

# 2024 Becker County Aquatic Invasive Species Program Report

This document outlines Becker Soil and Water Conservation District’s efforts to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species using county AIS prevention funds per MN Statute 477A. 19. The Becker Soil and Water Conservation District implemented the plan elements below using these funds, combined with contributions from lake associations and townships.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2024 Expense</b>
1. Outreach and Education	Printed Materials, Display Booth Materials, Television Ads, Bar Coasters	\$2,835.00
2. Inspections	Watercraft Inspectors, Field Supplies, Unemployment, Work Comp	\$220,529.00
3. Decontamination	Equipment, Fuel, Maintenance, Storage	\$18,192.00
4. Monitoring, Treatment, Response	Management Grants, SCUBA Monitoring	\$13,387.00
5. Professional and Technical	Office Space, Cell Data, Vehicle Maintenance, Fuel, Training	\$91,132.00
6. Operations and Liability	Insurance, Office Supplies	\$5,151.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$361,977.00*</b>

*\*Based on estimates of Dec 2024 expenses*

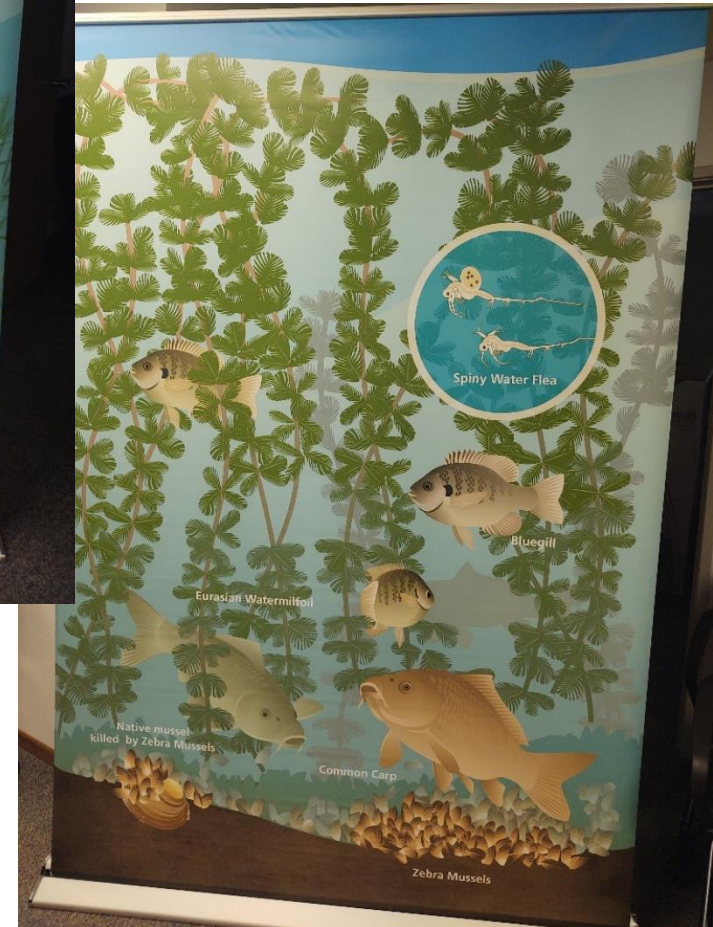


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In 2024, Becker SWCD produced high-quality display materials demonstrating how invasive aquatic plants and animals can impact lake ecosystems.



## **1. Outreach and Education**

Becker SWCD works to raise awareness of laws and best practices related to aquatic invasive species by offering presentations, age-appropriate youth activities, volunteer opportunities, and professional media content. In 2024, presentations were provided at 3 lake association meetings. AIS prevention messages were also promoted via electronic billboards, bar coasters, bait bags, and websites. Other activities completed in 2024 include:

- An interactive map showing Zebra Mussel, Curly-leaf Pondweed and Flowering Rush infestations was updated on the Becker County website.
- A fun and engaging educational presentation was provided for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from 6 Becker County schools at the City of Detroit Lakes water fest.
- A 30-second television commercial was updated and aired on the “Linder’s Angling Buzz” program on Fox Sports North. (May-August) 16 counties shared the cost of this sponsorship.
- 1,000 bait bags were distributed to local bait dealers in May 2024. St. Louis County worked with Wildlife Forever, an environmental nonprofit, and a group of around a dozen counties, to design a message promoting proper live bait disposal.
- Becker County partnered with Ottertail County Environmental Services to sponsor an electronic billboard near Detroit Lakes, featuring this design from Wildlife Forever:



