

# 2025 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>2025 Expense</b>
1. Outreach and Education	Printed Materials, Display Booth Materials, Bar Coasters	\$1,228.00
2. Inspections	Watercraft Inspectors, Field Supplies, Unemployment, Work Comp	\$224,420.00
3. Decontamination	Equipment, Fuel, Maintenance, Storage	\$20,308.00
4. Monitoring, Treatment, Response	Management Grants, SCUBA Monitoring	\$13,452.00
5. Professional and Technical	Office Space, Cell Data, Vehicle Maintenance, Fuel, Training	\$50,286.00
6. Administration	Insurance, Office Supplies	\$4,639.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$314,233.00*</b>

*\*Based on estimates of Dec 2025 expenses*

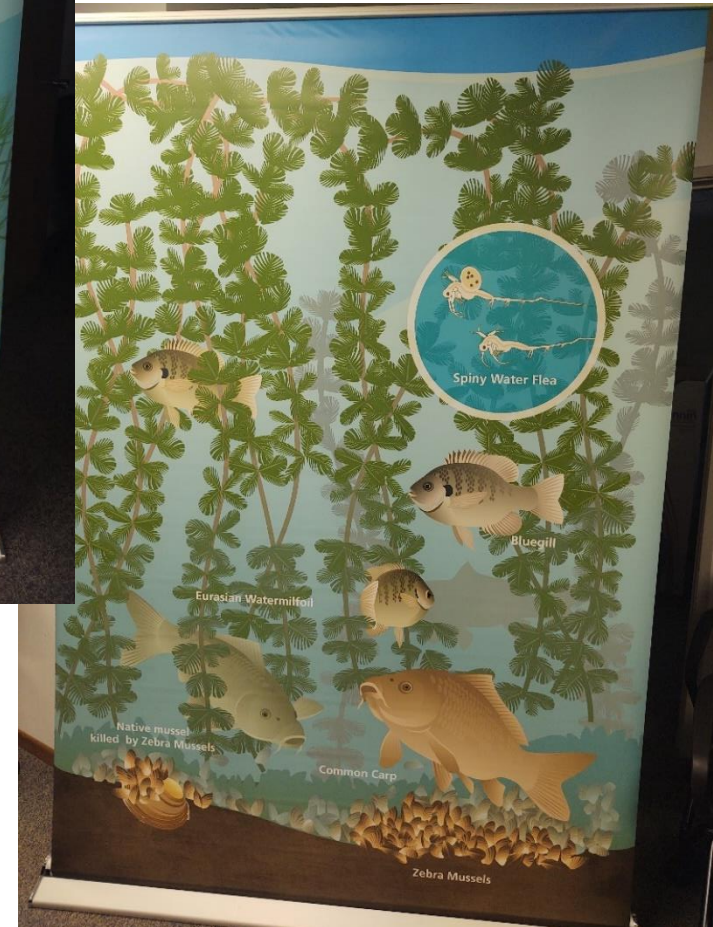


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In 2024, Becker SWCD produced high-quality display materials demonstrating how invasive aquatic plants and animals can impact lake ecosystems.



## **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 2025, presentations were provided at 4 lake association meetings. AIS prevention messages were also promoted via electronic billboards, bar coasters, bait bags, and websites. Other activities completed in 2025 include:

- An interactive map showing Zebra Mussel, Curly-leaf Pondweed and Flowering Rush infestations was updated on the Becker County website.
- Fun and engaging educational presentations were provided for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students from 6 Becker County schools at the City of Detroit Lakes water fest.
- 1,000 bait bags were distributed to local bait dealers in May 2025. 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 25 watercraft inspectors in 2025. Five 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 10 and were finished on October 18, 2025. Watercraft inspectors assisted boaters with cleaning and draining 1,480 watercrafts found with water, plants, mud, or invasive species when exiting lakes.

