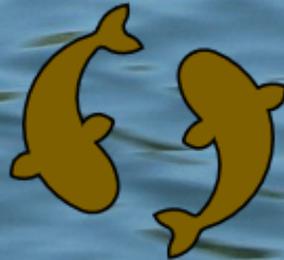


# *Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention*



*Plan*



**Plan Adoption Date: December 26, 2023**

*This plan was prepared by the Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee*

# Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

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## **1. Introduction**

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are defined as nonnative or hybridized aquatic organisms that invade nonnative ecosystems beyond their natural, historic, and native range, cause damage or harm to human uses and the environment and create negative economic impacts. AIS often have economic and environmental impacts such as competing with native species, decreasing habitat and habitat quality, decreasing water quality, spreading pathogens, limiting recreational opportunities, decreasing value of waterfront property, and having huge costs associated with damaged infrastructure and removal.

Le Sueur County has 128 lakes, many creeks, streams, and rivers within its jurisdictional boundaries, which are among some of the County's greatest natural assets. Aquatic invasive species now threaten the habitat, ecosystem function, and recreational enjoyment of these resources. The desired outcome for Le Sueur County is to prevent the spread of AIS and minimize their impacts to the County's water resources.

### ***1.1 Plan Purpose***

The purpose of the Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan is to administer and coordinate federal, state, and local resources in order to help prevent and limit the spread of AIS. There are variety of ways that will provide support in achieving this including education and outreach, watercraft inspections, decontamination, assessments (research/studies), management, monitoring, and enforcement. The activities identified in this plan will have action items that will be prioritized with set goals and timelines.

The main objectives set forth in this plan are listed below:

- Prevent the Introduction of new AIS in the County.
- Slow the spread of existing AIS within the County
- Reduce the economic and environmental impacts caused by current and future AIS infestations.
- Educating the public about the importance of preventing and limiting the spread of aquatic species and their impact to humans and the environment.
- Participation and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders to carry out the goals and objectives within this plan.

### ***1.2 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid***

In 2014, the State of Minnesota (MN) approved a new funding source for counties, Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid, in order to prevent the introduction and/or limit the spread of aquatic invasive species within each County (MN Statue 447A.19). The money allocated to each county is based on the total number of watercraft parking spaces and watercraft trailer

launches. Distributions of funds in 2014 was \$4.5 million dollars and \$10 million dollars for subsequent years. Le Sueur County received \$147,589 in 2023, \$147,001 in 2024, and anticipates receiving similar funds in future years.

To view AIS Prevention Aid allocations for all counties each year since 2014, click on the following link: <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/aquatic-invasive-species-prevention-aid>. The funds that are received from the State of Minnesota assist Le Sueur County in completing the activities and goals outlined in this plan.

### 1.3 AIS in Le Sueur County

A number of AIS are already present within the County and surrounding areas. As of 2023, Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), Common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), European common reed (*Nonnative Phragmites*) and Curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) are present in Le Sueur County lakes, and Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), Grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), and Silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*) are present in the Minnesota River which defines the County's western border. To find out more information about each of these species please visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s website-



**Figure 1.** Purple Loosestrife at Rays Lake Park. Photo Credit: Le Sueur County



**Figure 2.** Eurasian Watermilfoil found at Sunfish Lake. Photo Credit: Carli Wagner, Minnesota DNR

Guide to AIS <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/id.html>.

The aquatic invasive species located within Le Sueur County are listed on the prohibited and regulated species lists. With prohibited species, it is unlawful to possess, import, purchase, transport, or introduce unless you are permitted to do so. A few examples of these species located in Le Sueur County include: Flowering Rush, Eurasian Watermilfoil, and Zebra Mussels. Regulated species are allowed to be sold, transferred, bought, etc., but may not be introduced into a free-living state unless you are permitted to do so. An example of this species located in Le Sueur County is Common Carp. Management and prevention of these species are important in continuing to protect the water resources within Le Sueur County.

Infested waters are defined in MN State Statute 84D.03 a,b,c, “ a) As the water contains a population of AIS that could spread to other waters if not regulated b) or the water is highly likely to be infested by AIS because it is connected to water that contains a population of AIS. c) The presence of common carp and curly-leaf pondweed shall not be the basis for listing a water as infested.” To see the complete infested waters list for Le Sueur County or other Minnesota Counties, click on the following link:  
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/infested.html>.

There are a variety of species that are found in Minnesota, but are not found within Le Sueur County; therefore they are considered emergent concerns due to their proximity and potential risk to Le Sueur County’s water resources. Examples of emergent species of concern, include but are not limited to: Starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*), Spiny waterflea (*Bythotrephes longimanus*), Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), Chinese mystery snail (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*), Faucet snail (*Bithynia tentaculata*). Despite whether Le Sueur County’s lakes, rivers, streams, and creeks contain aquatic invasive species or not, users should always follow AIS prevention best management practices.

#### **1.4 AIS Tools**

There are a variety of tools available to help identify and detect aquatic invasive species such as EDDMaps and iNaturalist. Many of these plant id resources can be downloaded as an app on your mobile phone. Please note that the accuracy of each app for identifying species will differ. EDDMaps is the only resource that will automatically contact Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff of the new report of a species.

- EDDMaps: <https://www.eddmaps.org/>
- iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

Another tool was developed by the University of Minnesota-Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center to assist with decision making for management of Aquatic Invasive Species called AIS

explorer. Le Sueur County has utilized this tool to help identify infestation risks for different species as well as help prioritize where to place watercraft inspectors each season.

