

*National Invasive Species
Outreach and Education*



*2013 Annual Report
Reaching Millions and Millions*



STOP  **P**
AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

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A special thank you to campaign funding partners:



Executive Summary

The Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! (SAH!) campaign grew and improved in 2013 thanks to partnership efforts, social media and a consistent message to Clean, Drain, Dry. Wildlife Forever is honored to be leading the internationally recognized campaign to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Education about invasive threats encourages the outdoor community (anglers, boaters, hunters, and recreational users) to protect our lakes, streams and woods by accepting behavior changing practices. This stewardship development has also resulted in industries changing products to reduce risk of invasive species transfer. Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! is becoming a known consumer brand.

Working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service our goal is to modernize the brand, develop social media, renew the newsletter and website to build a strong and stable coalition. Together we have amassed the largest team in the nation of states, federal agencies, professional angler associations, tribal organizations and NGOs, plus local lake associations to Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

Wildlife Forever started the task by boosting program capacity with increased staff and outreach to states and regional organizations. We identified opportunities for growth with social media, television, radio and print reaching over **200 Million impressions**. Through active partner engagement the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! newsletter was re-issued in an e-news format with a new *Partners in Action* (PIA) feature. The Protect Your Waters website was evaluated and found to have a 10-year old legacy platform in need of a major redesign. Investments were made to keep the important resource on-line. Plans for 2014 include a new site as funds become available.

PIA features exceptional efforts by groups or outstanding individuals making a difference and setting an example for everyone to learn from and emulate. The first PIA was a local bass fishing sportsman's club in Victoria, Minnesota. Access was being closed. The local club found a solution, unfortunately it included a dock covered in zebra mussels from a nearby infested lake. They invited local media and the DNR to decontaminate making the dock safe for use in the non-infested lake. Access was reopened and a lake was saved. That is indeed a *Partners In Action* example.

Successful stories of AIS prevention gives us confidence that we can change behavior with outreach, education and enforcement. New species continue to become threats. By using the talents, skills and resources of all partners, behavior can be changed and our great outdoors can be conserved.

This coming year presents many challenges. Federal budget cuts threaten the SAH! campaign. Funding, or the lack there of, is the number one SAH! problem. Without funding we go back to an old sterile SAH! website, offering no social media or local outreach tools. Partners will not have a central collective voice. Wildlife Forever is working to identify new partners. Nearly 140 million Americans enjoy hunting, fishing, birding and hiking. Sharing the cost to continue expanding the SAH! campaign to an outdoor audience that generates \$646 billion to our U.S. economy is an opportunity. Join us! Support SAH!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™**

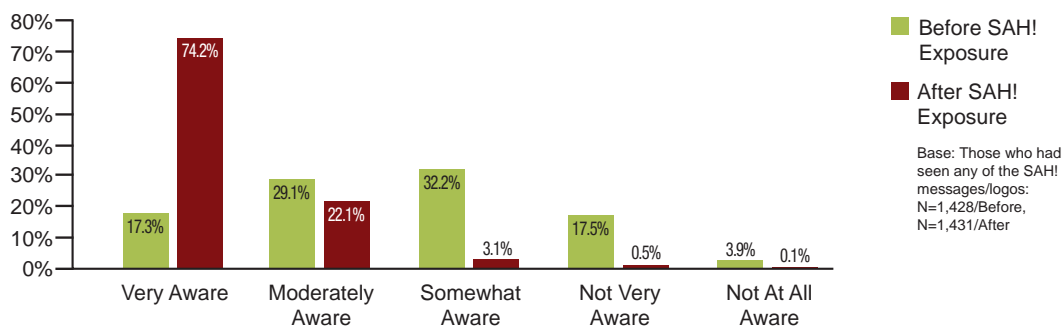
— Douglas H. Grann
President & CEO

SAH! Effectiveness

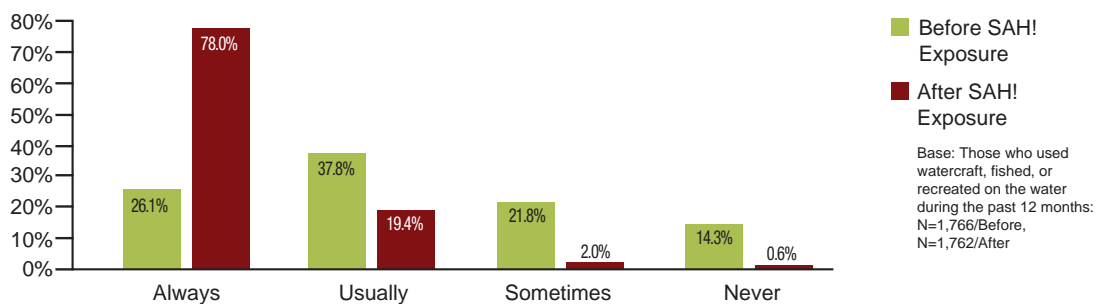
In a little over a decade the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! campaign has become an internationally recognized public service campaign educating to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species. Over the years surveys have been conducted to evaluate effectiveness including multi-state boat ramp studies and local watershed direct mail questionnaires.

