

Chapter IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I – INTRODUCTION

Chapter III of this plan explored numerous forms of outreach that have been conducted to educate the public and identify critical AIS issues specific to Washington County. This chapter expands on these critical issues through the identification of goals, objectives and recommended actions. This chapter also prioritizes planned actions and identifies entities responsible for implementing recommended actions over the next five years. Accomplishing the goals listed in this chapter and successfully combating AIS will benefit many stakeholders throughout the County.

Stakeholders Affected by Aquatic Invasive Species

The following list attempts to include the many groups and interests that may be impacted by AIS and those who may benefit from the implementation of this plan. There is overlap among various parties listed and the list is not all-inclusive.

- Residents of Washington County
- Visitors and tourists of Washington County
- Motorized watercraft users
- Non-motorized watercraft users
- Local governments
- Lake associations
- Riparian/waterfront property owners
- Local tourism organizations and chambers
- Watercraft retailers/rental shops
- Sporting good stores/retailers
- Bait shops
- Private boat launch owners
- Resort and campground owners and clientele
- Service industry owners and staff
- Anglers
- Fishing guides
- Nature watchers
- Waterfowl hunters
- Swimmers
- Pet stores
- Garden centers

PART II – ISSUES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The AIS Advisory Committee (AC) believes that in order to be successful in the fight against AIS in Washington County, five primary issues must be addressed: education, prevention, monitoring, control, and sustained planning.

EDUCATION

As explained in the previous chapter, AIS education and awareness has increased in recent years, but many boaters and riparian/ shoreline property owners are still not fully aware of AIS laws and their potential ability to spread AIS. In order to address this issue, the AIS Advisory Committee (AC) identified numerous approaches to disseminate educational information including emphasizing how AIS

can affect property values, make a waterbody unusable for recreational purposes, and negatively impact the local economy.

Thoroughly informing and educating the public can be accomplished through improved signage, publications, enforcing regulations, and increased volunteer efforts. Many of these efforts can be initiated by the County's AIS Coordinator but the longevity of effectiveness largely relies on volunteer efforts, local governments, and property owners. Funding is commonly an inhibiting factor in the combat against AIS, therefore obtaining grant funds is essential.

GOAL: Educate residents and visitors of the County about the existence and impacts of AIS.

PREVENTION

Although many of the major lakes in Washington County have been confirmed as having some type of AIS present in them, there are still many waterbodies that remain uninfested or contain specific AIS populations that can still be contained or eliminated. Key prevention measures must be taken for them to remain uninfested or plans implemented to eradicate the AIS populations. Such measures include ensuring boats are thoroughly cleaned when leaving an infested waterbody, maintaining an inventory of AIS information, curbing the threat of AIS being spread from Lake Michigan and other lakes to Washington County, bolstering funding efforts, and communicating and coordinating with other entities.

GOAL: Prevent the spread of AIS to waterbodies that are currently uninfested, keep existing AIS populations in check and eradicate them if possible.

MONITORING

Effectively monitoring AIS populations largely depends on education and the actions of many. Although the County's AIS Coordinator may monitor many waterbodies for AIS, long-term monitoring AIS countywide will depend on proactive measures taken by public volunteers. Public interest and knowledge of AIS has increased in recent years but must continue to be enhanced. To effectively monitor AIS populations within the County, the public must first be motivated to look for AIS, be able to positively identify species, have avenues for reporting their findings, and reported information must be confirmed, documented, and maintained.

GOAL: Monitor and maintain an inventory of existing AIS populations.

CONTROL

Once AIS populations are identified and monitored, they must then be controlled and if possible, eradicated to prevent further spread within a waterbody or to a separate waterbody. To successfully control AIS populations, actions must be conducted swiftly via a plan of action that is in place before problems escalate, become extremely costly, and often impossible to overcome. It is important to recognize that all AIS are unique and require different measures to successfully control, and the keys to doing so are vigilance and being proactive.

GOAL: Control the spread of AIS populations.