- AIS Explorer: <https://www.aisexplorer.umn.edu/#!/home>

### ***1.5 AIS Partners and Stakeholders***

Le Sueur County relies on partners to assist with efforts to prevent and limit the spread of aquatic invasive species. Partners that historically and continue to play a critical role with these efforts include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota, Minnesota State University Mankato, Lake Associations, Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District, Le Sueur County Parks Department, Le Sueur County Sherriff's Department, contractors/consultants, businesses, and nonprofits.

The Minnesota DNR provides technical expertise and financial and educational resources for Le Sueur County. The University of Minnesota and Minnesota State University Mankato provide education and outreach expertise, resources, and research. Lake Associations contribute local financial resources, assistance with education and outreach efforts, and are considered local experts in aquatic invasive species. Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District and assists with technical expertise in management of resources. Le Sueur County Parks Department assists with invasive plant management and education outreach efforts. The Le Sueur County Sheriff's Department assists with watercraft inspections and education and outreach efforts. Contractors and consultants are hired to implement research and management efforts as well as performing watercraft inspections. Businesses are hired to help promote the prevention of Aquatic Invasive Species through education and outreach efforts such as advertisements and social media posts. Nonprofits are also partnered with to help promote the prevention of Aquatic Invasive Species through education and outreach efforts such as advertisements and social media posts. Lastly, Le Sueur County will often participate with other local government units that coordinate their own aquatic invasive species program. This type of partnership allows for a larger scale project or activity to be implemented and reach a statewide audience.

### ***1.6 AIS Program Management***

It will be the responsibility of Le Sueur County Environmental Services Department and the Le Sueur County AIS Prevention Advisory Committee to develop the County's AIS Prevention Plan. The Environmental Services Department and the AIS Prevention Advisory Committee will review the plan annually to monitor progress and determine its effectiveness. If at that time they feel the plan needs major updates and/or amendments, changes will be made accordingly and approved by the Le Sueur County Board. The County will likely not update and/or amend the plan every year, but instead updates/amendments will be made every 3-5 years. The

Environmental Services Department, AIS Prevention Advisory Committee, Minnesota DNR, County Sheriff's Department, Lake Associations, and other local stakeholders will work together to enact different aspects of this plan.

This plan is intended to outline goals, activities, actions, and timelines that will help achieve progress towards limiting and preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. The items discussed in this plan are not meant to limit what activities can be completed and pursued. Rather, the plan helps guide the County, Minnesota DNR, Lake Associations, Sheriff's Department, and other stakeholders in reaching the outcomes as described later in the plan. It is recognized that aquatic invasive species are very dynamic and over time the goals, activities, and actions will change due to individuals and groups gaining knowledge and effectiveness in working towards stopping the spread and preventing the introduction of AIS.

## 2. Strategies

The strategies listed below were selected by the AIS Prevention Advisory Committee. They continue to be of importance and can be found in past and current Le Sueur County AIS Prevention Plans. Each strategy will continue to be implemented and/or will be implemented in the future in Le Sueur County to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. The diversity in strategies demonstrates that there are numerous ways to implement and administer the program, and ultimately, help limit and prevent the spread of AIS. Each strategy continues to grow and change over time to reflect the experiences and knowledge that are gained throughout the years.

### 2.1 Education and Outreach

The education and outreach aspect of the Le Sueur County AIS Prevention Plan will focus on the following: raising public awareness, educating adults and children at numerous events and functions, distributing and utilizing AIS educational materials for events and functions, media advertising (TV, radio, billboards, etc.), presenting at events and functions, funding AIS education and outreach programs and projects, and partnering with



**Figure 1.** University of Minnesota Extension Staff Presenting at 2023 Purple Loosestrife Workshop on Rays Lake. Photo Credit: University of Minnesota Extension.

local and nonlocal organizations as well as other government units. Education and outreach may also involve AIS ambassadors and volunteers. These individuals are required to go through DNR training but are not authorized to do Level 1 watercraft inspections. Instead, they interact with individuals to discuss AIS, explain the laws, and help them understand the importance of completing watercraft inspections. By utilizing all of these resources and tools, Le Sueur County will be able to promote the adoption and consistent practice of AIS prevention behaviors by all residents and visitors throughout the county.

**Table 1. Education and Outreach**

Activity Item	Measurable Goal	Timeline	Responsible Party(s)	Prioritization of Activity	How Activity Supports AIS Prevention
<b>Activity #1:</b> Attend events and functions such as lake association meetings, fishing contests, county fair, etc. to present information about AIS.	Attend a minimum of 3 events and functions per year and provide outreach to at least 250 individuals each year.	Annually, Numerous times per year	County, MN DNR	High	Presentations at these events and functions are direct education and outreach that reaches a variety of stakeholders and reviews a variety of topics related to AIS.
<b>Activity #2:</b> Acquire and distribute AIS educational materials (books, identification cards, handouts, promotional items, etc.), props, and displays for AIS related events and functions.	Number of educational materials, props, and displays provided or shared with stakeholders at different events and functions.	Annually, Numerous times per year	County, MN DNR , Lake Associations, and Sheriff's Department	High	Educational materials provide additional ways in supporting and spreading the message of AIS prevention.
<b>Activity #3:</b> Advertise AIS prevention through local media sources (TV, radio stations, newspapers, social media, and websites) and through different platforms (signs, billboards, etc.)	Number of advertisements , newsletters, social media posts, website updates produced annually.	Annually, Numerous times per year	County, MN DNR, Sheriff's Department, SWCD	High	By utilizing numerous media sources and platforms to increase awareness about AIS prevention, a wide variety of audiences will be reached.