## **2. Watercraft Inspection**

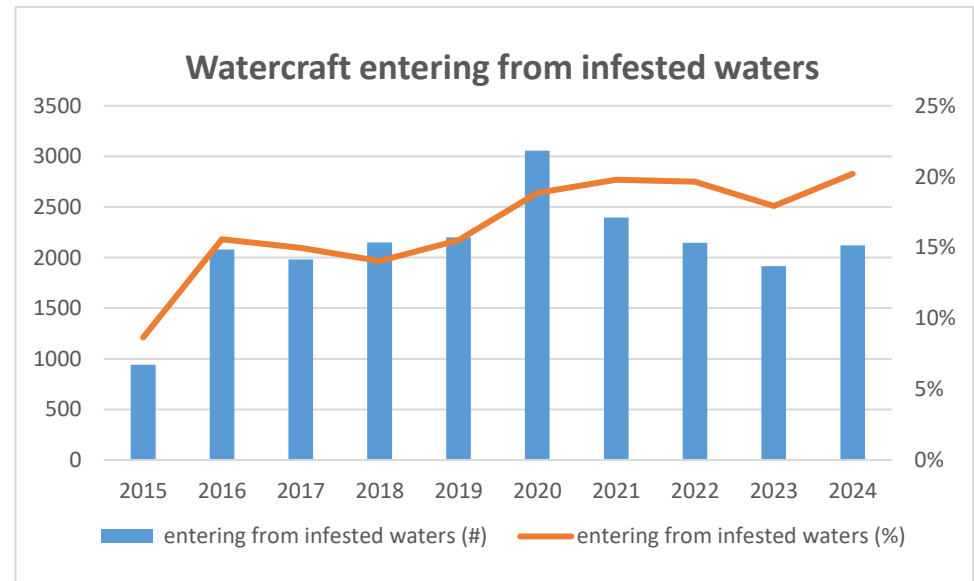
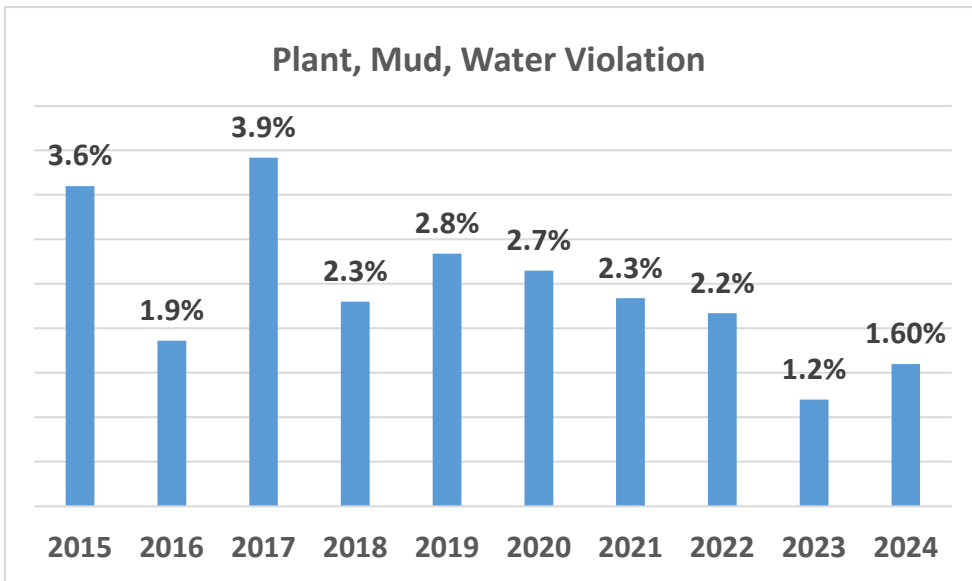
Becker SWCD hired 24 watercraft inspectors in 2024. Four inspectors were hired and trained as Level 2 inspectors. Level 2 inspectors are trained to operate mobile decontamination equipment in addition to their watercraft inspection duties. Watercraft inspections in Becker County began on May 11 and were finished on October 22, 2024. Watercraft inspectors assisted boaters with cleaning and draining 1,580 watercrafts found with water, plants, mud, or invasive species when exiting lakes.

Inspection hours were allocated to individual lakes using a risk score based on the number of access ramps, and resorts and the number of inspections per hour completed in 2024. Contributions from lake associations allowed for over 660 additional inspection hours at 4 lakes. See page 12 for proposed 2025 inspection hour allocations. The total number of inspections, inspection hours completed, and the results of entering watercraft inspections are displayed on the spreadsheets on pages 13-15. These include a breakdown of the responses provided when boaters were asked where they last used their watercraft, just before the lake where the inspection occurred.

