



## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Crow Wing County Seeks Comments on Proposed 2021 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan**

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department is requesting public comments on the proposed 2021 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Plan. The 2021 AIS prevention plan can be viewed on the County website at [www.crowwing.us/AIS](http://www.crowwing.us/AIS). Written comments on the plan will be accepted until Monday, February 1st, 2021 at 5:00pm and may be submitted to Crow Wing County at [landservices@crowwing.us](mailto:landservices@crowwing.us) or mailed to 322 Laurel Street, Suite 15 Brainerd, MN 56401, attention AIS Plan Comments.

The County Board will review the proposed 2021 AIS Prevention Plan at a regularly scheduled meeting in February 2021.

Crow Wing County is also hosting a 2021 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention online presentation on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 at 9:00am. This will be a virtual presentation and is open to the public to attend and learn more about Crow Wing County's AIS prevention plan for 2021. Topics to be highlighted include watercraft inspections, decontaminations, education & awareness, milfoil treatments, and early AIS detection. Please visit the County's website at [www.crowwing.us/ais](http://www.crowwing.us/ais) for more information about how to join the virtual online presentation.

Crow Wing County has been allocated \$440,901 by the State legislature to assist in the prevention of the spread of AIS within County lakes and rivers in 2021. The AIS prevention plan proposes to accomplish this through several approaches, including:

- Watercraft inspections
  - In the past, Crow Wing County partnered with the University of Minnesota – Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) and the United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service to develop an optimized model for locating DNR trained watercraft inspectors on Crow Wing's County's public watercraft access landings. For the first time in 2020, MAISRC developed an online dashboard of this model called AIS Explorer for local government AIS managers and staff. This online dashboard uses existing infestation information, water connectivity risk modeling, and over 1.6 million boater movement survey results to forecast the introduction risk of four priority AIS (zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, starry stonewort, and spiny waterflea) at individual lakes throughout the County. In total, 17,040 watercraft inspection hours are proposed to be allocated on 42 landings in 2021.

- Decontamination units
  - The County plans to operate the AIS decontamination station located at the Crosslake Joint Highway Maintenance Facility that will be open Thursday through Sunday, 9:00am to 5:00pm. The County also plans to operate a mobile decontamination station located at five public landings including Edward, Lower Hay, Lower Cullen, Pelican – Halverson Bay, and Upper South Long that will be open Friday through Sunday. Both decontamination stations will be open from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September, free of charge. Please call the Crow Wing County Decon Hotline at 218-824-1055 for more details during the summer season. Watercraft decontaminations consist of a very hot water rinse to kill Zebra Mussels and if needed a high pressure spray to remove AIS from boats, motors, trailers, and personal gear.
- Treatment of Eurasian Water Milfoil
  - Crow Wing County has 10 lakes that are infested with milfoil that also have a public access. As in previous years, funds will be allocated for chemical or biological treatment of milfoil in these lakes.
- Education & Awareness
  - Since 2014, Crow Wing County has allocated approximately \$40,000 directly to lake associations to conduct an education outreach campaign to the general public. Over 30 lakes have participated. In 2021, the County plans to again offer this program. The County proposes funding 18 lakes for lake association public awareness campaigns. In addition, other proposals are education and awareness initiatives include partnering with bait shops, printed media, and other targeted advertising. Since 2014, approximately \$184,000 has been allocated to covering the costs of AIS related education and awareness programs.
- Early AIS Detection
  - The County plans to continue to work with area lake associations and an environmental lab to conduct Zebra Mussel veliger and Spiny waterflea testing in 2021.

In 2020, Crow Wing County allocated 17,040 watercraft inspection hours on 42 public access landings across the County. Lake Associations added an additional 5,000 hours of expanded coverage requests that the County scheduled beyond its County Board approved hours..

No newly infested Zebra Mussel lakes were identified in Crow Wing County in 2020. This shows that the Optimized Model that Crow Wing County used by the MAISRC and USDA Forest Service has been successful to-date. Information about Crow Wing County AIS prevention efforts, including interactive maps to search for the statuses of area lakes can be found on the web at [www.crowwing.us/ais](http://www.crowwing.us/ais).

The Land Services Department is committed to providing excellent customer service while helping our residents make wise decisions that protect Crow Wing County's extraordinary natural resources. Citizens are encouraged to contact the Land Services Office at (218) 824-1010 or [landservices@crowwing.us](mailto:landservices@crowwing.us) to discuss AIS or other land use related activities.

**Our Vision:** Being Minnesota's favorite place.

**Our Mission:** Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

**Our Values:** Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.