



The AIS Defender

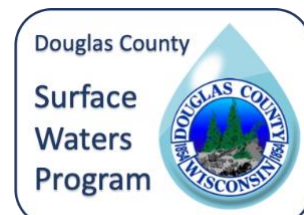


~ A Douglas County Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter ~

Hopefully the warming weather and last weekend’s fishing opener are bringing anglers and recreationists to a lake near you! As always here in Douglas County we welcome locals and visitors alike to enjoy the hundreds of beautiful lakes and rivers our area is known for. However, so many of us are keenly aware of the importance of protecting these surface waters against emerging threats like Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and other issues. The Douglas County Surface Waters Program is here to promote that conservation message, and make sure we can enjoy our lakes and rivers for generations to come! 2023 was a fantastic season with about 12 surface water conservation and AIS projects running concurrently around the County (read on for more details). But there’s plenty more to do! In 2024 I will be launching a new grant to continue and expand the popular “Stop Spiny” project, continuing countywide AIS prevention, conducting AIS monitoring, collecting data on some of our most heavily used lakes, and working with partners to offer a variety of trainings and outreach programming. Work on AIS prevention and management on the Brule River will continue, as will AIS Snapshot Day, and new AIS projects will also be starting in cooperation with our neighbors at the Town of Barnes/Bayfield County to the East, and Big McGraw Lake Group and Burnett County to the South.

Warm Regards,
Zach Stewart

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www.douglascountywi.org/waters



Photo: K. Hilding

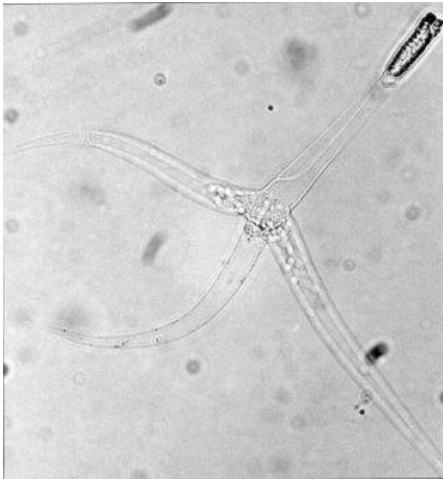
The Whitefish Lake community turned out to learn about AIS prevention and monitor the lake last August. Photo: K. Hilding.



Photo: Z. Stewart

Hardy Lake Nebagamom volunteers helped Zach with hand-pulling of invasive Curlyleaf Pondweed. Thank you folks! Photo: Z. Stewart.

SPOTLIGHT ON AN INVADER: *Myxobolus cerebralis*



The invasive parasite *Myxobolus cerebralis* (left) infects salmonids like the Brook Trout pictured here (right), causing black color and deformities in the cartilage of the tail, which can lead to increased predation or death.

Myxobolus cerebralis

Anglers and boaters are urged to take precautions against the spread of *Myxobolus cerebralis*, a parasite that can infect salmon and trout, leading to tail deformities known as “whirling disease”. The Wisconsin DNR recently detected the parasite in Elton Creek in Langlade County, WI for the first time, prompting concerns for spread to other WI trout populations. To prevent further spread, anglers should clean, drain, and dry their gear after fishing trips, removing all water, aquatic vegetation, and mud. Rubber-bottomed boots or waders are recommended to limit parasite transmission. *Myxobolus cerebralis* has a complex lifecycle involving transitioning to infect two hosts, salmonid fish and tubificid oligochaetes (a type of Annelid worm). Early detection of whirling disease symptoms, such as blackened tails or swimming in circles, is crucial, so sightings should be reported to local fisheries biologists. Because the parasite cannot be eradicated after it is established, preventative measures are key for protecting our local trout populations in Douglas County! So, remember folks, please clean, drain, and dry your boats and gear this season!

To learn more about *Myxobolus cerebralis* check out these resources:

WI DNR press release: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/90651>

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myxobolus_cerebralis

Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW) Inspector Training

Clean Boats Clean Waters Inspector Training

Wednesday, May 15 2:00 – 3:00 PM Live virtual training, free for all CBCW workers or volunteers! Use Google Chrome browser to join this video call link: <https://meet.google.com/ewy-bjdj-ajk> No registration required. Most CBCW workers will attend this virtual training to learn CBCW basics and AIS ID, then receive site specific training from their employer or lake association volunteer coordinator.

-or-

Recorded CBCW Training Videos are available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLz1F3wus1j4yt3YPmWVCgST1nEIY2sp5a>

If you cannot make the live virtual training on May 15, there is a high-quality set of recorded training videos available for you at the link above!

Faxon Creek Volunteer Day

Thursday, June 13th 10:30AM Meet at the Central Park Disc Golf Course in Superior, WI to help remove invasive Yellow Flag Iris and Garlic Mustard! Ramona Shackelford of NCWMA and Zach Stewart of the Surface Waters Program will be there to teach you to identify these two harmful plants and lead a cleanup of Faxon Creek that flows through the Central Park Disc Golf Course.

We will meet at 10:30 AM at the paved parking lot on Laurel Ave (South side of Central Park). Dress for the weather and wear long sleeves, sturdy footwear, and gloves. We will provide hand tools and garbage bags for disposal. Folks of every ability level are welcome. Bring your questions about invasive species!



Photo: A. Johnson



Photo: A. Johnson

Great Lakes Landing Blitz AIS Prevention

The 2023 Landing Blitz AIS project was a great success with positive reception from the public! Approximately 550 media impressions were made, and 696 local boaters were educated on preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) through the Blitz events. Zach coordinated with partners like the Freshwater Paddler's Symposium, Point to La Pointe Swim, and Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area to reach new audiences and educate recreationists about AIS prevention. People really enjoyed receiving the free red boat cleaning sponges printed with AIS prevention messaging that were designed and printed for this project (pictured below).



Wakesports and AIS

By Erin McFarlane, Statewide CBCW Educator with Extension Lakes

Wakesports and Wisconsin's lakes are a popular discussion topic right now, and CBCW participants may have questions about how to best share AIS prevention information and laws with boaters enjoying wake sports. These questions are understandable, as draining all the water or removing attached plants or animals from these boats can be very challenging. The primary mission of CBCW is to educate landing visitors about how to prevent the spread of AIS and engage them in taking these prevention steps. CBCW inspectors are not trained or accredited to enforcement any AIS laws, nor is that a part of the CBCW effort.

Just like when engaging other types of boaters or anglers, CBCW inspectors should share standard AIS prevention message and emphasize the importance of doing their best not to transport water (and everything floating in it) from one place to another. CBCW staff also have the option of letting wake boaters know that the Water Sports Industry Association has an online database of wake boat diagrams (searchable by manufacturer/model year): <https://decon.wsia.net/>. The diagrams offer a simple visual to remind the boaters to get to know their boats and how to go about following the AIS prevention steps and laws.