

# Aquatic Invasive Species

As we near the fishing opener and the summer boating season it is again time to be reminded that our lakes and rivers are under siege from a number of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). In Hubbard County we have four (that we know of) affected lakes, Portage and Eleventh Crow Wing – Curly Leaf Pondweed and Upper and Lower Twin – Faucet Snail. Just talk with someone who is waging the battle against an AIS and you will be convinced that the old saying “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is very applicable.

Throughout history man has been the major culprit when it comes to introduced plant and animal species. Sometimes, as is the case with many landscape plants, this has worked out well and sometimes not so much. Purple Loosestrife was originally introduced to the U.S. in the 1800’s and later distributed as a landscape plant. If you’ve ever seen Purple Loosestrife in full bloom you would agree that it is beautiful. However, once it escaped into the wild it out competed our native plants and today it continues to wreak havoc on our wetlands. Lately there has been a lot of publicity about the spread of Zebra Mussel, a native to Southeast Russia. The Zebra Mussel is believed to have hitch hiked to the United States in the ballast water of ocean going ships. When the ballast water was dumped into the Great Lakes the Zebra Mussels had found a new home. The story is much the same with other AIS as man has unwittingly spread them far and wide. Since so many lakes in Minnesota are known to be infested with a variety of AIS we all need to be vigilant and do everything we can to prevent the further spread of these unwanted pests.

For several years now the Hubbard County COLA AIS taskforce has been actively involved in spreading the word about Aquatic Invasive Species. Some of the projects that they have undertaken are:

- 1.) Worked with over 50 local resorts to educate them about the AIS threat. Informational packets were developed and distributed to the resorts to help them and their guests prevent the spread of AIS.
- 2.) Developed and distributed thousands of Z-fold AIS brochures to help educate local lake and river users.
- 3.) Worked with local law enforcement on AIS training.
- 4.) Worked with Lake Emma Township to have DNR interns inspect watercraft at boat landings in Lake Emma Township.

Things that we can all do to help prevent the spread of AIS are:

- 1.) Inspect and remove all plants and animals from your boat, motors anchors/rope and trailer before you leave a body of water.

- 2.) Drain all water from motor, live wells, bilge and transom wells before leaving the boat landing.
- 3.) After fishing empty your bait bucket on land.
- 4.) Wash/dry your boat, tackle, downriggers, trailer and other equipment.