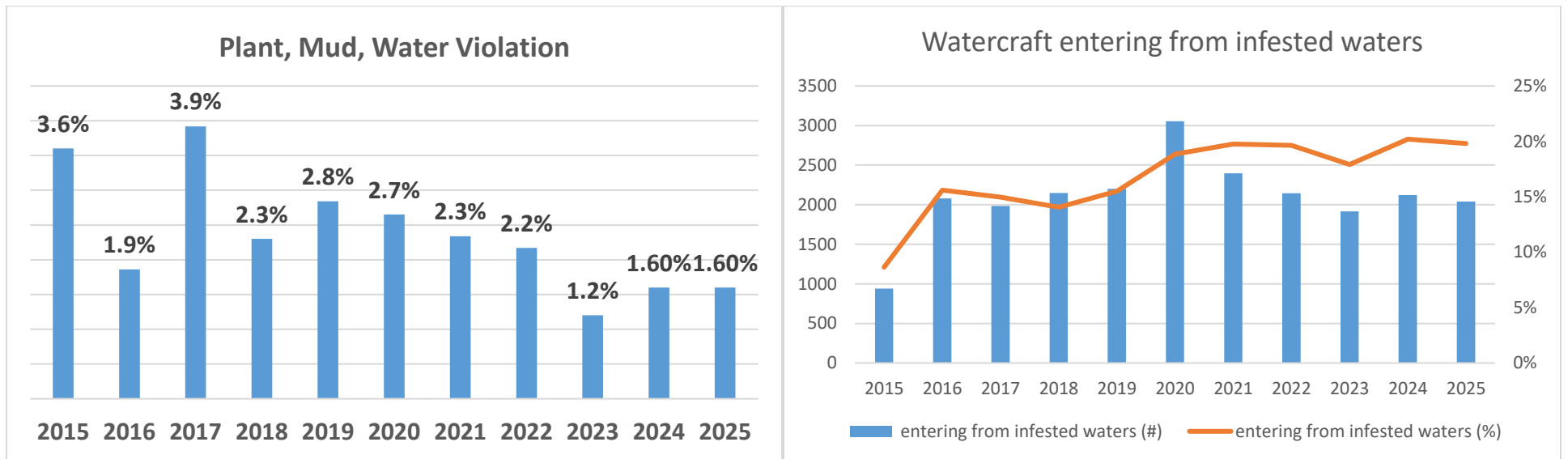
Inspection hours were allocated to individual lakes using a risk score based on the number of access ramps, and resorts and the number of inspections per hour completed in 2024. Contributions from lake associations allowed for over 550 additional inspection hours at 3 lakes. See page 12 for proposed 2026 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.