<b>Activity #4</b> Place signage at county and MN DNR parks and accesses.	Number of signs at county and state parks and accesses.	TBD	County, MN DNR	Moderate	The signage helps create awareness about how to prevent the spread of AIS, how to clean water orientated structures and equipment, and what bodies of water have AIS infestations.
<b>Activity #5:</b> Partner with local and nonlocal organizations and other government units to provide AIS education and outreach about species, laws, research, best management practices, treatment, and control efforts.	Number of partnerships formed and number of education and outreach events, workshops, and materials supplied.	Annually	County, MN DNR, and Lake Associations, UMN	High	Partnerships provide additional resources and will reach an increased audience size when spreading awareness about AIS prevention. Education will increase stakeholders' awareness about AIS prevention and management.
<b>Activity #6:</b> Encourage local participation and support required training for individuals in becoming an AIS ambassadors/volunteer at accesses.	Number of individuals reached out to or enrolled in ambassador/volunteer program.	TBD	All stakeholders	Low	AIS ambassadors/volunteers assist with educating/informing the public about AIS and how to slow their spread.
<b>Activity #7:</b> Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Advisory Committee members will attend conferences, trainings, and seminars to stay up to date and knowledgeable about AIS.	Each AIS per committee member will attend at least 1 conference, training, or seminar annually.	Annually	All stakeholders	High	Trainings provide the skills and knowledge for stakeholders to increase their awareness as well as help increase others awareness in AIS prevention.
<b>Activity #8:</b> When deemed appropriate and necessary, seek out additional funding opportunities to help with education and outreach.	Number of applications or awarded and/or gifted funds to assist with education and outreach efforts.	TBD	County, MN DNR, UMN, and Lake Associations	Low	Additional funding opportunities will help the County spread awareness about AIS.

## 2.2 Watercraft Inspections

The watercraft inspection component of the plan will utilize the County's Sheriff Department, and private sectors. Additionally, delegation agreements will need to be completed by the

County with the Minnesota DNR. Once a delegation agreement has been approved, the DNR will provide training and then can authorize individuals to become Level 1 or Level 2 watercraft inspectors. Only after the delegation agreement has been signed and training has been completed can an individual serve as an authorized watercraft inspector.

According to Minnesota State Statutes in section 84D.105, inspectors are able to do the following:

- Visually and strategically inspect watercraft and other water-related equipment. This may include drainage, decontamination, removal, or treatment of equipment.
- Prohibit launching or operation of watercraft and other water-related equipment if a person refuses to allow inspection or removal of AIS.
- Require a watercraft to be decontaminated prior to launching.

Le Sueur County is fortunate to have numerous bodies of water, but that also means higher risk for infestations. Many of the lakes and rivers within the County serve not only residents, but also visitors from other Minnesota counties and visitors from other states. The lakes and rivers within the County offer recreational opportunities such as swimming, fishing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and hunting. Additionally, there are numerous seasonal and permanent residents around Le Sueur County lakes. With high traffic of watercraft and people, it is imperative for Le Sueur County to continue to conduct watercraft inspections to prevent and limit the spread of AIS among Le Sueur County lakes, rivers, streams, etc. and bodies of water that are not located within the County.

**Table 2. Watercraft Inspections**

Activity Item	Measurable Goal	Timeline	Responsible Party(s)	Prioritization of Activity	How Activity Supports AIS Prevention
<b>Activity #1:</b> Utilize County Sheriff's Department to complete watercraft inspections at boat accesses located throughout the county. <i>(see Appendix C for complete list)</i>	Minimum of 100 hours of watercraft inspections per year.	Annually	Sheriff's Department	High	Watercraft inspections are one of the most effective methods in preventing and limiting the spread of AIS.
<b>Activity #2:</b> Utilize private sectors to complete watercraft inspections at boat accesses located throughout the county. <i>(see Appendix C for complete list)</i>	Minimum of 2,500 watercraft inspection hours per year.	Annually	County, Contractor	High	Watercraft inspections are one of the most effective methods in preventing and limiting the spread of AIS.

<b>Activity #3:</b> Support watercraft inspectors attending required DNR training to become an authorized Level 1 or Level 2 watercraft inspectors.	Watercraft inspectors attend a minimum of 1 training per year.	Annually	Sheriff's Department staff, City Staff, Contractor	High	The required trainings provide the skills and knowledge for individuals to be effective in performing watercraft inspections and using decontamination units.
<b>Activity #4:</b> If additional AIS trainings are offered, encourage watercraft inspectors to attend.	Watercraft inspectors attend 1 additional training per year.	Annually	Sheriff's Department staff, City staff, Contractor	Low	These trainings enhance the skills and knowledge that individuals have in order to be more effective as a Level 1 or 2 watercraft inspector.
<b>Activity #5:</b> When deemed appropriate and necessary, seek out additional funding opportunities to help with Le Sueur County's watercraft inspection program.	Number of applications or awarded and/or gifted funds to assist with watercraft inspections.	TBD	County, Cities, and Lake Associations	Low	Watercraft inspections are one of the most effective methods in preventing and limiting the spread of AIS. Additional funding may be needed in the future to help cover costs.

