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Carlton County

News Release

July 20, 2015

TO: Pine Journal
Star Gazette
WKLK

RE: Carlton County Combats Aquatic Invaders with new State Funds

Please include the following information in your news items:

CARLTON, MN – Carlton County Zoning and Environmental Services has received state funds in order to limit the spread of aquatic invaders within the county. In 2014 the state legislature established a \$10 million dollar annual Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Aid Program to provide opportunities for counties to better manage aquatic invaders. From this fund the county received \$33,426 in 2014 and \$74,279 in 2015 to develop a program focusing on four initiatives: boat inspections, education and outreach, enforcement, and treatment. It is anticipated that funding will be received for implementation of the program in 2016 and 2017.

Aquatic invaders are not native to Minnesota and cause economic and environmental harm. Some of the invaders threatening our county include Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels, and spiny water fleas. Eurasian watermilfoil in particular impairs recreational use (including fishing, boating and swimming), decreases property values, and harms lake ecosystems by creating dense mats of vegetation. Eurasian watermilfoil is the only documented invader in Carlton County and is found in Chub Lake and Bear Lake. Because of this, the county is in an excellent position to prevent the further spread of aquatic invaders to our lakes.

The county has hired six Level 1 Watercraft Inspectors trained by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Their purpose is to educate the public about the impacts of aquatic invaders and ensure boaters are in compliance with DNR regulations. To do this they make sure all water is drained and all plants are removed from boats and trailers before entering or exiting a lake. Inspections are one of the most cost-effective methods of controlling aquatic invaders through prevention. Inspectors are located at the county's busiest boat landings this summer at the following lakes: Chub Lake, Island Lake, Tamarack Lake, Eagle Lake, Cole Lake, Hanging Horn Lake, Bear Lake, Hay Lake, Park Lake, Sand Lake, Moose Lake, and Big Lake.

• For Immediate Release

Additionally, local law enforcement has received training on AIS laws and will increase patrols at boat landings. To promote education beyond boat landings the county is working with CLIMB Theater, an educational theater company, to develop and present AIS curriculum to local schools. CLIMB will deliver in-classroom presentations to Carlton County students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Students learn what AIS is, its impacts on people and the environment, and how to prevent the spread of AIS. With these combined efforts, the county hopes to halt the spread of AIS and preserve the integrity of MN water for years to come.



Chub Lake public boat landing.



Level 1 Watercraft Inspector Elizabeth Alexson holds a sample of Eurasian Water Milfoil, an aquatic invasive species, at the Chub Lake public boat landing.



Level 1 Watercraft Inspector Elizabeth Alexson removes plant material from a boat exiting Chub Lake.