



Hubbard County 2016 AIS Program Report

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Hubbard Report 2016 Outline

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I. 2016 Watercraft Inspection Program

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to summarize the 2016 Watercraft Inspection Program (WIP) in Hubbard County, Minnesota. The WIP has been in transition throughout this past year moving from the direction and management of the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to the County under the Environmental Services Department (ESD). There was also the creation of a full-time AIS Program Coordinator position under the supervision of the Environmental Services Officer. The main structure of the program has remained the same with all of the watercraft inspectors being employed through Always There Staffing, Inc. This structure has been very successful in creating and maintaining an efficient and effective program.

The 2016 WIP was successful in its first season under the Hubbard County ESD. Some of the most notable points are as follows:

- The total amount of watercraft inspections increased slightly from 21,059 in 2015 to 22,757
- The number of hours worked increased from 14,943 in 2015 to 15,384
- The County-wide inspection per hour average was 1.48
- The percentage of boats that arrived at an access with drain plugs in decreased from 2.74% in 2015 to 1.15%
- The number of boats that arrived at a public access with plants, water, or mud attached decreased from 2.85% in 2015 to 2.10%
- The percentage of boaters that were last on infested waters increased from 9.01% in 2015 to 10.98%
- The percentage of boaters that were entering from out-of-state was 14.85%
- The number of decontaminations performed slightly decreased from 130 in 2015 to 116
- The percentage of decontaminations performed on boats that were last in infested waters increased from 37.69% in 2015 to 53.45%

These numbers represent the most important and relevant statistics from the 2016 watercraft inspection season. For further 2016 data, refer to the table in Appendix A.

The data represented in the above bullet points can be used to assess the strong points of the Hubbard County WIP. The total number of inspections increased between 2015 and 2016 while the number of boats entering with drain plugs in or with plants, animals, water or mud present decreased. This may represent an increase in boater education about current AIS laws and regulations. The number of boats entering that were last on infested waterbodies increased between 2015 and 2016. This should be expected as each year the number of infested lakes in Minnesota has been slightly increasing. The number of decontaminations that were performed in 2016 decreased slightly; however, the percentage of decontaminations that were performed on boats coming from infested waters increased by 15.76%. The percentage of boaters entering from out-of-state did not significantly change between 2015 and 2016.

II. 2016 Resort Education/Involvement

Hubbard County resorts have been involved in AIS prevention for many years now. There is a logistical desire to be able to obtain data from resorts in order to draw conclusions about this group of public water users. Hubbard County has an existing Resort Program which focuses on spreading educational materials and collecting data. This is largely successful because of the efforts of community volunteers and members of the past AIS Task Force. In 2016, Hubbard County worked with lead Watercraft Inspector Bob Gack to communicate and collaborate with local resort owners to promote AIS prevention. Building and maintaining good relationships with local resort owners is important to Hubbard County and crucial to preventing the spread of AIS as well as increasing AIS awareness in the local community. With the AIS Program being transitioned to Hubbard County, there will be areas to improve upon in order to continue to promote resort participation in AIS prevention practices.

In 2016, the County provided local inspection schedules to interested resort owners so that they could use this as a resource if they chose to have their guests inspected by trained AIS Watercraft Inspectors. Some of the resorts in Hubbard County launch boats at private resort accesses while some choose to send their guests through public accesses. Every resort has individual needs and preferences as it pertains to AIS prevention and inspection processes. Hubbard County will work to continually improve the Resort Program and adapt to these individual needs in order to accommodate local resorts and increase AIS prevention.

The 2016 Resort Program was successful in that there was a good amount of resort participation in boater surveys. These boater surveys asked a series of questions very similar to some of the questions asked by Watercraft Inspectors. Some of the results of these surveys were as follows:

- Total number of resorts: 68
- Number of resorts that send guests to public accesses: 32
- Number of resorts with boat accesses: 41
- Number of resorts that launch boats on-site: 34
- Of the resorts that launch boats on-site, 27 screen or inspect boats
- Percentage of boats that arrived at resorts with drain plugs in: 8.62%
- Percentage of boats that arrived at resorts from out-of-state: 25.86%

The 2016 Resort Program was successful in spreading awareness and building relationships with local resort owners. The majority of resorts (86.76%) are screening boats either by sending their guests to public launch sites to be inspected or doing an on-site inspection. The results of the 2016 Resort Program support several likely trends in resort users. From the surveys that were returned to the County, it appears that the percentage of boats that arrive with drain plugs in is higher at resorts than it is at public water accesses. The results of the resort surveys also show that the percentage of boats entering from out-of-state is higher at resorts than at public water accesses.

III. Rapid Response Planning

Hubbard County has been working to develop a Rapid Response Plan (RRP) in 2016. The County has formed a Rapid Response Planning Committee that has been refining and editing the RRP that was drafted in 2015. This Rapid Response Planning Committee is comprised of representation from the County Board, the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HCCOLA), and the Hubbard County AIS Program Coordinator. The Committee has been working towards developing an RRP that accurately describes action steps that the County can take in the event of an infestation. The MN DNR has provided input on these action steps to ensure that they are accurate and achievable.

