

# Iowa Great Lakes




## 2010 Aquatic Invasive Species Boat Ramp Volunteer Instructions

May 21, 2010

### **Introduction**

Residents and visitors to the Iowa Great Lakes are concerned about the threat of aquatic invasive species (AIS). There are many invasive species, but two that are of concern are Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels. In 2005, zebra mussels were discovered in Clear Lake. Docks, hoists, and rocks in Clear Lake are now covered with zebra mussels. This zebra mussel infestation at Clear Lake shows the need to significantly increase efforts to protect the Iowa Great Lakes.

### **Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Watermilfoil, and Asian Carp**

<p><b>Zebra Mussels</b> – Clear Lake is infested with zebra mussels. Any boaters coming from Clear Lake should be sure their boats have been cleaned. Many boaters from Kossuth County use Clear Lake. Lake Delhi and the Mississippi River are also infested.</p>	
<p><b>Eurasian Watermilfoil</b> – Almost all of the lakes around the Twin Cities have Eurasian watermilfoil. Any boaters that have been around the Twin Cities should be sure their boats have been cleaned. Last August EWM was found in Mill Creek and Dog Creek Lake near Paullina in O’Brien County.</p>	
<p><b>Asian Carp</b> – One species of Asian carp, the silver carp, is of great concern to boaters. Silver carp grow to three-feet in length and weigh up to sixty pounds. These fish can jump several feet out of water into boats and into boaters, skiers, and tubers causing injury. Asian carp are being found in the Missouri River along the Iowa border. Bighead carp, another species of Asian carp, have been observed below the Lynn Grove dam (32 miles south of the Iowa Great Lakes). The DNR does not expect Asian carp to arrive in our lakes by boat and trailer, as would Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels. The fish would probably arrive here by swimming up the Little Sioux River and through Mill Creek.</p>	

If a boat, motor, trailer, live well, etc. has been out of the water for 5 to 10 days, any AIS should have died. To be sure, everything should be washed with high pressure and/or hot water and allowed to dry before entering the lake.

## ***Past Efforts***

During summers, Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) water patrol officers and seasonal fisheries staff have been stationed on boat ramps to educate boaters about the threat of AIS. These employees also inspect boats and trailers for any signs of AIS. However, with 12 major boat ramps and six staff, many boat ramps remain uncovered. The major coverage concern is for weekends and holidays when the number of boaters using our ramps increases significantly.

Last summer boater maps were developed for East Okoboji and the Lower Lakes, West Okoboji, and Spirit Lake. The DNR developed 3D lake depth maps that include the location of marinas, gas docks, hazard buoy locations, and other lake features. On the back of the map is an AIS message with a map of car wash locations.

Communicating AIS information to boaters coming into the Iowa Great Lakes area has been a challenge. Many boaters are visiting our chain of lakes for the first time or only visit our lakes once a year. This spring the DNR activated an Information Radio System to inform boaters about the threat of AIS. The new radio system has been licensed to broadcast at 1640 AM. The Iowa Department of Transportation and Dickinson County Highway Department installed roadway information signs to alert boaters to this new AIS radio broadcast.

Some might think educating boaters along with inspecting boats and trailers is a waste of time, since some Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa lakes already have AIS. Our experience is that 99% of the boats and trailers coming to the Iowa Great Lakes are free of AIS. However, we need to be diligent for that 1% that could bring Eurasian watermilfoil or zebra mussels to our lakes. Boater education will pay dividends even when DNR staff or volunteers are not at boat ramps.

## **Boat Ramp Volunteer Program**

We launched a program in 2008 for volunteers to assist the DNR at major boat ramps on busy weekends and holidays. Each volunteer is asked to cover a boat ramp for two hours each summer month to educate boaters about the harm AIS can do to our lakes and how to prevent their spread. Some volunteers may want to contribute more than two hours per month - that is encouraged. The volunteers also inspect boats and trailers to be sure they are not carrying AIS.

### ***2010 Volunteer Equipment***

The boat ramp volunteer equipment includes the orange safety vest, clipboard, training DVD, AIS brochures, boater's maps, trailer stickers and report forms. Equipment can be obtained from

- Maritime Museum – Arnolds Park Amusement Park
- DNR Fish Hatchery – 122 252<sup>nd</sup> Avenue - Orleans

### ***2010 Volunteer Training***

The DNR Fisheries Bureau will provide live training to volunteers. Coffee and Rolls will be provided and the training takes less than an hour.

- Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> Iowa Lakeside Laboratories (Waitt Lab) 8 AM and 1 PM
- Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> Spirit Lake Expo Building 2 PM
- Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup> Arnolds Park City Hall 9 AM

It is not necessary to attend one of the live training sessions. The AIS training DVD available at the DNR Fish Hatchery or the Maritime Museum provides the information you will need. If you were a volunteer last summer the DVD might be a good way to brush up on your boat ramp skills.