### 2.3 Decontamination

Another strategy to reduce the spread of AIS is the use of decontamination tools. A decontamination unit reduces the chances of spreading AIS by utilizing heated pressurized water to kill and remove AIS from boats and trailers. The success of a decontamination unit is dependent on the individual that is using the equipment, usually a DNR authorized Level 2 watercraft inspector. Le Sueur County is interested in pursuing decontamination tools to help reduce barriers for cleaning off water related equipment. Currently there are no plans for the County to provide and manage a decontamination unit. Plans may be pursued in the future



Figure 2. Decontamination Tools at Lake Washington Access.

if there is sufficient interest and funding. Currently the State of Minnesota has mobile Decontamination Units that rotate at different lake accesses throughout the state. The location of the mobile units frequently changes throughout the season. To find out when and where decontamination units will be located, please visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Courtesy Decontamination webpage:

[https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/watercraft\\_inspect/courtesydecon.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/watercraft_inspect/courtesydecon.html).

**Table 3. Decontamination**

Activity Item	Measurable Goal	Timeline	Responsible Party(s)	Prioritization of Activity	How Activity Supports AIS Prevention
<b>Activity #1:</b> Purchase decontamination unit(s) and place in various locations throughout Le Sueur County. Equipment will be purchased based off of interest, logistics, and funding availability.	Purchase a maximum of 10 aquaweed stick stations for high use accesses.	2024	County	High	Decontamination units will limit and help reduce the risk of spreading AIS to non-infested waters.
<b>Activity #2:</b> Train watercraft inspectors to become authorized Level 2 inspectors in order to utilize decontamination units.	Provide 1 training per year for watercraft inspectors to use aquaweed stick stations.	2024-2028	MN DNR	Low	Level 2 Inspectors will be properly trained to utilize the decontamination unit and can assist the public in correctly utilizing the equipment to prevent further spread of AIS.
<b>Activity #3:</b> When deemed appropriate and necessary, seek out additional funding opportunities to help Le Sueur County acquire decontamination equipment.	Number of applications or awarded funds to assist with decontamination units.	TBD	County	Low	Decontamination units will limit and help reduce the risk of spreading AIS to non-infested waters Additional funding may be needed in the future to help cover costs for the decontamination unit(s).

#### **2.4 Assessment and Research**

Work will be done to explore possible avenues for AIS introduction, risk, and movement to waterbodies within the County. The first step in assessment is to understand the current status of aquatic invasive species in Le Sueur County’s water resources. This information and data are often gathered and collected by the Minnesota DNR, Le Sueur County, University of Minnesota, and local lake associations. Existing data and research should be reviewed before making any future assessment and management decisions. Assessments and research will be a continuous effort to collect as much data and information as possible to reflect the changes that occur with AIS prevention and management efforts. There are a variety of ways to assess AIS and their

impacts to the County. Areas that would be of interest to the County include, but not limited to, the following:

- Carp Populations, Recruitment, and Spawning
- Evaluation of AIS Pre & Post Treatment Conditions
- Risk of Infestation of Water Resources
- Feasibility & Success of AIS removals and treatments
- AIS impacts to water quality and internal loading
- Existing AIS Conditions
- Integrated Pest Management Plans



**Figure 5.** Common Carp being weighed and measured as part of an assessment project. *Photo Credit: Le Sueur County.*

Aquatic invasive species assessments and research have been completed in Le Sueur County in past years for a variety of reasons. Aquatic Invasive Species Action Plans were conducted in 2015 to determine a risk assessment for 12 lakes located within the County. To review the AIS Action Plans please click on the following link:

[https://www.co.le-](https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/499/Research-and-Studies)

[sueur.mn.us/499/Research-and-Studies](https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/499/Research-and-Studies). The information gathered from these studies will be utilized to better direct management efforts as well as allow the County and AIS Prevention Advisory Committee to track changes that occur with AIS. In 2019, Le Sueur County hired a contractor to conduct carp assessments on 11 lakes. The assessments helped provide a rough estimate of the current carp populations for each lake, and whether they potentially are having an impact on water quality. If it is determined that carp are having an impact on water quality, additional research and studies may be needed to determine how to reduce carp numbers. To review the results of the carp assessments please click on the following link: <https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/499/Research-and-Studies>. The assessments provided a rough assessment for each lake, and the data can be used to assist with next steps in carp research and management. The next step would be an integrated pest management plan for each lake.

**Table 4. Assessment and Research**

Activity Item	Measurable Goal	Timeline	Responsible Party(s)	Prioritization of Activity	How Activity Supports AIS Prevention
<b>Activity #1:</b> Identify and maintain a list of current AIS infested waters.	Annually assess current AIS infested list and update Le Sueur County website.	Annually	County	High	The AIS infested waters listed is often updated. Being aware of County and neighboring counties infestations will help reduce risk of spreading AIS.
<b>Activity #2:</b> Compile AIS reports, research, studies, case-studies, and data that have been completed by the County, DNR, Universities, and Lake Associations.	Create database for AIS reports, research, studies, and data located within Le Sueur County.	Biannually	County, MN DNR, Lake Associations , and UMN Extension	High	This information will be used to determine what is known or unknown about the current conditions of AIS throughout the County, Minnesota, and the U.S. as well as what has or hasn't worked in managing/reducing the spread of AIS.
<b>Activity #3:</b> Pursue AIS (vegetation, fish, and invertebrates) assessments, feasibility studies, and research to determine how they impact water bodies and what type of management should be utilized in Le Sueur County.	Number of assessments, feasibility studies, and research projects completed.	Every 3-5 years or if there is need due to gaps in data	County, UMN, Lake Associations , MN DNR	Moderate	The impacts that AIS have on water bodies varies. In order to have a better understanding of how AIS impact water bodies and potential avenues to manage AIS; additional research/assessments may be needed. Management can be difficult with AIS and is not always effective. Feasibility studies will help determine if and what AIS management is appropriate for a specific water body.
<b>Activity #5:</b> Evaluate AIS treatment efforts and/or post-treatment conditions.	Number of workshops,	TBD	All stakeholders	High	Monitoring AIS treatment efforts will determine if treatment of AIS was successful and if additional treatment is needed.