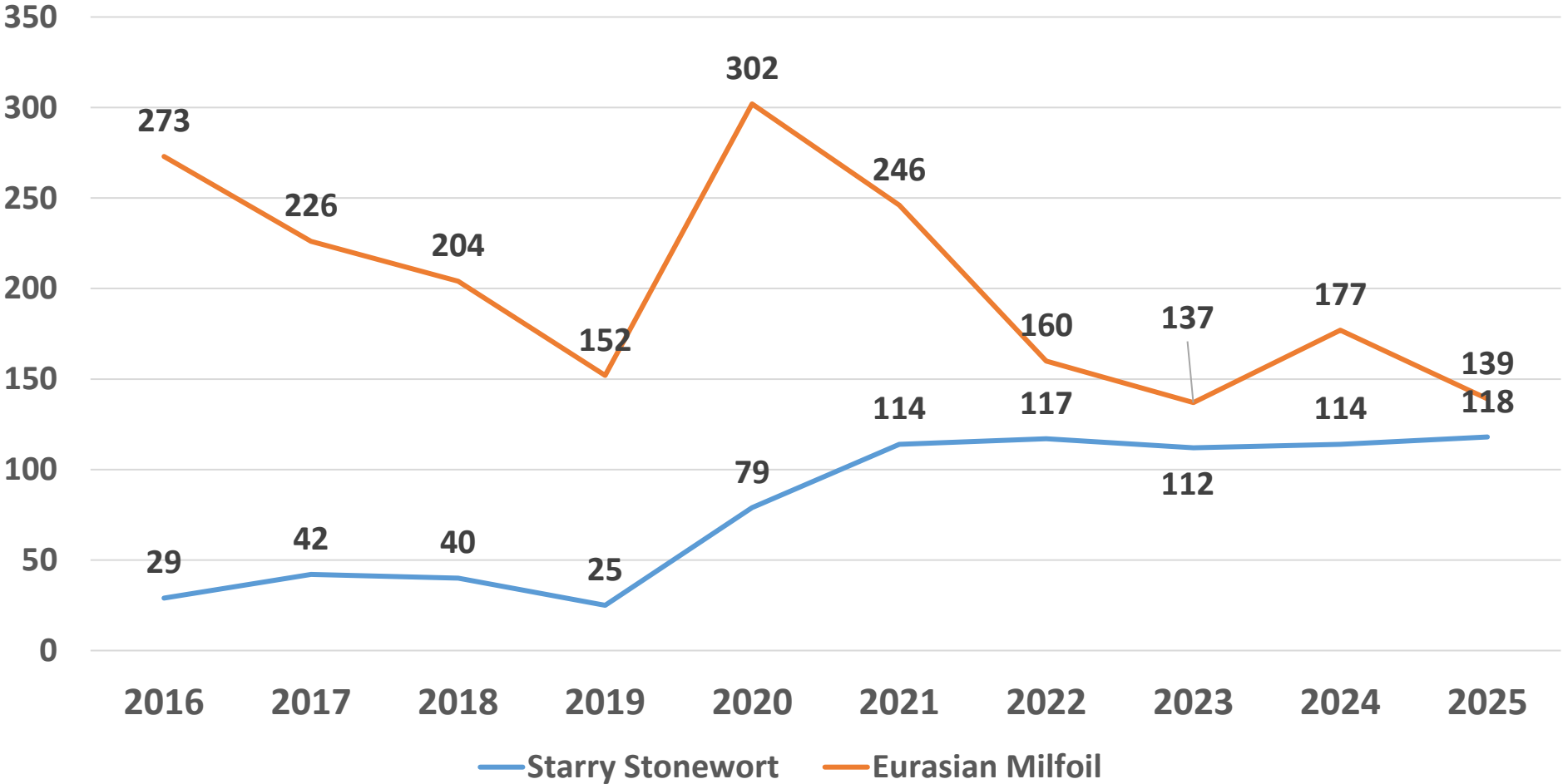
On 8/6/2021, a watercraft inspector removed this fragment of Eurasian Milfoil from a boat trailer arriving at Floyd Lake. The boater was arriving from Lake Minnewashta in Carver County

Watercraft Inspection continued

- 10,165 inspection hours were completed in 2024 at 21 public accesses in Becker County.
- 16,514 inspections were completed.
- Inspectors reported 165 watercraft arriving with plants, water, or mud. (1.6% of entering watercraft)
- Inspectors reported 47 watercraft arriving with drain plugs installed. (.56% of watercraft equipped with plugs)
- In 2025, 2,039 boaters reported last using their watercraft at a lake or river on MN's list of AIS-infested waters. (19.8% of entering watercraft)