***Role of the Lake Protective Associations***

Each lake protective association plays a critical role in organizing volunteers to cover the boat ramps on their lakes.

**Okoboji Protective Association - West Okoboji** - Emerson Bay, Lazy Lagoon, Hattie Elston

**East Okoboji Lakes Improvement Corp. - East Okoboji & Lower Lakes** –

Highway 9, East Okoboji Beach, Hinshaw Bridge, Dam Road, AP City, Minnewashta

**Spirit Lake Protective Association – Spirit Lake** – Templar, Marble, Ainsworth, MiniWaukon

***How to Volunteer***

1. Contact your Lake Coordinator to provide your name and contact information. The use of email is preferred because it requires less time.
2. Obtain your volunteer items from the DNR Fish Hatchery or the Maritime Museum.
3. Complete the DNR Keepers of the Land Volunteer Waiver when you obtain your volunteer materials and leave it with DNR Fish Hatchery or Maritime Museum staff.
4. When you are ready, contact your lake coordinator to advise them of the boat ramp and time you will volunteering.

**2010 AIS LAKE COORDINATORS**

<p><b>West Okoboji</b> <i>Boat Ramps: Emerson Bay, Triboji, Hattie Elston</i></p>	<p>Rhonda Thornton &amp; Emily Schaefer – 337-8038 Email <a href="mailto:emilyschaefer@hotmail.com">emilyschaefer@hotmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>East Okoboji &amp; Lower Lakes</b> <i>Boat Ramps: Highway 9, Trigg's, Minnewashta, East Okoboji Beach</i></p>	<p>Austin Jones - cell 319/ 331-8396 Email <a href="mailto:jonesaah@uni.edu">jonesaah@uni.edu</a></p>
<p><b>Spirit Lake</b> <i>Boat Ramps: Marble Beach Templar Park, Ainsworth, Mini-Wakan</i></p>	<p>Martha Chozen – 336-4292 Email <a href="mailto:chozen1@mchsi.com">chozen1@mchsi.com</a>  Kim Stroud - cell 515/ 221-9409 Email <a href="mailto:stroudone@mchsi.com">stroudone@mchsi.com</a></p>

### ***Optimum Boat Ramp Time of Day***

Boat Ramp usage can be affected by weekends, holidays, temperature, wind speed, wind direction, approaching storms, fishing conditions, time of day, and many other factors. In the morning, anglers might be launching their boats. Around noon, they might come in lunch or finish for the day. In the afternoon, you might find pleasure boaters launching their boat. Then later in the afternoon or early evening, they might be taking their boat out of the water.

### ***Working with the Public***

Many boaters are familiar with AIS, especially Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels, and do not want to see AIS at the Iowa Great Lakes. Most boaters will be cooperative as long as you are courteous and respect the use of their time. By asking a few questions, you can determine boaters' level of knowledge with regard to AIS. If they do not know much about AIS, this can be an opportunity to educate them. If they are knowledgeable about AIS, ask them where they got their information. Always ask the boater if you can inspect their boat and trailer for AIS. Be sure to offer boaters a boater's map, trailer sticker, and AIS brochure.

As a DNR volunteer, you do not have the authority to stop someone from launching their boat. If a boater becomes argumentative, it is best to get out of the way and let him or her launch or leave. Do not be confrontational. If a boater is uncooperative, does not have safety equipment, has too many passengers, is impaired, or could have AIS, you can contact the Spirit Lake Communication Center by at 712/ 336-2525. Identify yourself as a DNR Volunteer and ask the dispatcher to contact a Lake Patrol Officer to have this boater investigated regarding your concerns. The dispatcher will need a description of the boat, registration number if possible, number of passengers, and direction of travel. In an emergency involving the safety of persons or property, call 911.

### ***What If You Find AIS?***

Many native plants and mussels can look like Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels. Look at your sample very carefully. Eurasian watermilfoil has 12 – 21 leaflet pairs and is limp when removed from the water. Adult zebra mussels have D-shaped, fingernail-sized shells with stripes. For confirmation, call one of the Conservation Officers - Gary Owen Cell Phone 712/ 260-1018 or Jeff Morrison Cell Phone 712/ 260-1017. The Conservation Officers have two-way radio contact with the Water Patrol Officers, so do not be surprised if one of the summer officers arrives to make the evaluation. Save the sample by wrapping in a wet paper towel, place in a sealed plastic bag, and note the location found and the last water body used.

To remove questionable vegetation or mussels suggest the boater go to a car wash in Spirit Lake or Milford and use the high-pressure manual washer. A drying time of five to ten days is also effective.

The DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator is Kim Bogenschutz. She is located at Boone and can be reached at 515/432-2823 x103 or [Kim.Bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Kim.Bogenschutz@dnr.iowa.gov) . For specific local questions, contact DNR Biologist Mike Hawkins in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840 x116 or [michael.hawkins@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:michael.hawkins@dnr.iowa.gov). More information on AIS can be found at the Water Safety Council website ([www.watersafetycouncil.org](http://www.watersafetycouncil.org)) by clicking on Aquatic Invasive Species. Information about AIS and a list of infested waters can also be found in the Iowa Fishing Regulations booklet.

### ***Boat Ramp Repeat Customers***

In some cases, boaters will be returning to one of the Iowa Great Lakes several times during the summer. The DNR will provide a year-specific sticker to place on the boat trailer, so we know at least the people that were with that boat the first time have been briefed about AIS. Returning boaters

should be given a reminder about AIS. It would still be wise to look their boat over for any AIS if the boat came from another waterbody.

### ***Iowa Law on Aquatic Invasive Species***

It is illegal to possess or transport prohibited aquatic invasive species in Iowa. The fine for violating this law is \$500 plus court costs.

### ***Acknowledgement***

The Iowa Great Lakes Water Safety Council organizes the 2010 Volunteer Aquatic Invasive Species Boat Ramp Program [www.watersafetycouncil.org](http://www.watersafetycouncil.org). Questions can be directed to Phil Petersen at Email [philpetersen@mchsi.com](mailto:philpetersen@mchsi.com)

The recruitment and organizing of boat ramp volunteers is the responsibility of each lake protective association. Participating lake protective associations include East Okoboji Lakes Improvement Corporation, Okoboji Protective Association, and the Spirit Lake Protective Association.

## **Boat Ramp Report Form Completion Instructions**

**Date:** Record the date of these boat interviews and inspections.

**Lake and Boat Ramp:** Record the name of the lake and boat ramp you are covering.

**Volunteer Name and Phone Number:** Record your name and phone number in case we need to ask questions about your report.

**Start Time and End Time:** Record the time you got to the boat ramp and the time you left.

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As a vehicle or boat approaches record:

**Type:** type of watercraft: F=fishing, R=runabout, P=pontoon, S=sailboat, J=personal watercraft, C=canoe, O=other (please note in comments).

**State:** state of vehicle license plate or boat registration

**# Persons:** number of persons that will be in the boat

**Enter/Exit:** Write enter if the boat is launching and exit if the boat is leaving the water.

Introduce yourself: "Hi, I'm with the Iowa Great Lakes Volunteer Program and we are talking to boaters about aquatic invasive species and checking boats for aquatic hitchhikers. Our purpose for being here is to keep aquatic invasive species from spreading to our lakes. Have you have talked with any of our inspectors earlier this summer" (look for trailer sticker)?

**Insp Y/N:** Record Y if the boater has been inspected earlier this summer or N if they have not been inspected this summer.

If boaters answer Yes, remind them to clean and drain their boats and trailers before leaving boat ramps. Thank them for their time and cooperation.

If boaters answer No, tell them you have a few quick questions to ask and then would like to walk around their watercraft and point out a few places where aquatic hitchhikers like to stick to boats and trailers.

**Knowledge AIS:** Is the boater aware of AIS and the threat they mean to our lakes? ✓ means yes

**Knowledge Law:** Is the boater aware of AIS law? ✓ means yes

If boaters answered Yes to either of the questions, ask them where they got their information.

**Sources of Information:** Ins=inspector, PSA=radio/TV, Br/M=brochure/map, Sign=boat ramp sign, Bill=billboard

Inspect Watercraft: Walk around the boat and point out areas to look for AIS. Document on survey form under **Comments** anything you found and where you found it.

Ask Final Questions.

**Last/Next Waterbody:** If the boat is launching, record the name of the last waterbody where the boat was used. If the boat is leaving, ask the boater the next waterbody he or she plans to visit.

**Comments:** Please note things such as observations of vegetation, zebra mussels, or standing water on boats, special events, or unusual occurrences.

Give boater a brochure, map, and sticker and encourage him/her to put sticker on trailer so we know they have been inspected already this year.

**Dickinson County Communications Center** – The non-emergency number for the Communications Center is 336-2525. If you need to reach a DNR Conservation Officer or Water Patrol Officer, the Communications Center can contact them by radio 24 hours a day. For emergencies, call 911. The Gull Point Lake Patrol station is not manned at all times; however, you can leave a message at 337-3377.

At the end of the month, send your boat ramp report forms to the Lake Coordinator for your lake. Information can be found at the Water Safety Council website ([www.watersafetycouncil.org](http://www.watersafetycouncil.org)) by clicking on Aquatic Invasive Species. The Water Safety Council email is [watersafety@watersafetycouncil.org](mailto:watersafety@watersafetycouncil.org)