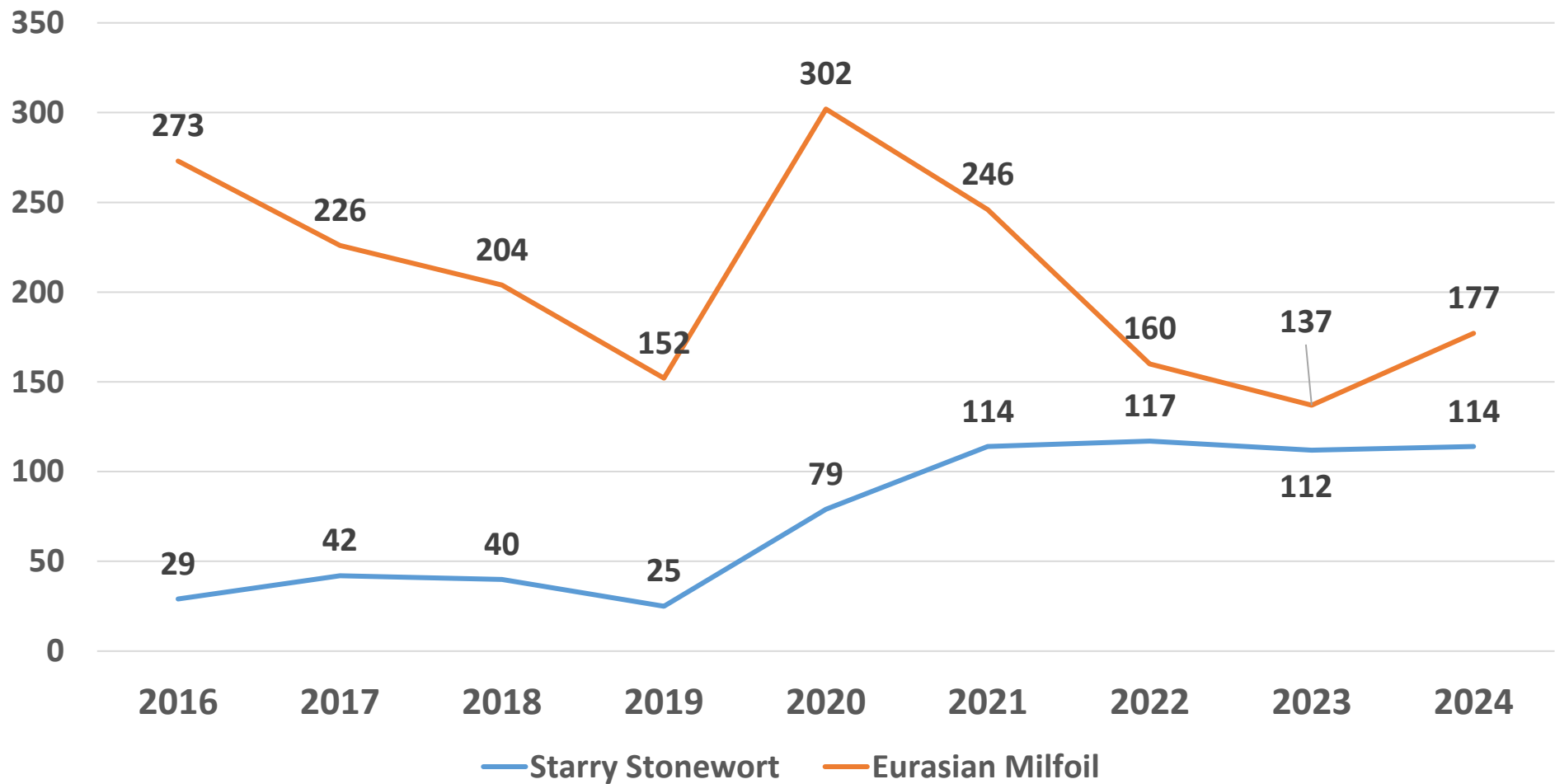


Watercraft Inspection continued

- 10,380.25 inspection hours were completed in 2024 at 22 public accesses in Becker County.
- 17,334 inspections were completed.
- Inspectors reported 176 watercraft arriving with plants, water, or mud. (1.67% of entering watercraft)
- Inspectors reported 53 watercraft arriving with drain plugs installed. (.63)% of watercraft equipped with plugs)
- In 2024, 2,121 boaters reported last using their watercraft at a lake or river on MN's list of AIS-infested waters. (20.2% of entering watercraft)