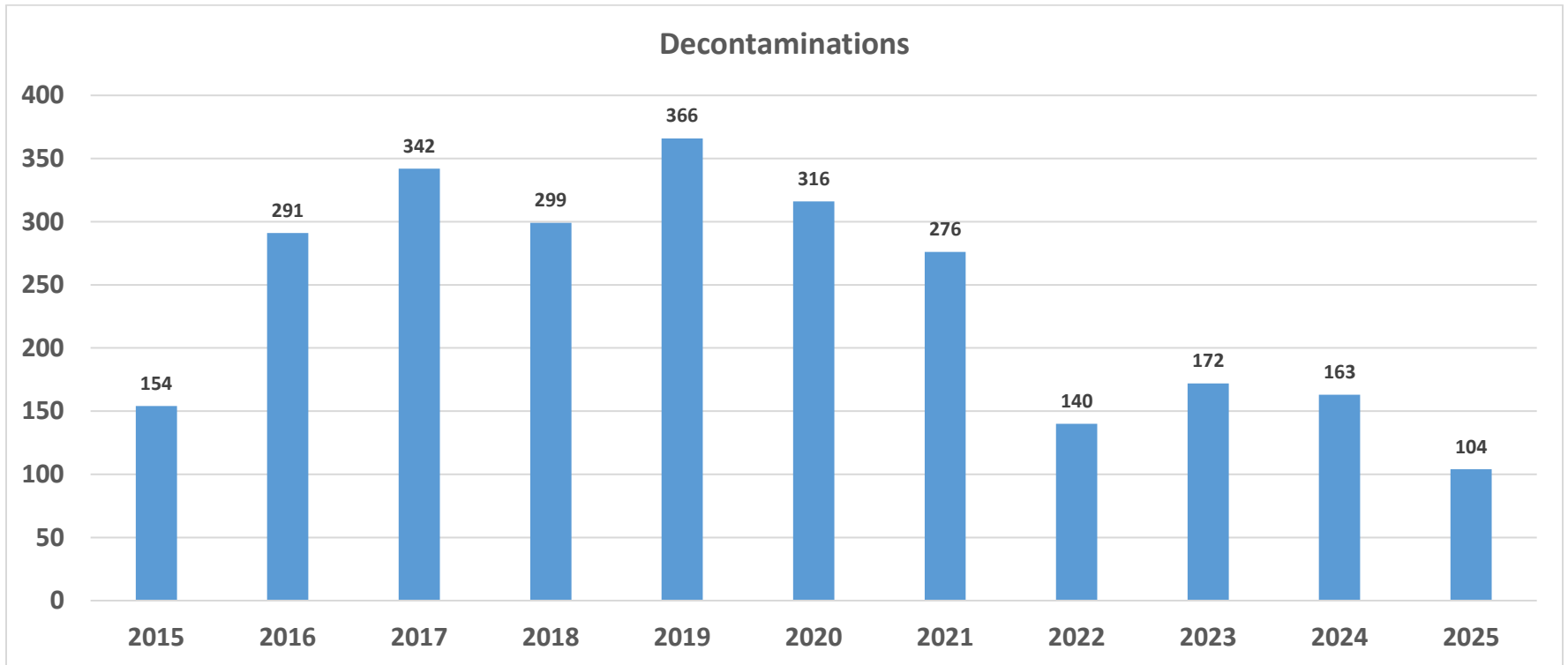


### Entering Watercrafts from Infested Lakes and Rivers



### **3. Watercraft Decontamination**

Becker SWCD's watercraft inspectors completed 104 hot-water decontaminations in 2025. From May 10 to September 28, 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.