<b>Activity #6:</b> When deemed appropriate and necessary, seek out additional funding opportunities to complete AIS assessment, research, and management activities.	Number of applications or awarded/ gifted funds to assist with assessment and research efforts.	TBD	County, MN DNR, Lake Associations	Moderate	Funding is often a limiting factor for completing projects. Additional funding opportunities will help the County, MN DNR, and Lake Associations complete AIS assessment and research activities that will be needed.
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**2.5 Management and Monitoring**

The County will work with the MN DNR, Lake Associations, and Municipalities on managing AIS within the County. Management of AIS within the County may include activities, but not limited to, the following: mechanical treatment, chemical treatments, biocontrol, structures/barriers to prevent AIS movement, drawdowns, monitoring, recruitment mortalities, etc. If the County or any other entity pursues any type of management, the proper federal, state, and local permits will be secured before work begins.

Le Sueur County has assisted with mechanical, chemical, and biological treatments for lakes located within the County. If any type of treatment is needed for a particular water body, the County will coordinate with all stakeholders involved to determine if treatment is needed and appropriate. Funding opportunities may be available from the County to support treatment efforts.



**Figure 6.** Loosestrife Beetles being reared to be released later for biocontrol management.

In order to monitor AIS, the County will encourage seasonal surveys. These surveys will be used to determine the current growth of AIS already known to be infesting a water body or utilized to scout for the introduction of new AIS not already known to be present in a lake. Additionally, these surveys may be utilized to better direct AIS control efforts. AIS tools such as iNaturalist and EDDMaps should be utilized to assist with surveying efforts.

**Table 5. Management and Monitoring**

Activity Item	Measurable Goal	Timeline	Responsible Party(s)	Prioritization of Activity	How Activity Supports AIS Prevention
<b>Activity #1:</b> Support local efforts for AIS removal and treatment. Treatment efforts can include mechanical, chemical, or biological.	Number of permits issued, or amount of funds awarded.	TBD	County, Municipalities, Lake Associations	High	The County will work with all stakeholders in AIS removal/treatment in order to reduce/limit AIS presence in water bodies.
<b>Activity #2:</b> Coordinate with MN DNR to identify and establish management efforts when necessary.	Total hours for coordination efforts or number of reports/summaries developed.	TBD	County, Municipalities, Lake Associations, MN DNR, UMN	Low	Le Sueur County and the MN DNR will work together to determine what management efforts would be effective in preventing the spread of AIS.
<b>Activity #3:</b> Monitor pre & post treatment of AIS infested waters in Le Sueur County.	Number of monitoring efforts or reports developed (will vary by each resource type).	Annually	County, MN DNR, Contractor, and Lake Associations	High	Monitoring AIS treatment efforts will help determine if management was successful and if additional management is needed.
<b>Activity #4:</b> Monitor water bodies (lakes, rivers, wetlands, stormwater ponds, etc.) in Le Sueur County for current conditions of AIS.	Number of monitoring efforts or reports developed (will vary by each resource type).	Every 2-3 years	County, MN DNR, Lake Associations, and other stakeholders	Moderate	Data will be available in order to determine the extent of AIS presence in water bodies and determine if management is needed in order to prevent the spread of AIS.
<b>Activity #5:</b> Install structures or barriers within lakes, streams, ditches, and wetlands to reduce movement of nonnative fish.	Number of structures or barriers installed.	TBD	County, MN DNR, SWCD	Low	Structures and barriers can limit and prevent the movement of nonnative fish from one body of water to another reducing risk.
<b>Activity #6:</b> Implement chemical treatments or drawdowns on water bodies that are infested with Carp species to reduce carp populations.	Number of treatments or drawdowns used to reduce carp populations.	TBD	MN DNR	Moderate	Using chemical treatments or drawdowns on lakes can be an effective management tool for reducing carp populations.

<b>Activity #7:</b> Create an AIS monitoring program for Le Sueur County.	AIS Monitoring Program Created	2024-2025	County, MN DNR, UMN, Lake Associations, Sheriff's Department, Municipalities	High	Creating an AIS Monitoring Program for Le Sueur County will help identify spread of existing AIS species and identify any new species that may be introduced into water resources.
<b>Activity #8:</b> When deemed appropriate and necessary, seek out additional funding opportunities to complete AIS management activities.	Number of applications or awarded/ gifted funds to assist with management and monitoring efforts or number of volunteer hours to assist with these efforts.	TBD	County, MN DNR, Lake Associations	Moderate	Funding is often a limiting factor for completing projects. Additional funding opportunities will help the County, MN DNR, and Lake Associations complete AIS management activities that will be needed.

**2.6 New Infestation Plan**

A New Infestation Plan will be developed to address new, localized infestations in an effort to keep AIS from becoming established within a water body. This plan will be utilized solely to deal with new, isolated introductions and not with AIS that have already become established. Infestations are considered new when the AIS has not been previously recorded by the MN DNR in the water body in question. Suspected new infestations should be reported directly to the MN DNR immediately to start the response process. The MN DNR is required to verify or deny the report. If the new infestation is verified by the MN DNR, communications should be initiated by the Le Sueur County Environmental Services Department, Lake Association (if applicable), any local businesses on or near the lake, and neighboring counties about the new AIS occurrence.

