



Section 1:

What is the program all about?



Wisconsin's Comprehensive Management Plan

To Prevent Further Introductions and Control Existing Populations of Aquatic Invasive Species, created in 2003

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) have long been recognized as a serious problem in Wisconsin. The Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, has prepared a plan to coordinate responses to the problems associated with AIS. This plan is one component of a comprehensive state effort to control invasive species that involves all affected state agencies and tribal governments working together to prevent the further introductions of invasive species (both aquatic and terrestrial) into Wisconsin's ecosystems. This plan focuses on prevention as the key strategy for limiting the impacts of aquatic invasive species by controlling the initial introduction and subsequent transfer from one water body to another. Prevention strategies rely heavily on information, education, and communication. Therefore, this plan includes the full range of those activities in order to implement an effective prevention program.

However, prevention techniques alone are inadequate for limiting the negative impacts caused by aquatic invasive species. This plan also suggests that control, mitigation, or elimination strategies must be considered. It incorporates information and education/outreach activities, watercraft inspection efforts, and policy, and legislative initiatives as key components of the overall program.

The goals of Wisconsin's comprehensive management plan are designed to address different stages of the AIS invasion:

1. The initial introductions of AIS into Wisconsin waters from other parts of the continent or world;
2. The spread of AIS populations to previously unaffected state waters; and
3. The colonization of self-sustaining AIS populations within water bodies, including the harmful impacts resulting from such colonization.

Goal 1:

Implement procedures and practices to prevent new introductions of AIS into Lakes Michigan and Superior, Wisconsin's boundary waters (the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers), and the inland waters of the state.

Because of the limited experience with most AIS, the long-term consequences of their impacts are not yet known. With a more robust global economy, it is anticipated that without a new prevention program, new introductions are highly likely. For that reason, prevention actions at the national and regional level, as well as at the individual jurisdictional level, are critical. The highest prevention priority is the control of ballast water discharges.

Several other potential transport mechanisms could result in releases of AIS into the Great Lakes and inland state waters. Some of these vectors are: the transportation and rearing systems related to the aquaculture industry, commercial barge traffic, and recreational boating; inter-Great Lake boating associated with research or



management activities; scuba diving; the sale and distribution of fishing bait; the transfer and disposal of nonindigenous pets; plant nurseries; fish stocking activities and individual releases by anglers.

Three of the potential AIS transport mechanisms have been selected for specific actions: the sale and distribution of bait, aquaculture and aquarium industries, and ballast water discharges.

Specific actions related to this goal are: work with the bait industry, agriculture, and aquarium industries and transoceanic shipping to collect information about vectors and AIS transport mechanisms in general, and evaluate new technologies or management practices for effective control of AIS.

Goal 2:

Establish management strategies to limit the spread of established populations of AIS into inland waters of the state.

The introduction of AIS into the Great Lakes has resulted in the spread of AIS to inland waters. The spread of established populations of AIS is primarily caused by human activities such as transfer of boats, bait handling, and water transport. Water resource user groups are frequently not aware of which waters are infested with AIS, the problems associated with AIS and the precautions they should take to limit the spread of AIS.

Specific actions related to this goal are: determine which species pose the greatest problems; determine the level of monitoring needed to document AIS distribution; assess the sampling and monitoring programs for priority invasive species; implement education and outreach programs to increase public awareness and improve coordination efforts on AIS by encouraging cooperation with partner organizations, agencies, and volunteers.

Goal 3:

Abate harmful ecological, economic, social, and public health impacts resulting from infestation of AIS and, where possible, eliminate those impacts.

Appropriate strategies to control AIS and abate their impacts may not be technically, economically, or environmentally feasible. Control strategies must always be designed so as not to cause significant environmental impacts.

Specific actions related to this goal are: assess the public health, social, economic, and ecological impacts of AIS to Wisconsin waters; determine control actions that are appropriate to limit impacts, that are cost-effective approaches, and that provide long-term solutions; evaluate the effectiveness of the control strategies after they have been implemented.

This plan provides the generalized approaches that must be followed to protect indigenous species and the socioeconomic benefits that are threatened by aquatic invasive species. It is likely that management plans for individual species, such as zebra mussels and Eurasian water-milfoil, will be developed as a result of this plan.

For detailed information about this plan, visit: <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/compstateansplanfinal0903.pdf>

Wisconsin's comprehensive state management plan was approved by the National Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force at their November 2003 meeting. Their approval qualifies the state for federal funding to implement the specific actions as detailed in the plan.



The Volunteer Aquatic Invasive Species Program Vision

The Volunteer Aquatic Invasive Species Program promotes water resource stewardship by actively involving individuals in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species that can harm Wisconsin's ecosystems, economy, and recreational opportunities.

Citizen involvement in watercraft inspections and monitoring for invasives will increase public awareness about the potential impacts of aquatic invasive species. Volunteers will serve to inform and educate the public about how people can help prevent the spread of invasives by inspecting their watercraft and removing aquatic plants and animals from their boats and equipment before leaving an access site.

To accomplish these objectives, the volunteer program supports:

- ◆ Watercraft inspections for aquatic invasive species.
- ◆ Communication with the public about the laws and issues surrounding the existence, spread, and effects of invasives to Wisconsin's waters.
- ◆ Distribution of educational resources and publications.
- ◆ Collection of data to evaluate the potential spread of invasive species, public awareness of invasive species issues, and the effectiveness of the invasive species program.
- ◆ Response to technical inquiries from the public concerning invasive species.





“If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.”

- Loren Eiseley
The Immense Journey, 1957