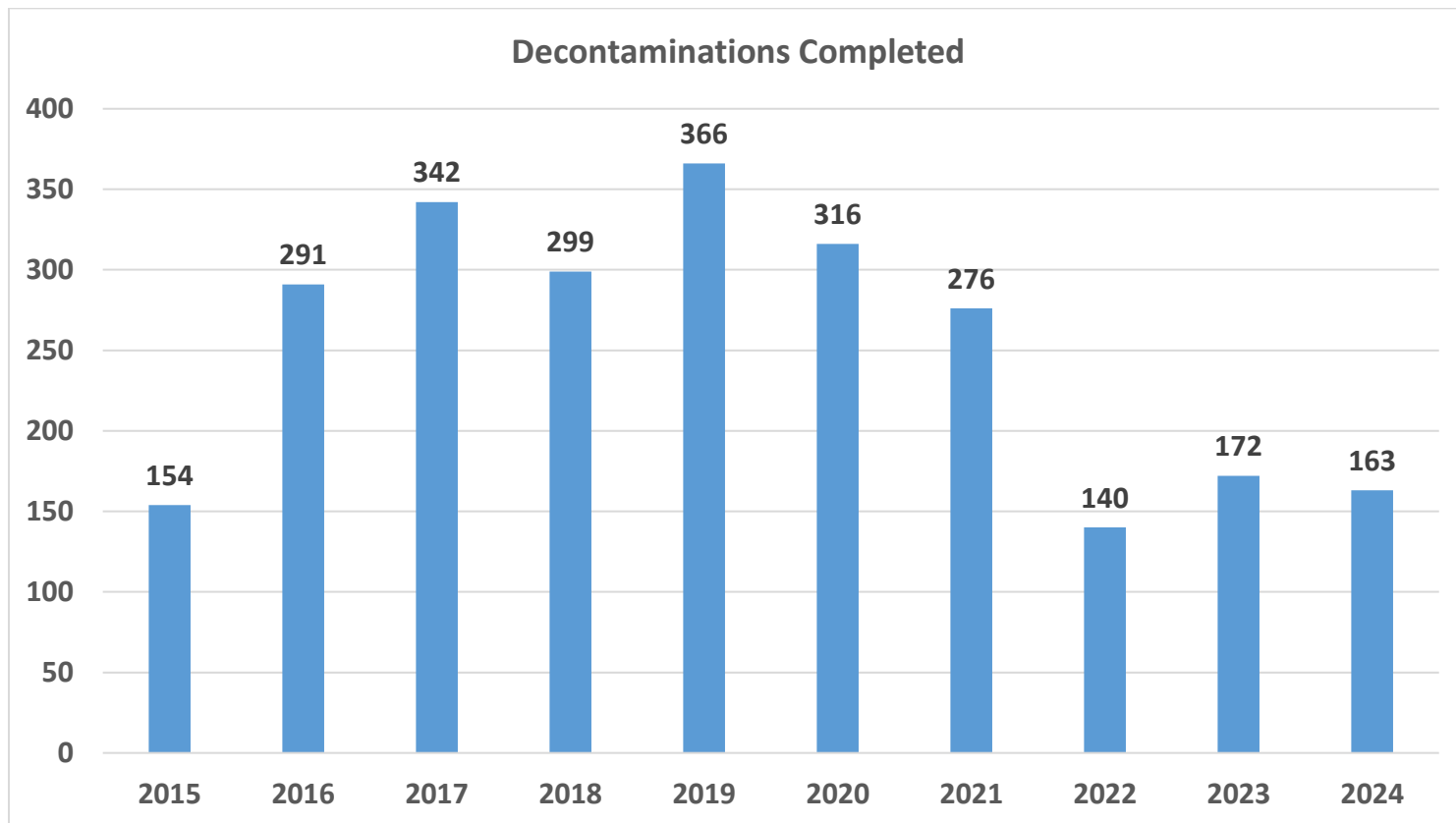


### Entering Watercrafts from Infested Lakes and Rivers



### **3. Watercraft Decontamination**

Becker SWCD’s watercraft inspectors completed 163 hot-water decontaminations in 2024. From May 11 to September 21, hot-water decontamination was available to watercraft users at the Detroit South, Melissa, and Cormorant West public access sites. Watercraft decontaminations were also offered by appointment at the Becker SWCD shop on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.



#### **4. Monitoring and Management**

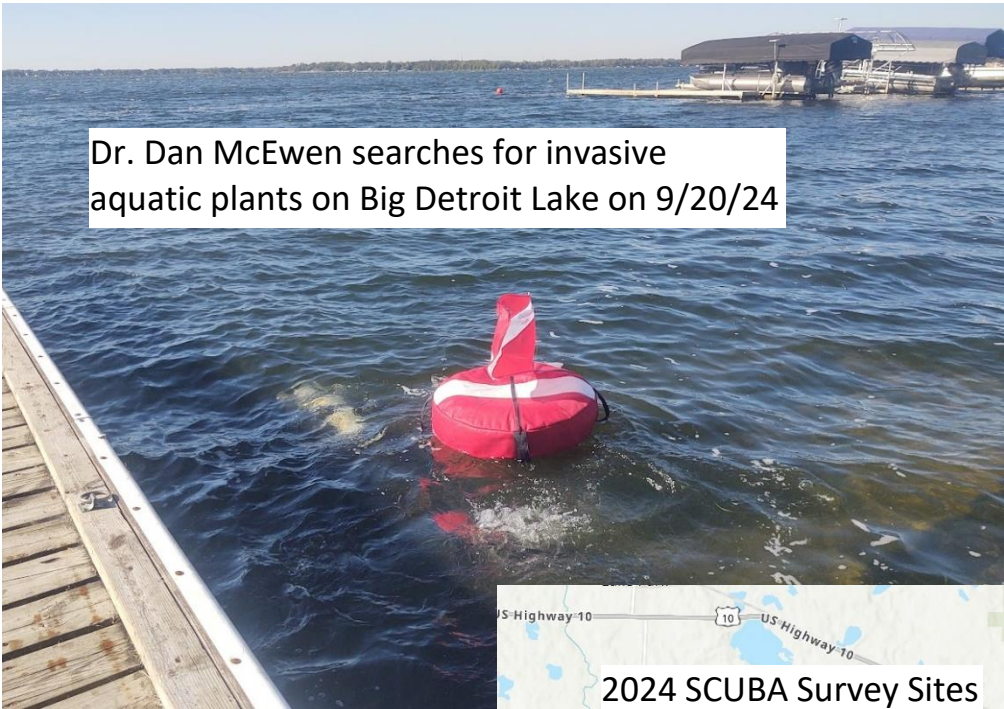
Monitoring public access sites for new invasive species is a top priority of Becker SWCD’s AIS prevention program. Locating recently established invasive plant populations allows for more effective management and prevention actions. Monitoring efforts were completed with assistance from volunteers and Limnopro llc.

