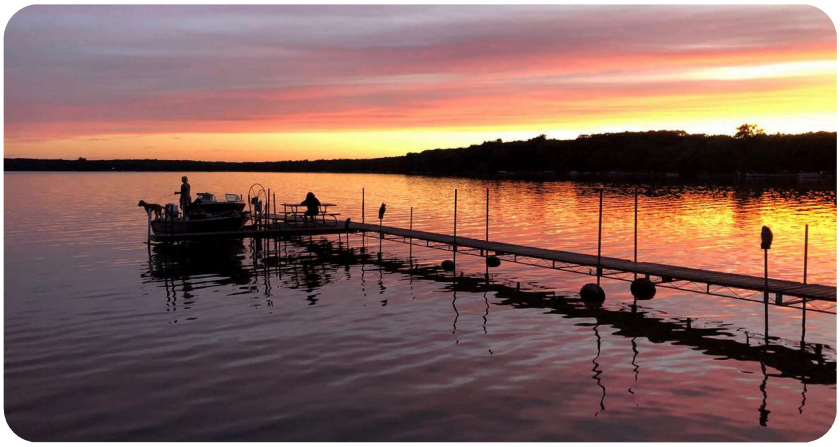
The internet provides a great tool to reach a wider audience than ever before. We utilized social media and online publications throughout the year to educate about AIS.

- 12 Social Media Posts.
- Promotion of SWCD YouTube Videos: Eurasian Watermilfoil, Zebra Mussels, and Curly Leaf Pondweed
- 2 Stories in the Isanti SWCD's Quarterly e-Newsletter.
- AIS educational materials available on Isanti SWCD's website.

How to Identify Zebra Mussels

## 5th Grade Conservation Day

On May 17th the Isanti SWCD hosted an AIS Prevention Station at the annual 5th Grade Conservation Day organized by Isanti County. Schools all across Isanti County participated. We were able to teach 95 5th Graders the steps they can take to prevent invasive species' spread and why it matters.



## Printed Materials

Traditional materials were created to assist in education and reach a varied audience.

- Two newspaper articles published during anticipated times of heavy lake use.
- Isanti County specific flyers distributed to local lake groups and key stakeholders.
- This annual report to provide transparency to the public.

## AIS Open House

This summer, in partnership with the Cambridge Public Library, to host an AIS open house. The event featured models of aquatic invasive species, and attendees of all ages enjoyed the challenge of spotting the invasive species hidden on our boat for a chance to win a prize. Over the course of the day, we had the opportunity to speak with 32 people about identifying AIS and the importance of proper boat cleaning to help prevent their spread.