During the summer of 2013 campaign partners, led by Sea Grant, collaborated on an electronic survey targeting the Great Lakes states. Through a series of dedicated e-newsletters to known anglers and boaters of the North American Fishing Club results showed effectiveness when comparing before and after SAH! outreach and education.

AIS Awareness Before & After Exposure to SAH! Messages



AIS "Actions Taken" Before & After Exposure to SAH! Messages



2013 survey results clearly demonstrate the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! brand, logo and campaign are highly effective in raising awareness of AIS concerns and creating behavior change to prevent AIS spread.

"We have ample evidence Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! messages not only raise awareness, but also change behaviors that help protect our waters."

— Doug Jensen - MN Sea Grant

Social Media & Partners in Action

Today Facebook is at the center of how society communicates, runs businesses and shares information. It is ranked as the most used social networking service worldwide.

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! now has its' own Facebook page and has quickly grown to have more than 400 "Likes". With weekly postings of AIS news, information and campaign updates, the new resource is a great communicator for public engagement. Watch for special features of "Most Wanted" species as FB spotlights specific invaders and provides public information on identification, interesting facts and how to prevent the spread.

Arming fans with up-to-date information is critical to helping resource managers identify new infestations for rapid response and control. Facebook is part of our social fabric, "Like" us and become engaged with outdoor recreational users.
www.facebook.com/StopAquaticHitchhikers

Partners in Action is a monthly feature highlighting an active lake association, individual, or club that is working hard in the battle to stop invasive species. By recognizing the people doing the heavy lifting on the water FB shares information, provide ideas and inspires others to join the SAH! movement.



"AIS threatens our fishing industry but through NPAA's affiliation with the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! campaign we're part of a dedicated team to protect our sport."

*— Pat Neu, Executive Director,
National Professional
Angler Association*



Photos (left to right)
Kim Bogenschutz - October
Dr. Nick Schmal - November
Pat Neu - December

Youth Conservation Education

The future of our natural resources lies in the hands of today's youth. Our outdoor heritage depends on how we share our conservation values. The cornerstone of any successful public service campaign is America's youth, and Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! is working to engage the next generation.

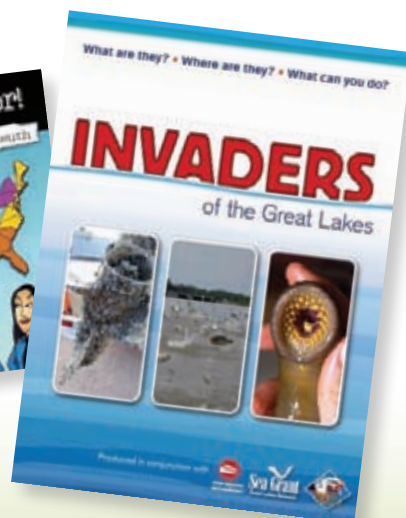
The State-Fish Art® Contest is a K-12 education program teaching aquatic conservation through the arts and engaging students to learn about fish and fishing. A special AIS lesson plan informs kids about silent invaders and features a special national award category called the "Invader Crusader." While learning about invasive species, students create art that shows how AIS impacts their local waters. The outcome is building stewardship in America's youth. Learn how you can help engage youth with AIS prevention at: www.StateFishArt.org.



2013 Invader Crusader



Creative products like AIS tattoos, books, key floats and others tools appeal to youth and provide a tangible connection to responsible outdoor recreation. *Nab the Aquatic Invader*, led by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, is another partner program working to engage youth with AIS through an interactive program and website.



"If lion fish are not removed from our coastal reefs, we may lose the native fishes and shrimp that make our marine habitat special."

— Erin Werner,
5th grader

Television Marketing

From Fortune 500 companies to small local businesses, everyone knows television is the most highly effective tool in reaching a huge targeted audience. And recent SAH! survey results confirm television ads are one of the most effective sources for sharing AIS information.

This past year the Telly Award winning program, Silent Invaders™ reached 11.7 million households by merging with North American Fisherman Television. Airing for 26 weeks on NBC Sports, Destination America and Pursuit Channel each show featured a special 2-3 minute invasive species vignette.

Top invasive species issues impacting anglers are spotlighted. During commercial breaks a 30-second PSA was aired reminding viewers to Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! and always Clean, Drain, Dry. By incorporating everyday language into AIS awareness and prevention steps, recreational users change old habits. “Clean, Drain, Dry” will become automatic just as “Catch and Release”.



Complementing the Silent Invader television show is a new DVD set that incorporates seven original 30 minute programs plus, 8 independent “Broadcast Ready” PSAs. Viewers can take the PSAs to their local broadcast station and request airing to protect local waters. By arming the public with tools to help get the word out, SAH! is effectively reaching millions and developing community support.



“As the greatest threat to global biodiversity, invasive species impact our economy, our enjoyment of the outdoors and the environment.”