34 Public access sites were surveyed by tossing a rake head and examining retrieved plants. Sites were selected using a risk model developed at The Minnesota AIS Research Center (MAISRC), and data collected by watercraft inspectors. The MAISRC model estimates the risk of Zebra Mussel and Starry Stonewort invasion of 25,000 waterbodies in Minnesota. In Becker County, the top 34 public-access lakes predicted for Starry Stonewort invasion were selected for monitoring. No Starry Stonewort or other invasive plants were observed in 2024 following approximately 60 combined hours of sampling. Access sites listed below were checked by this method in August and September 2024.



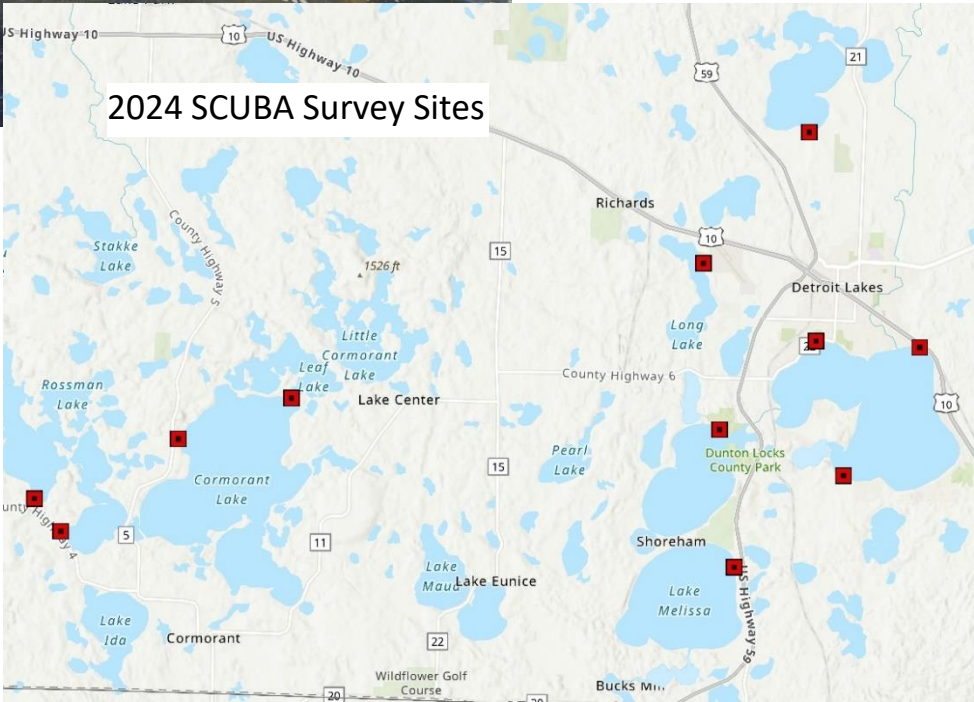
<b>August and September Monitoring</b>	Little Cormorant	Shell
Bad Medicine	Little Floyd	Straight
Big Sugarbush	Little Sugarbush	Strawberry
Boot	Little Toad	Tamarack
Buffalo	Long	Toad
Cotton	Many Point	Two Inlets
Elbow	Maud	Upper Cormorant
Eunice	Melissa	White Earth
Floyd	Middle Cormorant	Wolf
Height of Land	Pickerel	
Ida	Pearl	
Island	Rock	
Leif	Round	





Dr. Dan McEwen searches for invasive aquatic plants on Big Detroit Lake on 9/20/24

MAISRC's risk model ranks Big Detroit and Big Cormorant lakes as the seventh and second highest (respectively) risk lakes in the county for Starry Stonewort infestation. A more intensive monitoring effort began at public access sites on these lakes in 2019, and additional lakes in 2022. On September 20-22, 2024, Dr. Dan McEwen from Limnopro Aquatic Sciences completed SCUBA transect surveys over 200'X100' areas around the 5 primary public access sites at Detroit and Big Cormorant lakes, as well as access sites at Middle Cormorant, Upper Cormorant, Sallie, Melissa, Long and Big Floyd.



