

Blackwater Lake Association (BLA) - 2016 AIS Prevention Plan

Vision Statement: Our mission is to preserve the resources we have for future generations by undertaking necessary actions and providing a forum for ongoing education.

Introduction and Background:

Blackwater Lake is located in Cass County in the area of Longville south of County Road 11 and west of State Highway 84. Listed below are some of the facts regarding Blackwater Lake and the Blackwater Lake Association's AIS prevention efforts to date.

- ~ The lake is a general development lake with approximately 755 acres of surface water and approximately 7.7 miles of lakeshore. There are about 180 properties around the lake.
- ~ There is one cooperative rental resort on the lake.
- ~ There is a DNR public landing on the north side of the main body of water that is located approximately 1/2 mile from County Road 11 on South Green Forest Drive.
- ~ The Blackwater Lake Association (BLA) has been taking water samples for 25 years and has participated in the Cass County sampling program with RMBEL Labs. We have taken Secchi disk readings for 26 years and submitted them to the State of Minnesota as well as RMBEL.
- ~ In 2013, the BLA acquired and placed four metal Burma Shave-type signs (1-foot x 5-feet in size) that read "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers," which were placed on South Green Forest Drive leading to the public access. The messages read: "Make Sure Your Boat" - "Is Clean and Dry" - "Invasive Species" - "The Reason Why," and "Stop the Spread" - "Let's get Smart" - "Invasive Species" - "Do your Part."
- ~ In 2013, 2014 and 2015 the BLA published AIS alerts and warnings to membership and property owners via emails and hardcopy articles in the tri-yearly newsletter.
- ~ In 2014, the BLA conducted boat inspections at the public access with paid DNR trained inspectors during a portion of each weekend from June to Labor Day 2014 for 100 total hours. BLA applied for and received matching grant funds from the state to assist in paying these boat inspectors.
- ~ In 2014, the BLA purchased a vehicle counter installed at the DNR public access to capture traffic data to help determine plan coverage by paid inspectors for subsequent years.
- ~ In 2013, 2014 and 2015 AIS speakers were invited to talk to the BLA membership annual meeting.
- ~ In 2013, 2014 and 2015 AIS education cards were given to BLA membership.
- ~ In 2015 an AIS inspection program was initiated.
 - Established team of 8 volunteers, each to inspect 1/8 of the lake
 - Provide training for the volunteers on AIS monitoring and identification
 - Constructed some monitoring tools and distributed to volunteers
 - Established a protocol of who to notify when inspections are completed and if an AIS is found

- ~ The BLA is a member of the Healthy Lakes Program, which provided an opportunity to apply and receive grants and matching grant funds to implement Healthy Lake projects.
- ~ The BLA is a member of the Leech Lake Watershed Foundation LLWF. With their help, the eagles nest lake shore on the north side of the lake was designated as county/state land to prevent private multi-use development.
- ~ The BLA is a member of the Association of Cass County Lakes ACCL, a concerned and informative organization, which provides a community forum to address and resolve issues and concerns of lakes within Cass County.
- ~ The BLA is a member of Minnesota Waters, which serves as host to the Blackwater Lake website.
- ~ The BLA belongs to Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates as a means to have a voice about water concerns in the state legislature. While we belong as an association, each property owner also has the right and opportunity to join this group. As a member, one of the benefits is receiving timely and informative emails about water issues and concerns.
- ~ At this time, none of the aquatic invasive species(AIS) of major concern have been found in the lake. However, Chinese and Banded Mystery Snails were found in 2014.

Future Actions and Opportunities

Goal: To protect our quality waters from the spread of aquatic invasive species through collaborative actions of prevention, education and enforcement by:

1. Increase boat inspection weekend hours from Memorial Day through mid September based on traffic data learned from the vehicle data counter. While this will be a significant increase from the 100-hours of inspections conducted summer 2014, one bad boat entering the water will destroy our high quality lake.
2. Raise funds to pay for increased boat inspection expenses and other AIS-related needs, a special ask request to lake neighbors needs to be scheduled for spring 2016, communicated through a mailing, an article in the spring Blurb newsletter and articulated at the annual meeting. A final budget of expenses will be developed and approved for funding initiatives by the BLA Board.
3. Provide training on AIS identification to as many lake members as possible and especially our own eight area inspectors. They are in place and trained to be the front line of defense and detection for our AIS early detection.
4. Work with the team of trained volunteers willing to periodically inspect the lake areas which are divided into the eight sections of the lake in relation to our roads to the lakeshore homes.
 - Further clarify the areas to be inspected
 - Provide ongoing training as needed
 - Establish clearer reporting procedures
 - Recruit new volunteers as needed

Continue to provide volunteers with tools for conducting inspections, including zebra mussel samplers, aquatic plant rakes and crayfish traps.

Update the list of AIS to watch for if additional species of concern are identified

5. Develop an early detection response plan so that if a AIS is found, the plan can be quickly implemented.
6. Continue to print AIS articles in the newsletter and sending emails to BLA property owners to bring attention to the on-going fight against AIS. The messages will remind BLA members and friends of the need to be diligent in cleaning their boats and trailers, draining water from holds, pulling-the-plug, and just being alert to other developments.
7. Provide posters and handouts at local business, including the lumber yard, Mule Lake Store, Corral and others to augment what is already in place.
8. Provide AIS handouts in our new neighbors welcome packets.
9. Continue to host AIS speakers at the annual meeting.
10. Periodically review and modify the 2015 AIS Plan, as requirements dictate.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Seemann, Claus Peukert, Travis Skalicky, Lloyd Thielmann, Carolyn Dindorf