Le Sueur County has set aside funds to help respond to new infestations. In order to be eligible for funding, the proper permits need to be obtained by the MN DNR. Additionally, the funds can be used for mechanical, biological, or chemical removal with County Board approval. A response guidance group made up of MN DNR staff, local resource managers, local organization leaders, consultants, and other experts as needed will be convened for each new infestation. The group will discuss available funding, the pros and cons of various treatment options, and monitoring that will be needed. A treatment and monitoring plan will be developed and implemented. A report summarizing response efforts and recommended next steps will be submitted to Le Sueur County.

**Table 6. New Infestation Plan**

Activity Item	Measurable Goal	Timeline	Responsible Party(s)	Prioritization of Activity	How Activity Supports AIS Prevention
<b>Activity #1:</b> Provide financial support for AIS removal and/or treatment of new infestations.	Total amount of funds provided for AIS removal and treatment efforts.	TBD	County, MN DNR, Lake Associations, and Municipalities	High	The County will provide financial support in AIS removal and treatment to limit/prevent further spread of new infestations.
<b>Activity #2:</b> Obtain appropriate permits and documentation for AIS removal and treatment of new infestations.	Number of permits applied for and approved.	TBD	County, Lake Associations, and Municipalities	High	The County will obtain the required permits and documentation needed to support AIS removal and treatment to limit/prevent further spread of new infestations.
<b>Activity #3</b> Report suspected new AIS infestation to the MN DNR. The MN DNR is required to verify or deny the report. If the new infestation is verified by the MN DNR, communications should be initiated by Le Sueur County Environmental Services Department, Lake Association (if applicable), any local businesses on or near the lake, and neighboring counties about the new AIS occurrence.	Contact hours of reporting new infestation to MN DNR, lake association(s), neighboring LGUs, and businesses. AND Minimum of 1 press release published in local newspaper.	TBD	All stakeholders	High	Quick responses and communication to all stakeholders will help reduce the risk of new infestations spreading throughout the same water body or to additional water bodies.

**2.7 Enforcement**

Enforcement of AIS prevention within the County will be handled by the local sheriff’s department. With the continued spread of AIS within the State of Minnesota, it is becoming more important to enforce prevention if we hope to reduce or halt the spread of these organisms and protect our waters for future generations.

Enforcement of the County’s AIS will be conducted on two main fronts, at access sites and on the road. Boats will be inspected as they enter and leave the access. By inspecting before a boat enters a waterbody, we can prevent new introductions. By inspecting a boat when it

leaves, we can prevent the unlawful transport of AIS from infested lakes. If an individual refuses to have their water related equipment inspected, the Le Sueur County Sheriff’s Department will be notified. If enforcement training is offered by the Minnesota DNR for officers, the County will encourage the sheriff’s department to attend.

**Table 7. Enforcement**

Activity Item	Measurable Goal	Timeline	Responsible Party(s)	Prioritization of Activity	How Activity Supports AIS Prevention
<b>Activity #1:</b> Utilize local sheriff’s department to promote and enforce AIS laws and regulations through watercraft inspections.	Minimum of 50 hours of local law enforcement promoting and enforcing AIS laws and regulations.	Annually	Le Sueur County Sheriff’s Department	High	The local sheriff’s department is knowledgeable about AIS laws and regulations and is able to enforce them. This will prevent AIS from spreading to and infesting other waters.
<b>Activity #2:</b> Encourage and support the sheriff department’s attendance at MN DNR enforcement trainings.	Number of local law enforcement attending AIS trainings.	Annually	Le Sueur County Sheriff’s Department	Low	The enforcement trainings sharpen the sheriff’s departments’ skills and knowledge to be more effective in enforcing AIS laws and regulations.

# *Appendices*

## **Appendix A. Le Sueur County AIS Contacts**

Le Sueur County staff (Environmental Services Department) is responsible for administering and coordinating the County's Aquatic Invasive Species program.

The Sheriff's Department assists the Environmental Services Department with Aquatic Invasive Species education and outreach efforts. The department also performs watercraft inspections and enforces Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species laws and regulations.

Minnesota DNR staff provides guidance and advice to the County when administering the AIS program. Additionally, the Minnesota DNR participates in many of the activities that are listed in this plan.

The AIS Prevention Advisory Committee was created to help the County direct its AIS prevention efforts in a manner that was effective and comprehensive while including local, county, and state AIS prevention goals/objectives. The Committee provides feedback about the current AIS prevention efforts in the County and brings forth knowledge/ideas to the group.

### **Environmental Services Department Staff**

Holly Bushman, Environmental Resources Specialist, 507-357-8540, [hbushman@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:hbushman@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

Trevor Rudenick, Resource Conservation Technician, [trudenick@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:trudenick@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

### **Sheriff's Department Staff**

Alyson Deegan, Le Sueur County Deputy Water Patrol, 507-357-4440, [adeegan@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:adeegan@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

Jim Staupe, Le Sueur County Deputy, 507-357-8386, [jstaupe@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:jstaupe@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

Brett Mason, Le Sueur County Sheriff, 507-357-8557, [bmason@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:bmason@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

### **Minnesota DNR Staff**

Vacant, Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist, 507-389-8812

Tina Fitzgerald, AIS Prevention Planner, 651-259-5146, [Tina.Fitzgerald@state.mn.us](mailto:Tina.Fitzgerald@state.mn.us)