Public access docks are inspected in late fall as they are removed from lakes to identify new zebra mussel infestations. Dock equipment was inspected at the public accesses of the lakes listed below in November 2024.

Acorn	Island	Meadow	Strawberry
Bad Medicine	Little Bemidji	Pearl	Town
Big Sugarbush	Little Cormorant	Rock	Two Inlets
Boot	Little Sugarbush	Round	Wolf
Boyer	Little Toad	Sauer	Wolf
Cotton	Many Point	Sieverson	
Height of Land (South)	Marshall	Straight	

On 8/10/24, 7 volunteers participated in the University of Minnesota AIS Research Center’s “Starry Trek” monitoring event. Becker SWCD has been a local host site for this event since it began in 2017. Volunteers searched 10 public access sites at Detroit, Sallie, Big Cormorant, Lief, Little Cormorant, Floyd, Little Floyd, Monson, and Long Lakes. Across Minnesota, 194 volunteers attended this event. These volunteers searched for starry stonewort and other AIS at 297 public access sites on 252 water bodies.

Flowering Rush was first observed at Pickerel Lake in 2017 and herbicide treatments have since been completed annually. A follow-up visit in September 2024 showed good results and minimal impact on adjacent emergent vegetation at the largest area of Flowering Rush. Treatments will continue at this location as needed.

6/13/23 Before treatment:



9/11/24 Second year of treatment:



In 2024, grants were offered to fund invasive plant management projects. These grants were offered to support herbicide management of invasive aquatic plants near public access sites. Two applications were awarded in 2024. The organizations that received these funds continued efforts to treat curly-leaf pondweed near public access sites on Toad and Big Detroit lakes.

Proposed inspection hour allocations for 2025

Actual hours completed are subject to change based on boater movement, weather, and staff availability. Contributions will be applied at a rate of 15.00 per hour. Hours will be applied as directed by the sponsor, and any unspent funds will be carried over to 2025.

Lake	PWA's (max 2)	# of resorts (max 3)**	2024 Insp. per Hour	2024 Risk Score***	Level	Base Hours 2024	Decon Hours	Adjustments/Carry over*	Total 2025	Notes	
Big Cormorant	2	2	2.79	6.79	5	1000	500	462 carry over	1962		
Detroit	2	3	2.34	7.34	5	1000	1000		2000	Inspector will be assigned to work at new access site	
Melissa	1	2	2.1	5.1	4	250	1000		1250		
Bad Medicine	1	3	1.36	5.36	4	500			500		
Cotton	1	0	2.24	3.24	3	250		add 250	500	High use site	
Sallie	1	0	1.53	2.53	2	150		add 250	400	High use site	
Floyd	1	0	2.01	3.01	3	250		add 250	500	High use site	
Ida	1	1	1.56	3.56	3	250			250		
Long	1	1	1.35	3.35	3	250		add 100	350		
Little Floyd	1	0	1	2	1	150			100		
Island	1	3	1.66	5.66	4	500			500		
Straight	1	3	0.81	4.81	3	250			250		
Height of Land	2	0	0.52	2.52	2	150			150		
Middle Cormorant	1	1	0.78	2.78	2	150			150		
Upper Cormorant	1	1	1.06	3.06	3	250			250		
Leif	1	2	1.7	4.7	3	500			500		
Many Point	1	1	1.07	3.07	3	250		add 200	250		
Toad	1	2	2.62	5.62	4	500			500		
Pickereel	1	0	0.76	1.76	1	150			150		
Total						7,000	2,500		10,512		
*Unused inspection hours are carried over from 2023								Level 1 (0-2.2) Lake shares a pool of dedicated inspection hours among a group of lakes			
** Based on data from Becker Co. Assessor's office								Level 2 (2.2-2.99) 150 dedicated inspection hours			
# of Public Accesses (max 2) + # of Resorts (max 3) + 2023 Inspections per hour = RISK SCORE								Level 3 (3-4.99) 250 dedicated inspection hours			
								Level 4 (5+) 500 dedicated inspection hours (1 access point)			
								Level 5 (5+) 1000 dedicated inspection hours (Must have 2 access points or more)			