Due to the vast differences and inconsistencies between types of infestations, the RRP will remain at a fairly broad scale. The plan provides a generalized chain of events that occur when an invasive species is found in a waterbody. It describes the actions that the MN DNR will take as well as the actions that Hubbard County will take. Having a broad and generalized plan of actions will allow Hubbard County to fine tune and react to an individual infestation. The goal is to have an RRP approved by the County Board in the winter of 2016-2017.

IV. Early Detection Program

Early detection is very important to the community in Hubbard County. The Lake Monitoring and Early Detection Program in Hubbard County has been developed and perfected by the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (HCCOLA). Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations has done a great job of getting lakeshore property owners involved in early detection work. For example, HCCOLA has urged property owners to monitor for zebra mussels by using settlement samplers, cinder blocks, and just by checking their lake equipment at the end of every open water season. Another example of early detection work in Hubbard County is zebra mussel veliger sampling done during peak times of the open water season. Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations also encourages property owners to monitor aquatic vegetation - some lakes do special vegetation monitoring events where aquatic plants are monitored by a group of lake residents. This inspires lakeshore property owners to become involved and raises the level of awareness and observation.

Hubbard County COLA has developed the Lake Monitoring and Early Detection Program and is continually working to expand the Program. The attention is beginning to shift towards opportunistic approaches to AIS detection. Lakeshore owners typically spend the most time on the water and should take advantage of that by being observant. Property owners are often the ones who are first to notice a change in the habitat on the lake on which they live. Hubbard County COLA has also developed a Lake Monitoring and Early Detection binder that it distributes to the local lake associations. The binder consists of information on AIS identification, lake monitoring techniques, sampling techniques, and

contact information for reporting suspected AIS samples. These binders have been widely accepted and used by lakeshore property owners in Hubbard County.

V. Public Awareness

Public awareness and education is a critical component of any successful AIS Prevention Program. One could argue that the state-wide AIS Prevention Program is an educational program. Hubbard County is fortunate to have a population that largely supports AIS prevention practices which is made evident through the level of township and lake association funding that our AIS Prevention Program receives. The local community works together with the County to maintain a successful and aggressive AIS Prevention Program.

Organizations such as HCCOLA have worked with the SWCD in the past and now Hubbard County to develop educational materials such as place mats for restaurants, boat rulers with AIS prevention practices, AIS ID cards, and AIS prevention ads in local publications. Hubbard County, together with HCCOLA, purchased radio spots from local radio stations to run Public Service Announcements (PSAs) educating listeners about AIS prevention as well as decontamination station locations and hours of operation. The radio PSAs have been very successful in reaching public water users.

Hubbard County will continue to work with HCCOLA and the local community to develop and distribute educational materials. Some of the most successful educational materials in the past have been AIS ID cards, boat rulers, and radio PSAs. The County continues to create new relationships with local community members and business owners who are passionate about AIS prevention. This past season, Hubbard County developed decontamination business cards which contain location, hours of operation, and an on-call phone number. These decontamination business cards were distributed to local bait shops and businesses as well as local resorts.

VI. 2016 Financial Summary

The 2016 budget for the Hubbard County AIS Program consisted of three main pools of money. The County received \$263,801 from the State, \$35,000 from the County General Property Tax Levy, and \$102,328.50 from lake associations and townships. This created a total pool of \$401,129.50. That pool of money was used to pay for contracted watercraft inspectors, educational materials, PSAs, decontamination unit fuel, and a full-time program coordinator. Some main points from Hubbard County's 2016 AIS budget are as follows:

- There was a total of 15,384 hours of watercraft inspections worked
- Lake associations and townships funded 5,847 supplemental inspection hours
- State funding provided 9,537 inspection hours

- Radio PSAs were funded through a 50/50 partnership between Hubbard County and HCCOLA
- Educational materials were funded by State money along with an HCCOLA contribution
- Full-time Program Coordinator wages were funded through the County General Property Tax Levy (\$35,000) and State funding
- All remaining Program expenditures were funded by the State AIS Prevention Aid

VII. Appendix

A. 2016 Program Summary Table

2016 Program Summary from 5/13/16 through 10/16/16		
Parameter	Number	Percent
Total Inspections	22,757	
Entering Inspections	12,683	55.73%
Exiting Inspections	10,074	44.27%
Drain Plug in on Arrival	146	1.15%
Plants/Mud/Water on Arrival	266	2.10%
Entering from Infested Water	1,393	10.98%
Entering from Out-of-State	1,883	14.85%
# of Total Decontaminations	116	
# of Decontaminations from Infested Water	62	53.45%
Number of Inspections	Hours	Insp/Hr
22,757	15,384	1.48