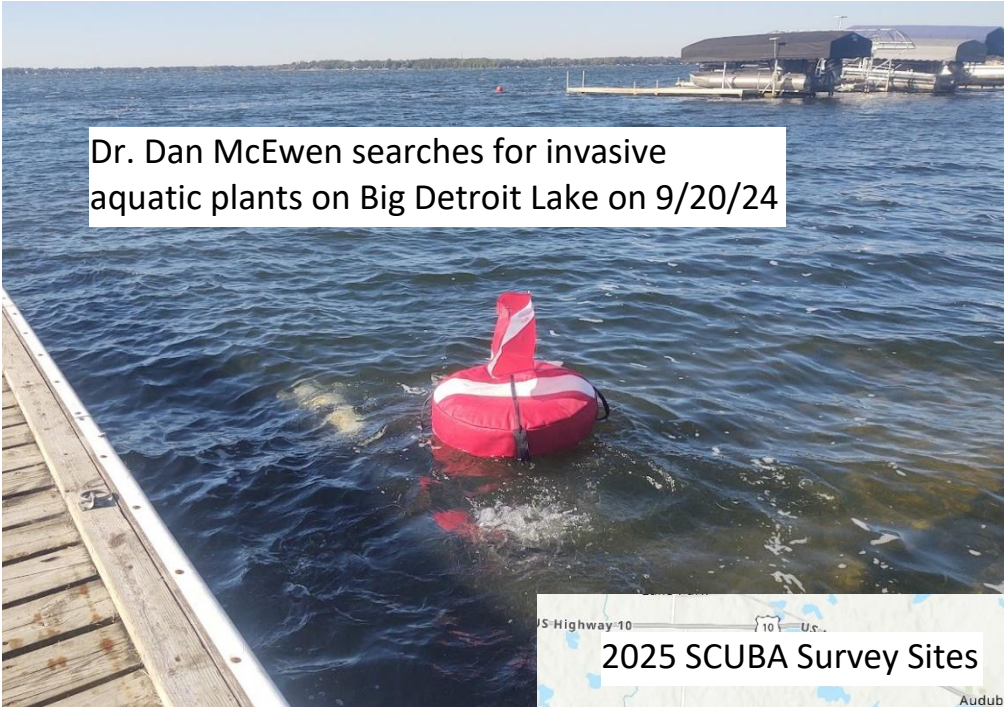
#### 4. Monitoring and Management

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 Ilc.

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 2025 following approximately 50 combined hours of sampling. Access sites listed below were checked by this method in August and September 2025.

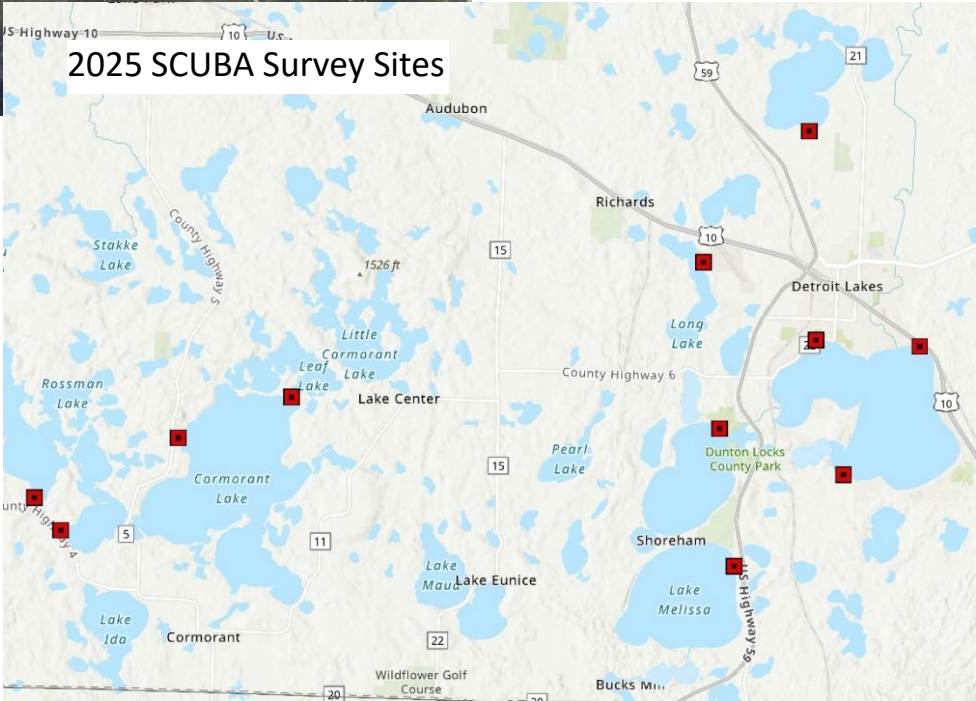


<b>August and September Monitoring</b>	Little Cormorant	Shell
Bad Medicine	Little Floyd	Straight
Big Sugarbush	Little Sugarbush	Strawberry
Boot	Little Toad	Tamarack
Buffalo	Long	Toad
Cotton	Many Point	Two Inlets
Elbow	Maud	Upper Cormorant
Eunice	Melissa	White Earth
Floyd	Middle Cormorant	Wolf
Height 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 August 27-29, 2025, 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 2025.