SUSTAINED PLANNING

As action is taken to address goals and objectives within this plan, the County must be proactive through a sustained planning effort to combat AIS. This includes keeping key policy makers and government officials abreast of AIS laws and issues and communicating, collaborating, and coordinating efforts with numerous organizations. Funding is perhaps the most common inhibiting factor in successfully

combating AIS. Whether it is for the planning process or on-the-water action, Washington County, local governments, lake associations, and other organizations affected by AIS should explore all short and long-term funding opportunities available.

GOAL: Sustain the implementation of the AIS Strategic Plan.

AIS ISSUES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIONS

*Notes: Planned actions under each goal were prioritized by the AIS Advisory Committee. Statuses of planned actions are listed as **ongoing** or as **the opportunity arises (AOA)**. The agency assumed to provide the lead role is indicated with bold font. If no agency is listed in bold, responsibility is assumed to be shared equally among those listed. Agency acronyms are listed on Page viii.*

EDUCATION

GOAL: Educate residents and visitors of the County about the existence and impacts of AIS.

WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTION	STATUS OF PLANNED ACTIONS	MAIN AGENCY	PRIORITY
1. Inform boaters so they are fully aware of AIS related laws, fines, and penalties, and their potential ability to spread AIS.	Improve signage at boat launches by making language on signs more concise, emphasizing potential fines and penalties, promoting an "AIS of the month" with photos and facts about a specific species found in or threatening the waterbody, and notifying launch users of AIS known to be in the waterbody.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD , WDNR	High
	Utilize local media to spread the AIS message, especially before summer holidays, including radio interviews and submitting articles to local newspapers. Also, invite media to AIS workshops and functions held in the County.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD , WDNR	High
	Enhance the AIS message by emphasizing how AIS can affect someone personally (such as negatively impacting property values and making a waterbody unusable).	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD , PPD, WDNR	High
	Confirm that bait retailers, landscapers, pet shops, water garden stores, and other related businesses are not selling AIS and encourage them to post AIS information in their retail outlet.	ONGOING	LWCD , WDNR	High
	Present AIS information via guest lectures at local schools, adult civic group meetings (Rotary, Lions), and youth group activities (4-H, Scouts).	AOA	LWCD	High
	Inform the public about how to properly check equipment to prevent the spread of AIS.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD , WDNR	
	AIS flashcards and other informational materials should be available at boat launches for people to take.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD , WDNR	

1. <i>Continued.</i>	Establish mass AIS emailing and postal mailing lists for disseminating AIS information.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD , WDNR	
	Publish lake newsletters that include information regarding AIS.	ONGOING	LO, LWCD , WDNR	
	Spread the AIS message at lake association meetings by distributing fact sheets and inviting guest speakers (make the message personal and describe economic impacts).	AOA	LG, LO , LWCD, WDNR	
	Work with UW-Extension of Washington County in disseminating AIS information through its publications.	AOA	LWCD , UWEX	
	Work with utilities and local governments who regularly distribute mass mailings to include an AIS insert periodically.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD	
	Work with UW-Extension to develop marketing/educational tools for riparian property owners that inform them of actions that help prevent accidental introductions of AIS.	AOA	LO, LWCD , UWEX, WDNR	
	Conduct informational workshops for specific audiences: local governments, lake associations, watercraft retailers, sporting good stores/bait dealers, resort owners, local tourism organizations and chambers, fishing guides, and others.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD , WDNR	
	Publish annual AIS newsletter for citizens, boat owners, local governments, lake associations, schools, media outlets, chambers, and other local groups.	AOA	LWCD	
	Create a Washington County AIS website with educational information; a portal for reporting infestations and links to AIS-related State and Federal webpages.	ONGOING	LWCD , PD	

PREVENTION

GOAL: Prevent the spread of AIS to waterbodies that are currently uninfested, keep existing AIS populations in check and eradicate them if possible.

WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTION	STATUS OF PLANNED ACTIONS	MAIN AGENCY	PRIORITY
<p>1. Institute a watercraft inspection program at all frequently used boat launches in the County and enhance watercraft equipment cleaning efforts to fully eliminate any potential spread of AIS.</p>	<p>Enforce existing regulations and encourage waterbody users to report violations. Consider a joint effort with WDNR water guard wardens and Washington County Sheriff Department to conduct several enforcement days at the busiest boat launches during the open water season.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>	<p>WDNR, LO</p>	<p>High</p>
	<p>Install boat decontamination facilities at the most frequently used boat launch sites and at launch sites on waterbodies known to be the most heavily infested with AIS.</p>	<p>AOA</p>	<p>LCC, LG, LO, LWCD, WDNR</p>	<p>High</p>
	<p>Identify alternative sources for long-term funding of watercraft inspection programs and seasonal staff.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>	<p>LCC, LG, LO, LWCD, WDNR</p>	<p>High</p>
	<p>Utilize Maps 2 and 21 in this plan and work with the WDNR, and private and public entities that own or operate boat launches to identify and prioritize which boat launches should be targeted for increasing AIS awareness and monitoring efforts.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>	<p>LG, LO, LWCD, WDNR</p>	<p>High</p>
	<p>Encourage and assist local governments, lake associations, or other organizations to establish and maintain watercraft inspection programs.</p>	<p>AOA</p>	<p>LG, LO, LWCD, WDNR</p>	
<p>2. Maintain communication between the County, neighboring counties, local governments and the State concerning AIS issues.</p>	<p>Communicate with counties on the Lake Michigan shoreline to discuss efforts to prevent AIS from leaving the lake and potentially spreading to other counties. Actions should include encouraging counties or local governments on the Lake Michigan shoreline to install boat decontamination facilities at boat launches.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>	<p>LG, LWCD, SEWRPC, WDNR</p>	<p>High</p>
	<p>Keep abreast of new and review existing State AIS legislation and respond accordingly.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>	<p>COBO, LCC, LWCD, PPD</p>	

2. <i>Continued.</i>	Include local governments, WDNR State AIS Coordinator, and all County Board Supervisors on mailing lists for AIS specific newsletters and related mailings.	ONGOING	LWCD	
3. Encourage donations/funding from various entities to fund AIS activities.	Encourage that a portion of boat launch fees be allocated to AIS activities such as adding facilities to clean boats at launch sites.	ONGOING	LG, LWCD, PCPC, PPD, WDNR	High
	Encourage lake groups to request donations via their newsletters.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD	
	Encourage local governments to raise funds to support AIS activities.	ONGOING	LG, LWCD, WDNR	
4. Maintain an inventory of each landing and regularly check for adequate AIS signage and maintenance of that signage.	Provide local governments with a list and map of publicly-used waterbodies in their jurisdiction that displays the type of access (trailer or carry-in only) and recommended AIS signage.	AOA	LG, LWCD, WDNR	
	Encourage local governments to establish a volunteer corps of lake users who visit the lakes often and can collect AIS data.	AOA	LG, LWCD, WDNR	
	Contact local governments each spring using a standardized form of feedback to ensure proper AIS signage is posted at their landings.	ONGOING	LWCD, WDNR	
5. Encourage AIS monitoring and prevention for all special events held on waterbodies within Washington County.	Communicate with the regional WDNR Fisheries Biologist regarding fishing tournaments or other permitted activities held on local waterbodies.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD	
	Communicate with resorts/businesses/other organizations that host tournaments or other recreational activities on local waterbodies.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD	
6. Encourage lake groups and homeowner associations to apply for available AIS grant funds.	Send regular email broadcasts of grant types and deadlines to local governments and lake organizations.	ONGOING	LWCD, WDNR	
	Establish a web page of helpful hints, links, and other resources for grant writing.	ONGOING	PPD, WDNR	
	Develop a contact list of individuals around the County that will assist others with grant applications.	ONGOING	PPD, WDNR	

MONITORING

GOAL: Monitor and maintain an inventory of existing AIS populations.

WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTION	STATUS OF PLANNED ACTIONS	MAIN AGENCY	PRIORITY
1. Encourage and support efforts to monitor waters for the presence of AIS.	Solicit public interest via press notices for assistance with lake monitoring programs.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD, WDNR	High
	Utilize fishing forum websites such as <i>Lake-Link.com</i> to promote AIS awareness.	AOA	LWCD, LO	High
	Publicize the County’s AIS Identification and Response Guide for reporting newly discovered AIS.	ONGOING	LCC, LG, LO, LWCD, PPD, WDNR	High
	Verify newly discovered AIS as reported through the County’s AIS Identification and Response Guide and initiate follow-up action or recommend actions for local entities to conduct.	AOA	LWCD	High
	Hold two public lake monitoring workshops per year in the County.	ONGOING	LWCD, PPD	
	Explore an “Adopt-A-Lakeshore/Landing” program on lakeshores to monitor invasive species.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD	
	Solicit civic groups (such as Rotary and Scouts) to contribute time and effort to monitor for invasive species.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD	
2. Maintain an inventory of waters in the County and existing AIS populations.	Continue to update the inventory portion of this plan as AIS conditions change on lakes. As maps are updated, include on County website.	AOA	GIS, LWCD, PD	
	Encourage private pond owners to report AIS existing in their ponds.	ONGOING	LWCD	
	Coordinate with the WDNR and other AIS-related organizations adding to and using their AIS inventory databases.	ONGOING	LWCD, WDNR	

CONTROL

GOAL: Control the spread of AIS populations.

WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTION	STATUS OF PLANNED ACTIONS	MAIN AGENCY	PRIORITY
1. Identify, contain, and eradicate (if possible) AIS populations to prevent further spread within a waterbody.	Increase AIS awareness among riparian landowners to increase AIS identification during early establishment stages.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD, PPD, WDNR	High
	Encourage riparian landowners to be proactive by removing AIS populations themselves if they are able or work with lake organizations to contract out for chemical treatment of lakes and other waterbodies.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD, WDNR	High
	Increase organized volunteer efforts for the physical removal of AIS and to monitor launch sites.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD, WDNR	High
	Seek dedicated funding for rapid response of pioneer and established AIS infestations.	AOA	LG, PPD, WDNR	High
	Encourage the AIS Coordinator to seek, obtain and /or maintain a chemical applicator status for chemical treatment of wetlands.	AOA	PPD	
	Publicize the County’s AIS Identification and Response Guide and educate citizens and relevant entities on how to utilize it.	ONGOING	LCC, LWCD, WDNR	
	Publicize the WDNR hotline at boat launches and encourage launch users to report any illegal AIS activities they may witness.	ONGOING	LWCD, WDNR	
2. Keep documentation of the infested waters in the County, the level of infestations and management.	Maintain a database within the LWCD with locations of infestations in collaboration with the WDNR SWIMS database.	ONGOING	GIS, LWCD, WDNR	
	Communicate with lake groups on their management activities and record locations and types of management.	ONGOING	LG, LO, LWCD	

SUSTAINED PLANNING

GOAL: Sustain the implementation of the AIS Strategic Plan.

WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES	PLANNED ACTION	STATUS OF PLANNED ACTIONS	MAIN AGENCY	PRIORITY
1. Continue to seek funding for staff (especially the AIS Coordinator position) to continue AIS activities.	Seek dedicated AIS staff time under the Land and Water Conservation Division.	ONGOING	LCC, LWCD	High
	Explore the potential of utilizing a portion of the County sales tax to fund AIS management efforts on local lakes.	AOA	COBO, LCC, PPD	High
	Pursue short and long-term grant funding opportunities.	AOA	COBO, LCC, LG, LO, PPD, WDNR	High
	Explore the potential of local governments funding a position for a permanent AIS Coordinator in Washington County.	AOA	LG, LWCD	High
	Incorporate recommendations of this Strategic Plan into the County's Land & Water Resource Management Plan and County Comprehensive Plan.	AOA	PPD, PD, LWCD	High
	Assist local groups and organizations with grant writing and submission.	AOA	LWCD, WDNR	
2. Educate decision-making bodies and policy makers about the importance of AIS management.	Present facts to the County Board and local government officials about the economic impact of local lakes and how AIS can affect their communities through local businesses, tourism, and property values.	AOA	LWCD	High
	Garner and publicize support for this plan from relevant organizations throughout the County.	ONGOING	LWCD, PPD	
	Publicize the positive effects resulting from AIS management efforts.	AOA	LWCD, PPD, WDNR	
3. Update this AIS Strategic Plan as needed to maintain its effectiveness and to sustain AIS awareness in Washington County.	Integrate relevant local lake district management plans and information into the County's AIS Strategic Plan as plan is updated.	AOA	AC, LCC, LO, LWCD, PD	
	Integrate recommendations of the County AIS Strategic Plan into lake district management plans as they are updated.	AOA	LO, LWCD	
	Update this AIS Strategic Plan every five years.	AOA	AC, COBO, GIS, LCC, LWCD, PD, WDNR	

3. <i>Continued.</i>	Collaborate with representatives from each lake association in the County to develop a countywide lake association committee in order to efficiently spread AIS information, share resources, and work together as one body in the fight against AIS.	AOA	LG, LO, LWCD , PD, WDNR	
	Reconvene the Washington County AIS Advisory Committee to update the plan.	ONGOING	AC, LWCD , PD, WDNR	

Top Twelve Highest Priority Planned Actions

The AIS Advisory Committee was asked to select the planned actions that they considered to be of the highest priority. The following twelve actions were selected as the highest priority planned actions of this strategic plan. The Planning and Parks Department should consider these priority actions when planning for future staff resources and programs. The following list is not organized by priority and actions should be considered of equally high priority.

- Improve signage at boat launches by making language on signs more concise, emphasizing potential fines and penalties, promoting an "AIS of the month" with photos and facts about a specific species found in or threatening the waterbody, and notifying launch users of AIS known to be in the waterbody. (EDUCATION ISSUE)
- Install boat decontamination facilities at the most frequently used boat launch sites and at launch sites on waterbodies known to be the most heavily infested with AIS. (PREVENTION ISSUE)
- Enforce existing regulations and encourage waterbody users to report violations. Consider a joint effort with WDNR water guard wardens and Washington County Sheriff Department to conduct several enforcement days at the busiest boat launches during the open water season. (PREVENTION ISSUE)
- Verify newly discovered AIS as reported through the County's AIS Identification and Response Guide and initiate follow-up action or recommend actions for local entities to conduct. (MONITORING ISSUE)
- Increase AIS awareness among riparian landowners to increase AIS identification during early establishment stages. (CONTROL ISSUE)
- Seek dedicated AIS staff time under the Land and Water Conservation Division. (SUSTAINED PLANNING ISSUE)
- Incorporate recommendations of this Strategic Plan into the County's Land & Water Resource Management Plan and County Comprehensive Plan. (SUSTAINED PLANNING ISSUE)
- Utilize local media to spread the AIS message, especially before summer holidays, including radio interviews and submitting articles to local newspapers. Also, invite media to AIS workshops and functions held in the County. (EDUCATION ISSUE)
- Communicate with counties on the Lake Michigan shoreline to discuss efforts to prevent AIS from leaving the lake and potentially spreading to other counties. Actions should include encouraging counties or local governments on the Lake Michigan shoreline to install boat decontamination facilities at boat launches. (PREVENTION ISSUE)

- Utilize fishing forum websites such as *Lake-Link.com* to promote AIS awareness. (MONITORING ISSUE)
- Encourage riparian landowners to be proactive by removing AIS populations themselves if they are able or work with lake organizations to contract out for chemical treatment of lakes and other waterbodies. (CONTROL ISSUE)
- Pursue short and long-term grant funding opportunities. (SUSTAINED PLANNING ISSUE)

