

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Recommendations for Improving Prevention Effectiveness in SD

OBJECTIVES

1. Deploy a clear, coordinated statewide effort to prevent the spread of AIS
2. Protect our borders from unwanted invaders being transported into SD
3. Educate the public about the economic harm caused by AIS
4. Identify dedicated funding mechanisms to facilitate expansion of AIS prevention efforts

RECOMMENDATIONS - By Category

LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Change the tone at the top from “slow the spread” to “prevent the spread”
2. Evaluate qualifications, empowerment and effectiveness of current AIS leadership
3. Discontinue practice of burying announcements of new AIS infestations so that public is made aware of the rate and extent of AIS spread
4. Engage with AIS professionals in neighboring states (Montana recognized as “Best of the West”) and other organizations to learn and implement best practices for AIS prevention, early detection, containment and enforcement
5. Develop clear and coherent regional watercraft inspection strategies that take into consideration number of water bodies, surface water priority locations and watercraft transportation corridors
6. Improve reporting of Clean Drain Dry compliance to incorporate all noncompliance matters initially detected at inspection stations. Assist boaters in correcting violations, but record as violations for more accurate compliance tracking
7. Develop and publish a more detailed breakdown on AIS noncompliance statistics for better accountability and as a resource for prioritizing educational efforts
8. Remove SDFGP organizational barriers that inhibit the ability to utilize state parks and recreation areas as a key opportunity for AIS education

MESSAGING & EDUCATION

1. Place greater emphasis on educating the public about the economic harm that AIS does to our state
2. Place greater emphasis on creating awareness of emerging AIS threats near SD borders. AIS prevention is not just about zebra mussels
3. Utilize social media to demonstrate that AIS inspection violators are getting citations. Use an approach similar to what SD Highway Patrol uses to illustrate violations without identifying offenders
4. Include AIS regulation and educational material with all boat license mailings

COORDINATION

1. Make AIS prevention a coordinated multi-agency priority in state government, with DANR becoming involved in surface water protection efforts
2. Seek stakeholder input on proposed AIS management strategies prior to submitting to GFP Commission for approval

WATERCRAFT INSPECTIONS

1. Expand watercraft inspection workforce
2. Develop strategy to recruit retired seniors to provide coverage after seasonal workers return to school.
3. Revise noncompliance recording protocol so that all detected noncompliance instances are recorded as such on the inspection tablets, even if the noncompliance issue is subsequently corrected. This will provide more accurate compliance statistics
4. Develop better guidelines for determining whether watercraft inspectors should focus on incoming or exiting boats, or both

PREVENTION – Other Recommendations

1. Develop better solutions for wake surfing boaters to effectively decontaminate ballast tanks. Work with marine dealers to provide education
2. Invest in AIS prevention equipment resources that allow boaters to effectively clean and (when necessary) decontaminate their boats
3. Change posture on willingness to reduce number of state-maintained boat launches on water bodies with multiple boat access points
4. Provide easily accessible information about locations and availability of watercraft decontamination equipment
5. Work to expand public and commercial watercraft decontamination opportunities, such as car washes stations and fish cleaning
6. Explore the feasibility of utilizing one or more zebra mussel detecting canine units for more targeted zebra mussel detection as well as an opportunity for education

ENFORCEMENT

1. Develop better mechanisms for routinely transferring AIS violation information to enforcement officers for followup
2. Evaluate legality and protocol for issuing inspection violation warnings by mail

EARLY DETECTION & CONTAINMENT

1. Begin using zebra mussel veligers tow sampling equipment as a regular SDGFP early detection tool
2. Develop a list of high risk, high impact water bodies and schedule regular shoreline searches for invasive species
3. Engage lake associations and sporting groups by communicating specific volunteer opportunities for prevention and early detection participation. Followup with resource and best practices information, as well as training where appropriate

MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

1. Clarify and streamline permitting requirements for mitigating nuisance vegetation caused by AIS MA
2. Develop best practices educational information for surface water users on mitigating nuisance vegetation MA

FUNDING

1. Increase annual resident boat license fee by a specified amount dedicated to AIS prevention
2. Require nonresidents to purchase and display an annual AIS sticker before any boat can be launched in South Dakota waters
3. Add an AIS prevention fee to both resident and nonresident fishing licenses
4. Place AIS specific fees into a dedicated fund that can only be used for AIS prevention, with unused funds allowed to carry over to the next year
5. Retain current annual grant funding for AIS management strategies (such as USFWS) so that new revenue sources are not replacing other available funding sources
6. Research and take advantage of grant funding opportunities that arise
7. Explore opportunities for shared funding of targeted AIS initiatives in partnership with other public, private, tribal and NGO organizations