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	
Cotton	Many Point	Sieverson	
Height of Land (South)	Marshall	Straight	

On 8/9/25, 5 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 7 public access sites at Big Cormorant, Lief, Little Cormorant, Island, Toad and Height of Land lakes. Across Minnesota, 162 volunteers attended this event. These volunteers searched for starry stonewort and other AIS at 249 public access sites on 210 water bodies. In 2025, Starry trek volunteers discovered 4 new populations of starry stonewort in Hubbard, Beltrami and Stearns counties.

## STARRY TREK 2025 RESULTS

**162** VOLUNTEERS



**210** VISITED WATER BODIES



**249** PUBLIC WATER ACCESSES SEARCHED



**1** NEW BANDED MYSTERY SNAIL  
2 EURASIAN MILFOIL  
5 CHINESE MYSTERY SNAIL



**4** STARRY STONEWORT DISCOVERIES



Flowering Rush was first observed at Pickerel Lake in 2017 and herbicide treatments have since been completed annually. The treatments have worked to reduce the size of the areas of flowering rush growth. In July 2025, a landowner reported finding a handful of flowering rush plants in a new area (photo below). These plants were removed, and the area will be monitored for new growth and treated in 2026.



In 2025, 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. Three applications were awarded in 2025. The organizations that received these funds continued efforts to treat curly-leaf pondweed near public access sites on Toad and Big Detroit lakes, and a new curly-leaf treatment effort was launched at Island lake.

Proposed inspection hour allocations for 2026

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 2026.

Lake	PWA's (max 2)	# of resorts (max 3)**	2025 Insp. per Hour	2025 Risk Score***	Level	Base Hours 2026	Decon Hours	Adjustments/Carry over*	Total 2026	Notes
Big Cormorant	2	2	3.08	7.08	5	1000	500	326.25 Carry Over	1826.25	
Detroit	2	3	2.34	7.34	5	1000	1000		2000	
Melissa	1	2	2.67	5.67	4	500	800		1300	
Bad Medicine	1	3	1.26	5.26	4	500			500	
Cotton	1	0	2.13	3.13	3	250		add 250	500	high use
Sallie	1	0	1.45	2.45	2	150		add 250	400	high use
Floyd	1	0	1.67	2.67	2	150		add 250	400	high use
Ida	1	1	1.85	3.85	3	250			250	
Long	1	1	1.06	3.06	3	250			250	
Little Floyd	1	0	1.14	2.14	1				150	
Island	1	3	1.62	5.62	4	500			500	
Straight	1	3	1.42	5.42	4	500			500	
Middle Cormorant	1	1	1.18	3.18	3	250			250	
Upper Cormorant	1	1	2.35	4.35	3	250			250	
Leif	1	2	1.48	4.48	3	250			250	
Many Point	1	1	1.15	3.15	3	250			250	
Toad	1	2	2.52	5.52	4	500			500	
Strawberry	1	0	1.66	2.66	1	150			150	
Total						6,700	2,300		10,226	