Travis Kinsell, Regional Watercraft Inspection Supervisor, 320-753-0336, [Travis.Kinsell@state.mn.us](mailto:Travis.Kinsell@state.mn.us)

### **AIS Prevention Advisory Committee**

Alyson Deegan, Le Sueur County Deputy Water Patrol, [adeegan@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:adeegan@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

Brenda Hennek Sholl, Lake Washington Improvement Association, [bmh3231@gmail.com](mailto:bmh3231@gmail.com)

Dave Gliszinski, Le Sueur County Commissioner, [dgliszinski@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:dgliszinski@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

Dennis Byron, Lake Francis Lake Association, [dennisfbyron@hotmail.com](mailto:dennisfbyron@hotmail.com)

Eric Lomen, Waterville Lakes Association, [elomen@lomen.com](mailto:elomen@lomen.com)

Holly Bushman, Environmental Resources Specialist (contact information above)

Karl Schmidtke, Resource Technician, [kschmidtke@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:kschmidtke@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

Marly Ayers, Rays Lake Association, [marleyaa@hotmail.com](mailto:marleyaa@hotmail.com)

Michael Schultz, Le Sueur SWCD, [mschultz@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:mschultz@co.le-sueur.mn.us)

Nicki Weber, Lake Volney Lake Association, [nickiweber02@gmail.com](mailto:nickiweber02@gmail.com)

Carol Burns, The Greater Jefferson-German Lakes Association, [burns@issmankato.com](mailto:burns@issmankato.com)

Jill Steffen, The Greater Jefferson-German Lakes Association, [jillsteffen246@gmail.com](mailto:jillsteffen246@gmail.com)

Shane Bugeja, Le Sueur County Extension Office-Extension Educator, [sbugeja@umn.edu](mailto:sbugeja@umn.edu)

Tina Fitzgerald, MN DNR AIS Prevention Planner (contact information above)

Travis Kinsell, MN DNR Regional Watercraft Inspection Supervisor, (contact information above)

Trevor Rudenick, Resource Conservation Technician (contact information above)

*\*Please note that the Le Sueur County AIS contacts may change over time due to individuals no longer in the position as described above. Additionally, individuals may be added to the list above. If you are having troubles contacting any one on the list, please contact the Le Sueur County Environmental Services Department.\**

## **Appendix B. Grants and Programs**

Grants and programs from the DNR, UMN, and other organizations are typically available for a variety of AIS activities such as monitoring, decontamination, treatment, education/outreach, new infestations, etc. The grants and programs listed in this Appendix are known grants/programs that have occurred in the past or are currently being offered. Funding availability determines when grants become available, and they will be pursued as needed. New grants and programs may come about during the lifespan of this plan, and hence, would not be included. The plan, specifically Appendix B, may be updated when new grants & programs become available.

To see what DNR grants and programs are currently available please visit the following link:  
[https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/aquatic\\_invasive/index.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/aquatic_invasive/index.html)

### **Grants**

#### AIS Control Projects

The AIS Control Projects Grant provides funding to help cover the cost of curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, and flowering rush control projects. The grant assists in covering the cost of herbicide, mechanical control, or a combination of both treatment types. Entities such as lake associations, watershed districts, cities, and counties may apply for funding.

#### Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) Research Studies

MAISRC offers a competitive grant process to expand research efforts for Minnesota's AIS problems. Proposals for research must include one of the following research priorities: control and management, prevention of establishment and spread, risk assessment, and early detection of AIS in Minnesota.

### **Programs**

#### DNR Signs at Water Accesses

The DNR provides a limited number of Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! Signs are at no cost for lake associations, local governments, and other groups to post at water accesses. You may also print your own signs.

## Appendix C. List of Le Sueur County Accesses & Map

Table 8.

<i><b>Water Body Name</b></i>	<i><b>Ramp Type</b></i>	<i><b>Administrator</b></i>
Cannon River-Waterville	Concrete	City
Clear Lake	Concrete	DNR
Clear Lake	Fishing pier	County
Diamond Lake	Carry in	DNR
Dora Lake	Gravel	DNR
Lake Emily	Concrete	DNR
Fish Lake	Concrete	County
Francis Lake (West)	Concrete	County
Francis Lake (East)	Concrete	DNR
German Lake (North)	Concrete	DNR
German Lake (Southwest)	Carry-in/pier	DNR
Gorman Lake (West)	Gravel	County
Gorman Lake (South)	Concrete	DNR
Gorman Lake (Southeast)	Carry-in	County
Greenleaf Lake	Concrete	DNR
Henry Lake	Gravel	DNR
Jefferson Lake	Fishing pier	County
Jefferson Lake (West)	Concrete	DNR
Jefferson Lake (East)	Concrete	DNR
Jefferson Lake (Geldners Sawmill)	Fishing pier	County
Minnesota River-Kasota	Carry-in	County
Minnesota River-Saint Peter	Concrete	City
Minnesota River-Ottawa	Carry-in	County
Minnesota River-Le Sueur	Carry-in	City
Minnesota River-Henderson	Concrete	City
Pepin Lake	Concrete	County
Ray's Lake	Gravel	County
Ray's Lake	Fishing Pier	County
Rice Lake	Carry-in	DNR
Roemhildts Lake	Concrete	DNR
Sabre Lake	Gravel	County
Saint Peter Trout Ponds	Shorefishing	DNR
Sakatah Lake (State Park)	Fishing pier	DNR
Sanborn Lake	Gravel	DNR
Scotch Lake	Gravel	DNR
Steele Lake	Gravel	County
Sunfish Lake	Concrete	County