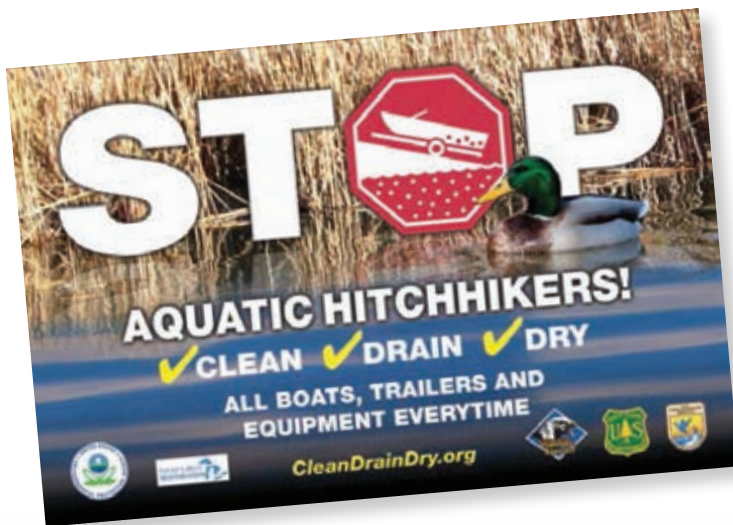
— Joe Starinchak
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Print Advertising

2013 survey findings of 30,000 anglers list magazine ads as a critical source for AIS information. This past year, utilizing funds from various partners, Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! created and ran print ads nationwide in multiple magazines and newspapers.

Creative ads are eye-catching and utilize brand strength. Showcasing partner logos confirms united support for SAH! Wildlife Forever has extensive experience in sourcing print ads, marketing/outreach efforts and works with media partners to negotiate deeply discounted and group buying rates. Print ads, targeted to outdoor recreational users, reached over 8.2 million readers in 2013.

Working with the Bureau of Land Management and western state game and fish agencies, Wildlife Forever helped to secure invasive species awareness ads in hunting and fishing regulations as well as popular outdoor publications.



Highway Billboards

Love em' or hate em' highway billboards work! They have been part of the landscape for 90 years. As an effective means of advertising with the ability to send a "big" message, billboard marketing often has a cost of \$1 per thousand (CPM) viewers. Using audited traffic counts, SAH! highway billboards are geo-targeted to recreational users traveling to and from lake/river bound areas on known travel routes.

With group buying, partners can leverage resources to go much further than individual efforts. Wildlife Forever's media purchasing and marketing experience simplify buying and create a streamlined approach for lake associations and agencies.

This past year, nationwide billboard outreach created 157.6 million impressions. Through consistency and repetition, SAH! has become part of the new landscape when traveling to and from the great outdoors.

Taking advantage of new graphics and targeted messages, while keeping the SAH! brand consistent, leads to greater traveler recognition. Designs can also be customized to raise awareness of specific invaders.



Outreach Projects & Tools

SAH! educational tools have been developed to assist with public outreach & education. Partners from across the country have created unique signs, displays and handouts to engage recreational users, businesses and local governments. Consistently using the SAH! logo with best management practices of Clean, Drain, Dry, quickly engages the public to Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

You can help! The new **SAH! product catalog** showcases campaign products and tools. New items are being added and all are available to partners at discounted prices. Group buying is a win-win for everyone. Available on-line at www.CleanDrainDry.org.



SAH! outreach with float plane pilots



Invasive species removal projects

Signs at water accesses are the #1 most effective sources for AIS information. Let us assist your lake association or sportsmen group. Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! can help design and source custom water access signage. Wildlife Forever is also working with partners to eradicate invasive species in efforts to restore prairie habitat and wetlands.

Working with on-the-ground partners, SAH! provides for community engagement aimed at raising awareness by providing effective outreach tools. Order today!



SAH! Events

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! campaign success happens through boots-on-the-ground and grass roots community engagement. Connecting directly with recreational users to inform, educate and empower for AIS prevention, SAH! is making a difference!

SAH! partners this year attended countless youth events, professional fishing tournaments, state and county fairs and sporting conventions. Consistent messaging focusing on Clean, Drain, Dry led the united movement.

Partners even braved the icy 2013 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener in Park Rapids. With many lakes frozen, boats were confined to a few open waters. Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! was a main feature for the large community picnic that showcased a new decontamination unit and an AIS see-and-touch table. *Invaders of the Great Lakes* pocket guide was unveiled and distributed throughout the community, complemented with local SAH! billboards making a "spring" appearance for Governor Dayton. Digger, a zebra mussel sniffing dog, also attended on behalf of the MN DNR.

*"Coming together
is a beginning;
keeping together
is progress;
working together
is success."*

– Henry Ford



2013 Minnesota Fishing Opener



Retail outreach events



County fair



Youth engagement

STOP



AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

✓ **CLEAN** ✓ **DRAIN** ✓ **DRY**

Join America's Top Partnership.

Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

Visit www.CleanDrainDry.org.

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