**2025 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>	1635.75	3.08	3310	2173	1136	1	0.11%	2	0.87%	19	355 (16.3%)
<b>Detroit</b>	2006	2.34	3230	2098	1113	19	0.32%	5	2.28%	48	402 (19.2%)
<b>Melissa</b>	1170.25	2.67	1551	873	665	13	0.29%	2	2.29%	20	173 (19.8%)
<b>Bad Medicine</b>	970	1.26	1221	774	447	0	0.00%	0	1.93%	15	186 (24%)
<b>Cotton</b>	289.25	2.13	618	385	233	0	0.00%	0	2.00%	8	63 (16.3%)
<b>Sallie</b>	409.5	1.45	593	338	254	1	1.03%	3	3.84%	13	94 (27.8%)
<b>Floyd</b>	481.3	1.67	806	527	279	0	0.00%	0	2.09%	11	98 (18.6%)
<b>Ida</b>	250.5	1.85	465	326	139	0	0.00%	0	0.61%	2	64 (19.6%)
<b>Long</b>	299	1.06	317	195	122	0	4.31%	6	1.02%	2	34 (17%)
<b>Little Floyd</b>	146	1.14	167	102	65	0	0%	0	0.98%	1	17 (16.6%)
<b>Island</b>	585	1.62	948	493	454	1	0.4%	2	1.41%	7	126 (25.5%)
<b>Straight</b>	248	1.42	354	197	157	0	3.50%	5	5.60%	11	52 (26.4%)
<b>Middle Cormorant</b>	48	1.18	57	44	13	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	15 (34%)
<b>Upper Cormorant</b>	237	2.35	559	381	178	0	2.98%	10	0.00%	0	104 (27%)
<b>Lief</b>	443.2	1.48	658	444	214	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	110 (24.7%)
<b>Many Point</b>	209	1.15	241	117	124	0	0.92%	1	3.41%	4	17 (14.5%)
<b>Toad</b>	474.13	2.52	1196	668	528	0	1.17%	7	0.30%	2	116 (17.3%)
<b>Strawberry</b>	134.25	1.66	223	161	62	0	3.41%	4	1.24%	2	11 (6.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10165.88</b>	<b>1.92</b>	<b>16,514</b>	<b>10,296</b>	<b>6,183</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0.56%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1.60%</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>2039 (19.8%)</b>
Corrected Hours**	<b>8,581</b>										
% of entering watercraft equipped with drain plugs arrived with the plug installed (1,937 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. 129.5 hours were paid for training											

2025 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>	322	4	16	1	2	0	0	10	0	0
<b>Detroit</b>	330	10	27	2	13	2	0	18	0	0
<b>Melissa</b>	150	3	12	0	2	0	1	5	0	0
<b>Bad Medicine</b>	141	10	4	1	2	0	6	22	0	0
<b>Cotton</b>	56	2	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Sallie</b>	90	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Floyd</b>	84	4	3	0	2	0	0	4	1	0
<b>Ida</b>	62	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Long</b>	32	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Little Floyd</b>	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Island</b>	93	7	3	0	8	0	0	15	2	0
<b>Straight</b>	43	1	5	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Middle Cormorant</b>	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Upper Cormorant</b>	97	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Lief</b>	99	3	0	0	1	0	1	4	2	0
<b>Many Point</b>	9	3	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0
<b>Toad</b>	87	6	4	3	3	0	1	8	4	0
<b>Strawberry</b>	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>ZM = Zebra Mussel      SWF = Spiny Water Flea      EWM = Eurasian Milfoil      SSW = Starry Stonewort</b>										

