

## Hubbard County’s AIS Prevention Aid Program: A Snapshot of Accomplishments in 2024

### Program Summary



The bulk of State Prevention Aid funds are earmarked for our comprehensive watercraft inspection program. Annually, our goal is to employ at least 40 DNR certified watercraft inspectors, covering over 30 public water accesses across the county. Our inspection season starts with the fishing opener in early May, and continues through the end of October on select accesses.







The goal of the Hubbard County AIS Program is to prevent new introductions of aquatic invasive species through education and public awareness. The County and our contributing partners believe that our watercraft inspection program provides the most effective means of meeting that goal.

Supplementing our watercraft inspection program, prevention aid funding is allocated towards public outreach through radio and billboard advertisements, handouts, newspaper articles, and the distribution of aqua weed sticks at every watercraft trailer launch county-wide.

Hubbard County operates and maintains a stationary decontamination unit, free for public use. The unit is available seasonally, on-call seven days a week.

Hubbard County has thus far been fortunate to avoid wide-spread infestations. However, Potato Lake - a locally popular destination lake - was confirmed to have zebra mussels this past fall. Zebra mussel-infested lakes in the County now include Benedict, Garfield, Long, Plantagenet, and Potato.

Category	Metrics
 <p><b>AIS Prevention Aid Used</b></p>	<p>\$ <b><u>263,911</u></b> AIS Prevention Aid <b>used</b> this calendar year                      \$ <b><u>263,911</u></b> AIS Prevention Aid <b>received</b> this calendar year</p>
 <p><b>People Dedicated to AIS Work</b></p>	<p><u>1</u> full-time staff with <u>20</u> % of their time dedicated to AIS work  <u>1</u> part-time, seasonal staff with <u>100</u> % of their time dedicated to AIS work  <u>47</u> total authorized watercraft inspectors, including:                          <b>42</b> trained as <b>Level 1</b> and <b>5</b> trained as <b>Level 2</b>                      \$<b>400,000</b> total spent on staff wages, including:                          \$<b><u>220,000</u></b> in AIS Prevention Aid                          \$<b><u>180,000</u></b> in other funds leveraged from <b>lake associations, townships and cities</b>  <u>5</u> volunteers conducted AIS work supporting aid-funded activities  <u>23</u> volunteer hours served supporting aid-funded activities</p>

Category	Metrics
	<p><b>Partnerships Created and Maintained</b></p> <p>Local organizations engaged and/or actively conducting aid-funded activities:  <u>18</u> lake associations  <u>13</u> local governments  <u>1</u> other group such as Garfield Lake Ice Racers Club</p>
	<p><b>Funds Distributed, Contributed and Leveraged</b></p> <p><u>\$180,000</u> in funds contributed by other organizations that directly supported <b>all</b> aid-funded activities in the county (aka leveraged funds)  <u>32</u> organizations contributing additional funds</p>
	<p><b>Communities Engaged</b></p> <p><u>\$10,000</u> of aid spent on advertisements (billboards, radio, newspaper, etc.)</p>
	<p><b>Watercraft Inspected</b></p> <p><u>\$425,000</u> spent on watercraft inspection and decontamination including:  <u>\$245,000</u> in AIS Prevention Aid  <u>\$180,000</u> in other funds leveraged from <b>lake associations, clubs and local government partners</b>  <u>20,470</u> inspections performed  <u>14,294</u> hours of inspections performed  <u>35</u> accesses covered by inspectors  <u>33</u> water bodies covered by inspectors  <u>99%</u> of watercraft recorded as arriving with drain plugs out  <u>97%</u> of watercraft recorded as arriving free of aquatic plants  <u>1</u> decontamination units (hot water, high pressure) operated by Level 2 inspectors  <u>167</u> decontaminations performed  <u>30</u> boaters engaged by AIS Volunteers/Ambassadors at water accesses  <u>69</u> water bodies with cleaning tool stations maintained at <u>75</u> water accesses</p>
	<p><b>Monitoring Conducted</b></p> <p><u>7</u> people participated in the University of Minnesota Extension and Minnesota AIS Research Center's "Starry Trek" event  <u>21</u> public accesses sampled  <u>20</u> lakes monitored</p>
	<p><b>New Infestation Response Planned</b></p> <p>A response plan developed in 2017, following the state's response plan.</p>

## Program Spending Summary

Budget Category	AIS Prevention Aid Spent by the County in 2024	Funds leveraged from other sources	Description
Public Outreach and Education	\$10,000		Billboard rental, radio PSA's, AWS distribution, flyers, hand-outs.
Watercraft Inspection	\$230,000	\$180,000	Inspector wages, agency costs, trainings, lead inspector costs, etc.
Equipment & Supplies	\$15,000		Equipment costs, fuel expenses, maintenance, inspector supplies.
Administrative Expense	\$5,000		Trainings, travel, etc.
Totals	\$260,000	\$180,000	

## Plans for 2025

The Hubbard County AIS program will continue to prioritize watercraft inspections as our primary means of outreach and AIS prevention. Inspection hours are increased on lakes infested with ZM and SSW, such as Plantagenet, Long Lake, and now Potato. We will continue our aqua weed stick program. In a promising trend, weed stick attrition rates were lower in 2024 than in 2023. We will continue our targeted outreach to area resorts through AIS spotlights. We plan to build on the number boat decontaminations after conducting 167 in 2024, which was a new high. We are exploring more targeted awareness for watercraft users on infested waterbodies.

## 2024 Highlights

### Success Stories

- Overall it was a relatively quite year in terms of zebra mussel violations. One used lift was prevented from entering the North PWA on Long Lake. Although the lift had been out of the water for an extended period of time, many zebra mussels were found to be attached. The lift was sent to our decontamination unit for cleaning.
- Six exiting inspections on infested lakes resulted in zebra mussels being discovered, preventing further spread to other lakes.
- Efforts to promote the free decontamination unit appear to be paying off. Total decontaminations rose from 144 in 2023 to 167 in 2024. This beats the previous record of 166 in 2021.

### Reports and Products

- See attached end-of-season report:

