

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES RAPID RESPONSE PLAN FOR POLK COUNTY

(Revised 9-13-2018)

1. Purpose / Background

On July 31, 2013, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) released their version of a Minnesota Rapid Response Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species. This plan calls for early detection of and rapid response to AIS introductions or infestations; a second line of defense following education and inspection programs. If the latter fail to prevent such movements of invasive species, the plan outlines the priority of actions following the introduction/infestation, reducing the overall economic and ecological impacts from those AIS.

While the MN DNR has dedicated staff for invasive species management, their areas of responsibility are often large. Response time is a major factor in the effectiveness of eradication or containment attempts, and response actions should be executed within the first few days to prevent further spread of AIS. This poses the need for more eyes on the ground and resource managers to initiate the process of implementing a response to those new AIS detections.

2. Scope

The Polk County Rapid Response Plan is designed to allow collaboration between resource managers at the local and state levels. Its intent is to translate plan items identified in the overall state plan to on-the-ground actions to be performed by the County AIS program delegate at the time of a new AIS discovery.

This following section clarifies how the Polk County AIS Taskforce, acting as managers for the Polk County AIS Plan, will assist or take the lead at various stages of the response. The state AIS response model is based on “Element II” of the State Invasive Species Management Plan: Early Detection, Rapid Response, and Containment. Its plan components are outlined as follows, and supplemented thereafter by the specific steps to be followed in the Polk County Rapid Response Plan.

3. 2013 State Rapid Response Plan components (MN DNR)

1. Detection and Surveillance
 - 1.1. Allow reporting utilizing observers – those likely to find AIS, including reports from other agencies or the general public.
 - 1.2. Promote reporting by relaying information on how to do so, such as watch cards with contact information, and reporting forms made available to the public
 - 1.3. Field surveying for invasive species and monitoring of known populations
 - 1.4. Investigate reports made of potential AIS sightings
 - 1.5. Confirmation of reports, after interviews and evidence gathering has occurred
 - 1.6. Databases of AIS Locations maintained and made available to the public
2. Rapids Assessment of Species and Distribution
 - 2.1. Rapid assessment of new introduced species to determine threat level
 - 2.2. Determine the distribution of introduced species or new infestations of existing AIS species
 - 2.3. Assess potential non-target organism impacts from available treatment options
3. Decision for Action; Five Factors:
 - 3.1. Is there knowledge of the risk for reintroduction, and is the risk low enough to justify eradication methods?
 - 3.2. Taken overall, can controls be initiated rapidly?
 - 3.3. Taken overall, is there a will to act on the issue?
 - 3.4. Taken overall, is organization/funding adequate?
 - 3.5. Other factors: is there support; effective outreach and education for affected parties?
4. Implement Response Actions. If treatment is available, follow the steps below.
 - 4.1. Determine treatment method
 - 4.2. Obtain treatment permits
 - 4.3. Arrange funding for treatment
 - 4.4. Contract for treatment
 - 4.5. Follow up and monitoring
5. Public Awareness: focus on containment, enforcement, inspections
 - 5.1. Action 1: Draft report of new infestations/introductions and issue news release when complete
 - 5.2. Action 2: Inform LGUs critical to the rapid response of new infestation **prior** to press release
 - 5.3. Action 3: Post Invasive Species Alert signs a water accesses on the new infested water
 - 5.4. Action 4: Enforce AIS containment laws at new infested water
 - 5.5. Conduct watercraft inspections at the public water accesses on waters recently designated as infested.

4. County Response Plan

Step	Specific Action for County	Timeframe	Budget Source
1) Assess the AIS infestation size and distribution	Verify the tip or report, if brought to watercraft inspectors or the Environmental Service Office, and then notify the MN DNR AIS staff member responsible for the area. Coordinate sampling efforts to confirm the detection and describe the current distribution.	Within the first week of receiving tip	DNR
2) Increase watercraft inspections at public water access on the new infested waters	Add additional staffing hours to surrounding waters, and provide full staffing hours to the water identified. Target education efforts, specifically to nearby residents.	First week of receiving confirmation	County
3) Notify local lake associations, government units, clubs, etc.	Call, email, and send letters to all stakeholders once confirmation of AIS introduction/infestation arrives from DNR.	First week of receiving confirmation	County
4) Issue news release about the AIS detection	Have local newspapers post notices/articles providing contact information and providing the public with all available information, advice.	After notifying local stakeholders though more direct contact methods (see above)	County
5) Designate as infested waters	Post the water as infested on Environmental Services, SWCD, Lake Association, and Watershed websites/newsletters, etc. Provide local bait shops, sporting goods outlets, and sportsman's clubs with notices and wall hangers of county infested waters list/descriptions. Verify posting on DNR list	Within first two weeks after receiving confirmation	County
6) Investigate AIS treatment options	Coordinate with DNR staff to collect additional data about infestation sites, assess workload for data collection and treatment method, and review budget/contracts for available options	Within first week of receiving confirmation	DNR/County
7) Post Invasive Species Alert signs at the water access	Provide space at each access for signage, where needed; assist with maintaining signage visibility (clear-zone)	Within first two weeks of confirmation; annually	DNR/County
8) Increase enforcement in the new infestation areas	Cooperate with DNR enforcement where required. Coordinate training opportunities for local law enforcement. Increase educational outreach related to regulations and laws	First year after confirmation	County
9) Consider & assess prevention options to curb the spread to nearby waters	Coordinate with DNR staff to collect data in nearby waters and assess risk for movement of AIS from initial detection site. Assess risk of natural spread, if containment is not successful	Ongoing after initial confirmation	County/DNR