Tetonka Lake	Concrete	DNR
Tetonka Lake	Fishing pier	DNR
Tetonka Lake	Fishing pier	City
Thomas Lake	Carry-in	DNR
Tustin Lake	Carry-in	DNR
Volney Lake	Concrete	DNR
Washington Lake (West)	Concrete	DNR
Washington Lake (North)	Concrete	DNR

If you are interested in access information for Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) or Aquatic Management Areas (AMA) please contact the local Minnesota DNR office in Waterville. Their contact information is as follows: 507-362-4223 or [waterville.fisheries@state.mn.us](mailto:waterville.fisheries@state.mn.us)

# Le Sueur County Boat Access Map



## Legend

### Boat Accesses

-  Le Sueur County
-  MN River



## **Appendix D. Request for Proposals**

### **YEAR Request for Proposals (RFP) Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid**

#### **Background**

Le Sueur County is issuing a grant application for local lake associations to distribute the State of Minnesota's Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid of approximately **\$30,000** for activities that are AIS related. Each lake association is eligible to request up to and not to exceed **\$5,000**. Additional funds may become available if the proposed project addresses priorities and goals that are included within existing local plans such as but not limited to: One Watershed One Plans, County Water Plan, and AIS Prevention Plan.

All projects must comply with local, state, and federal statutes. Furthermore, all projects require that the funds must solely be used to prevent the introduction and limit the spread of aquatic invasive species.

#### **Funding Priorities in YEAR**

Le Sueur County is interested in receiving proposals related to aquatic resources (lakes, rivers, streams) and those species that are considered nonnative or hybridized aquatic organisms that invade nonnative ecosystems beyond their natural, historic, and native range, cause damage or harm to human uses and the environment and create negative economic impacts.

The County will only consider supporting implementation of projects that address one or more of the following categories:

- Broaden knowledge of and participation in detection of aquatic invasive species.
- Explore or address specific pathways for AIS introduction.
  - Includes watercraft inspections.
- Assess county resources and their risk for AIS introduction and spread.
- Increase public awareness, participation, and education/outreach efforts for AIS prevention efforts.
- Manage existing populations of AIS.

#### **Eligible Applicants**

This grant application process is **only** for lake associations located within Le Sueur County. A member on behalf of the lake association may apply for these funds but must be authorized to do so by approval of the lake association board.

### **Eligible Costs**

Proposals must describe and explain what the Aquatic Invasive Species funds would be used for; a need must be demonstrated. Other information that must be provided within the application includes: the calendar year the funds will be used and the total amount of funds that will be requested. The County may request additional documents along with the RFP such as permits, maps, photos, etc. Any requests of funds for treatment efforts must include a delineation report and MN DNR permit before the project can start. Equipment may be funded on a limited basis, provided there are proper inventory controls. Applicants must demonstrate they have adequate financial controls for accepting and reporting on funding.

Projects will be ranked and scored by the County to determine which projects should be funded each year. Any project proposals that are submitted after the application deadline will not be considered for funds that fiscal year.

Le Sueur County AIS funding cannot supplant other funding or be used for expenditures prior to the award date. Funds are not eligible for activities that have already or are planned to be completed by the County, State agencies, Soil & Water Conservation District, University of Minnesota, and/or any other entities.

#### *Eligible Expenses:*

- Chemical, Mechanical, and Biocontrol treatment efforts
- Delineation of AIS
- Permit Fees
- Education/Outreach materials (signs, props, displays, brochures, handouts, etc.)
- Reports, plans, studies, and assessments related to AIS monitoring, management, risk assessments, and community based social marketing efforts
- Equipment (ex: garbage cans for bait or weed disposal, aquaweed sticks, plant rakes, etc.)
- Watercraft Inspections
- Match for planned projects that will be completed by another local, state, or federal agency/organization

#### *Ineligible Expenses:*

- Individual lakeshore owner expenses for Chemical, Mechanical, and Biocontrol treatment efforts
- Maintenance Costs for Projects and Equipment
- Projects not related to AIS activities
- Activities that local, state, and federal agencies and organizations are already doing

## **RFP Submission Format**

Font: minimum size is 11 point

Margins: 1-inch page margins

Page Limit: 15 pages; one side of an 8½" x 11" piece of paper equals one page

Required RFP Submission Format:

- Cover Letter
- Application Form
- Itemized Budget
- Appendices (if applicable):
  - Letters of Support
  - Permit(s)
  - Delineation Reports
  - Board Minutes
  - Maps
  - Pictures
  - Concept drawings and site plans
  - Inspection Hours Spreadsheet

## **Deadlines and Timeframes**

Proposals are due by **4:00pm** on **Friday, Date**. Applications may be submitted electronically (PDF format) or by mail. Send application materials by mail to: Le Sueur County Environmental Services, 88 S Park Ave, Le Center, MN 56057. Send application material by email to: [hbushman@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:hbushman@co.le-sueur.mn.us).

Proposals will be reviewed and applicants will be notified of funding decisions in **Date YEAR**.

## **Review and Selection Process**

1. The Environmental Services Department will review and evaluate all qualified RFPs submitted.
2. The Environmental Services Department will identify the top-ranked finalist candidates and recommend them to the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners.
3. The Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners will authorize approval of the top-ranked candidates.
4. The Applicant and the Environmental Services Department will negotiate a final scope, schedule, and budget. No work may begin until a Notice to Proceed has been issued by the Environmental Services Department.
  - a. If a project has started before approval from the County, funds will be forfeited.