## 2024 Inspection Results

Lake	Billed Hours**	Inspections Per Hour**	Total Inspections	Entering	Exiting	Courtesy	Plug In %*	Plug In #	Plants/Mud/Water on Arrival %	Plants/Mud/Water on Arrival #	Entering from Infested waters
<b>Big Cormorant</b>	1792.75	2.79	3720	2183	1536	1	0.11%	2	2.80%	61	434 (19.9%)
<b>Detroit</b>	1696.5	2.34	3165	1970	1170	25	0.41%	6	1.58%	31	382 (19.4%)
<b>Melissa</b>	1132.5	2.10	1366	769	581	16	0.00%	0	0.40%	3	132 (17.18%)
<b>Bad Medicine</b>	950	1.36	1292	824	468	0	0.28%	2	0.75%	6	187 (22.69%)
<b>Cotton</b>	463	2.24	1039	624	415	0	0.20%	1	1.61%	10	110 (17.63%)
<b>Sallie</b>	509	1.53	778	460	318	0	1.09%	4	1.75%	8	134 (29%)
<b>Floyd</b>	412.75	2.01	830	578	252	0	0.00%	0	0.88%	5	120 (21.13%)
<b>Ida</b>	250	1.56	388	306	82	0	0.44%	1	1.30%	4	65 (21%)
<b>Long</b>	447	1.35	603	338	264	1	4.00%	10	0.30%	1	59 (17.4%)
<b>Little Floyd</b>	200	1.00	200	113	87	0	0%	0	0.00%	0	12 (10.6%)
<b>Island</b>	619	1.66	1029	543	486	0	1.02%	5	1.66%	9	128 (23.6%)
<b>Straight</b>	294	0.81	239	238	1	0	9.46%	16	11.80%	28	24 (10%)
<b>Height of Land</b>	29	0.52	15	7	8	0	0.00%	0	14.00%	1	0 (0%)
<b>Middle Cormorant</b>	110	0.78	86	59	27	0	2.00%	1	0.00%	0	12 (20%)
<b>Upper Cormorant</b>	122.75	1.06	130	82	48	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	27 (20%)
<b>Lief</b>	478	1.70	812	512	298	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	137 (27%)
<b>Many Point</b>	176	1.07	188	97	91	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	24 (24.7%)
<b>Toad</b>	494.5	2.62	1300	707	593	0	0.31%	2	0.99%	7	113 (16%)
<b>Pickrel</b>	203.5	0.76	154	108	46	0	3.10%	3	1.85%	2	21 (19.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10380.25</b>	<b>1.91</b>	<b>17,334</b>	<b>10,518</b>	<b>6,771</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0.63%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1.67%</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>2121 (20.2%)</b>
Corrected Hours**	<b>9,090</b>										
*.63% of entering watercraft equipped with drain plugs arrived with the plug installed (2,051 lifts, docks, pontoons and canoes/kayaks excluded)											
** To calculate the number of inspections per hour, total hours are corrected for occasions when 2 inspectors are working together.											

2024 Entering Inspection Results- Continued

	ZM	ZM, SWF	ZM,EWM	ZM, EWM, SWF	EWM	SWF	SSW	ZM, SSW	ZM, EWM, SSW	ZM, EWM, Bighead and Silver Carp
<b>Big Cormorant</b>	386	21	6	2	4	3	0	2	8	2
<b>Detroit</b>	324	13	11	1	9	1	0	9	13	1
<b>Melissa</b>	123	2	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Bad Medicine</b>	133	6	10	3	7	4	2	13	9	0
<b>Cotton</b>	89	1	3	0	5	2	0	6	3	1
<b>Sallie</b>	129	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
<b>Floyd</b>	99	3	4	0	3	0	0	2	9	0
<b>Ida</b>	62	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Long</b>	57	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Little Floyd</b>	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Island</b>	94	7	6	3	8	3	0	5	2	0
<b>Straight</b>	15	2	3	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Height of Land</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Middle Cormorant</b>	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Upper Cormorant</b>	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Lief</b>	130	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0
<b>Many Point</b>	14	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Toad</b>	82	5	1	2	4	1	0	6	10	2
<b>Pickereel</b>	19	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,807</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ZM = Zebra Mussel      SWF = Spiny Water Flea      EWM = Eurasian Milfoil      SSW = Starry Stonewort</b>										