2025 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>	48	1015	9	8	77	12	202	447	0
<b>Detroit</b>	54	1025	11	0	128	2	62	408	6
<b>Melissa</b>	12	238	8	0	34	5	14	389	0
<b>Bad Medicine</b>	3	287	13	7	149	8	107	14	0
<b>Cotton</b>	3	132	0	0	33	4	10	140	0
<b>Sallie</b>	7	131	0	0	19	2	15	70	0
<b>Floyd</b>	5	166	0	0	23	0	37	198	0
<b>Ida</b>	3	220	0	0	12	1	26	0	0
<b>Long</b>	5	35	5	0	11	3	12	90	0
<b>Little Floyd</b>	0	44	0	0	9	1	0	31	0
<b>Island</b>	12	105	4	0	132	0	18	98	0
<b>Straight</b>	0	69	0	1	33	0	4	38	0
<b>Middle Cormorant</b>	0	15	0	0	0	0	11	1	0
<b>Upper Cormorant</b>	22	173	0	0	28	1	36	17	0
<b>Lief</b>	3	121	0	0	41	1	9	159	0
<b>Many Point</b>	7	34	0	0	43	0	0	16	0
<b>Toad</b>	3	226	0	0	136	0	39	148	0
<b>Strawberry</b>	0	72	5	0	24	0	2	47	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>4,108</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>2,311</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>Element</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2025 Budget</b>	<b>2025 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>\$1,128.00</b> Did not complete shared media project in 2025
<b>2. Inspections</b>	<b>Watercraft Inspectors, Field Supplies</b>	<b>\$220,544.00</b>	<b>\$224,420.00</b> \$8,210 in unemployment costs from 2023 and 2024
<b>3. Decontamination</b>	<b>Equipment, Fuel, Truck, Maintenance, Field Supplies, Storage</b>	<b>\$22,200.00</b>	<b>\$20,308.00</b>
<b>4. Monitoring/Treatment/Response</b>	<b>Contracted AIS Monitoring, Management Grants, Flowering Rush Pickerel Lake</b>	<b>\$14,000.00</b>	<b>\$13,452.00</b>
<b>5. Professional and Technical Services</b>	<b>Coordinator, Office Space, Cell Data, Vehicle Maintenance, Fuel, Training</b>	<b>\$99,850.00</b>	<b>\$50,286.00</b> Coordinator expenses reduced due to reduced coordinator hours billed in 2025
<b>6. Operations, Liability, Administration</b>	<b>Insurance, Office Supplies, Program Administration</b>	<b>\$5,150.00</b>	<b>\$4,639.00</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$364,194.00</b>	<b>\$361,850.00</b>

Income	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
AIS Prevention Aid							169,824					169,824	339,648
Lake Association Match*					5000					7130	255		12,385.0
DNR Inspection Grant													
DNR Public Awareness Grant													
Fund Balance	160,140												160,140
Misc. Income**													
<b>Total Income</b>	160,140				5,000		169,824			7,130	255	169,824	512,173
<b>Expense**</b>													Total
Education/Outreach				1,128									1,128
Inspections and Supplies		8210			457	39	59					215,655	224,420
Decontamination	1,211	1,225	1,212	1,203	2,721	2,711	2,293	1,349	1,455	2,064	1,471	1,396	20,308
Monitoring, Treatment							6,000	2329	5123				13,452
Professional and Technical	5147	5016	5746	4699	4983	4202	3355	4367	2339	3298	2965	4169	50,286
Administration	4077	273		46	91	23		84	15	30			4,639
<b>Total Expense</b>	10,434	14,724	6,958	7,075	8,252	6,975	11,707	8,129	8,932	5,392	4,436	221,220	314,233

197,940

\*\*\*DEC 2025 expenses estimated

Proposed 2026 Budget

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2026 Proposed</b>	<b>2026 Totals</b>			
MN State AIS Prevention Aid		\$346,437.00	DECONTAMINATION		
MN DNR Inspection Grant			Field Supplies	\$1,000.00	
MN DNR Public Awareness			Fuel (Gas/Oil)	\$2,000.00	
From fund balance			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 Projects	\$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	\$6,000.00		AIS Coordinator	\$55,000.00	
Level 1&2 Inspectors	\$203,497.00		Fuel (Gas/Oil)	\$500.00	
Mahnomen SWCD			Furnishings/Signage		
Recruitment	\$250.00		Office Space	\$3,000.00	
Staff Training Materials	\$250.00		Tech-Phone-Cell Data	\$600.00	
Unemployment	\$12,000.00		Training & Certification	\$250.00	
Sub Total		\$221,997.00	Sub Total		\$59,350.00
			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>\$325,147.00</b>