2024 Entering Inspection Results- Continued

	Out of State	Same Lake	Not on Survey List	Lake Service Provider	Not on infested waters list	Dock/Lift	Unknown	Storage	Prefers not to answer
<b>Big Cormorant</b>	54	955	10	4	114	8	177	424	3
<b>Detroit</b>	53	966	12	10	122	9	108	295	13
<b>Melissa</b>	13	286	11	0	32	1	6	288	0
<b>Bad Medicine</b>	2	308	8	0	189	6	124	0	0
<b>Cotton</b>	13	239	4	0	66	1	21	169	1
<b>Sallie</b>	14	137	0	0	35	5	14	121	0
<b>Floyd</b>	6	140	0	0	30	4	31	247	0
<b>Ida</b>	6	201	0	0	10	0	24	0	0
<b>Long</b>	6	128	7	0	15	0	9	114	0
<b>Little Floyd</b>	0	67	0	0	2	1	1	30	0
<b>Island</b>	14	143	1	2	132	0	14	109	0
<b>Straight</b>	1	111	0	0	57	2	9	34	0
<b>Height of Land</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	0
<b>Middle Cormorant</b>	5	27	0	0	6	0	9	0	0
<b>Upper Cormorant</b>	2	42	0	0	4	0	6	1	0
<b>Lief</b>	18	152	0	0	46	0	8	151	0
<b>Many Point</b>	1	28	3	0	35	0	0	6	0
<b>Toad</b>	5	246	0	0	153	0	60	130	0
<b>Pickrel</b>	0	33	0	0	25	0	3	26	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>4,209</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1,074</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>Element</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Actual and Notes</b>
<b>1. Outreach and Education</b>	<b>Newspaper Ads, Print Materials, Media Projects, Indoor Ads, Billboard</b>	<b>\$2,450.00</b>	<b>\$2,835.00</b>
<b>2. Inspections</b>	<b>Watercraft Inspectors, Field Supplies</b>	<b>\$247,018.00</b>	<b>\$220,529.00</b> Completed 10,380 hours of 11,421 budgeted
<b>3. Decontamination</b>	<b>Equipment, Fuel, Truck, Maintenance, Field Supplies, Storage</b>	<b>\$21,992.00</b>	<b>\$18,192.00</b>
<b>4. Monitoring/Treatment/Response</b>	<b>Contracted AIS Monitoring, Management Grants, Flowering Rush Pickerel Lake</b>	<b>\$14,000.00</b>	<b>\$13,387.00</b>
<b>5. Professional and Technical Services</b>	<b>Coordinator, Office Space, Cell Data, Vehicle Maintenance, Fuel, Training</b>	<b>\$97,250.00</b>	<b>\$91,132.00</b> Did not replace a vehicle
<b>6. Operations, Liability, Administration</b>	<b>Insurance, Office Supplies, Program Administration</b>	<b>\$9,650.00</b>	<b>\$5,151.00</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$392,360.00</b>	<b>\$361,850.00</b>



<b>Income</b>	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
AIS Prevention Aid							169,943.50					169,943.50	339,887
Lake Association Contribution*	1702.5	2000			125		1500	5,000			8535		18,862.5
DNR Inspection Grant													
Fund Balance	152,617												152,617
Misc. Income**				10,750									10,750
<b>Total Income</b>													522,117
<b>Expense</b>													Total
Education/Outreach**			146.25	13,439									13,585
Inspections and Supplies				418	886	300						218,925	220,529
Decontamination	1,259	1,242	1,235	1,234	1,717	2,045	1,544	2,495	1,528	1,207	1,422	1,265	18,192
Monitoring, Treatment							165	8215		5007			13,387
Professional and Technical*	7609.53	7574.53	7574.53	7574.53	7574.53	7574.53	7574.53	7574.53	7666.53	7685.53	7574.53	7574.53	91,132
Administration	4,091	57	266	42	83	21	192	97	14	125	83	80	5,151
<b>Total Expense***</b>													361,977

160,140

\*\$3,702.5 in Lake Association Contribution represents funds received in 2024 for work completed in 2023

\*\* \$10,750 in 2024 Education/Outreach expenses represents funds from 16 counties that passed through for the Linder's Angling Buzz Media Project. \$2,835 of Becker County's AIS Prevention funds were used for Education/Outreach in 2024.

\*\*\*DEC 2024 expenses estimated

*Proposed 2025 Budget*

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2025 Proposed</b>	<b>2025 Totals</b>			
MN State AIS Prevention Aid		\$339,649.00	DECONTAMINATION		
MN DNR Inspection Grant			Field Supplies	\$1,000.00	
MN DNR Public Awareness			Fuel (Gas/Oil)	\$2,000.00	
From fund balance		\$24,545.00	Maintenance	\$3,500.00	
<b>Total Revenue</b>			Shop / Storage Fees	\$14,200.00	
<b>Expense</b>			Unit Purchase		
OUTREACH			Utilities	\$1,500.00	
Education & Training	\$500.00		Vehicle Purchase		
Media Collaboration	\$1,200.00		Sub Total		\$22,200.00
Newspaper / Radio			MONITORING & RAPID RESPONSE		
Printed Materials	\$250.00		Management Grants	\$8,000.00	
Signage / Updates	\$500.00		Technical Services	\$6,000.00	
Sub Total		\$2,450.00	Sub Total		\$14,000.00
INSPECTIONS			PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL		
Field Supplies	\$2,500.00		AIS Coordinator	\$92,000.00	
Level 1&2 Inspectors	\$205,544.00		Fuel (Gas/Oil)	\$500.00	
Mahnomen SWCD			Furnishings/Signage		
Recruitment	\$250.00		Office Space	\$6,000.00	
Staff Training Materials	\$250.00		Tech-Phone-Cell Data	\$1,100.00	
Unemployment	\$12,000.00		Training & Certification	\$250.00	
Sub Total		\$220,544.00	Sub Total		\$99,850.00
			ADMINISTRATION		
			Program Admin	\$1,000.00	
			Liability Insurance	\$4,000.00	
			Office Supplies	\$150.00	
			Sub Total		\$5,150.00
			<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>\$364,194.00</b>