

Accomplishments Report
AEPP-619-20
La Crosse Area AIS Partnership
June – December 2021

The following is a summary of the activities performed as part of the La Crosse Area AIS Partnership grant, AEPP-619-20, from June to December 2021. River Alliance of Wisconsin requests a total of \$0.91, bringing our grant expenses to a total of \$35,725.91 including the pre-awarded cost (\$35,725.00) out of the total awarded \$142,900. We provided and demonstrated a total match to date of \$11,017.82 out of the agreed upon \$47,840.00. The necessary worksheets, invoices/receipts, and documentation are included with this report.

Note: Strikethrough text indicates a pending grant amendment that was submitted on January 3, 2022.

- **Grant administration for River Alliance’s La Crosse Area AIS Partnership grant, AEPP-619-20**
 - Tracked all expenditures and match, prepared partial payment request, and performed other grant administration duties as necessary.

- **Goal 1: Coordinate the La Crosse Area AIS Partnership**
 - 1.a: Serve as the coordinator of AIS activities within the project area. Strengthen partnerships and increase lines of communication. Maintain and continue developing a steering committee that meets biannually.*
 - Maintained frequent contact with partnership members and provided updates when they became available
 - The summer AIS partnership meeting was held on June 23, 2021. The meeting presentation and minutes are included in this report.
 - Attendees: Dale Hochhausen, Randy Hines, Fritz Funk, Matt Hanewall, Gregg Wavrunek, Tim Wucherer, Ty Tretter, Kristin Foehringer, Reed Lally, Gina Keenan, Cheryl Groom, Mark Gaikowski, and Ellen Voss

 - 1.b: Implement the AIS Strategic Plan for the Mississippi River and Major Tributaries in La Crosse, Trempealeau and Buffalo Counties.*
 - Implementation continues

- **Goal 2: Increase AIS outreach to targeted audiences**
 - AIS intern hire
 - Interviewees were chosen for the summer internship in April 2021. Ty Tretter was chosen to lead the outreach efforts in the 3-county area for the summer and fall and began work in late May.

2.a: Implement the Bait Dealer Initiative using the WDNR Bait Dealer toolkit. ~~Work with the statewide AIS and Watershed Groups Manager to develop outreach materials for distribution that target invasion pathways of organisms in trade and recreational water use and promote the "Paddler/recreational AIS Prevention and Decontamination Initiative."~~

- Ty visited participating bait dealers in the 3-county area June 1-3, 2021 and passed out toolkit materials to the following businesses:
 - Island Outdoors/Bob's Bait and Tackle
 - Emma's Diner, Bait, and Tackle
 - Schafer's Boats and Baits, LLC
 - Walsh's Ace Hardware
 - Wiebke Fur and Trading Co.
 - Dick's Sporting Goods
 - Neshonoc Sports
 - The River Stop
 - Fat Cat Bait and Fishing Supply
 - B&S Express
- All data were reported to Jeanne Scherer after an issue entering data directly into SWIMS was identified

2.b: Lead local efforts in statewide AIS initiatives that are coordinated by the WDNR (i.e., Clean Boats Clean Waters (CBCW), Landing Blitz and Drain Campaign) at high-traffic boat landings, complementing the efforts of local WDNR law enforcement officers.

- CBCW
 - Held training on May 22, 2021
 - Participated in boater behavior survey (data entered by Erin McFarlane; 12 hours total)
 - Alma landing
 - Neshonoc Swarthout Park
 - Lake Onalaska Ramp
 - All data were uploaded into SWIMS
 - Data are currently being verified (February 2022)
- Drain Campaign: June 4-6, 2021
 - Veteran's Freedom Park (busiest landing in La Crosse)
 - Ice packs distributed: 125
- Landing Blitz: July 1-5, 2021 (busiest landings in La Crosse)
 - Landings:
 - Lake Onalaska
 - Fred Funk
 - Green Island
 - Veteran's Freedom
 - Towels distributed: 116

2.c: Lead local AIS Snapshot Day efforts that are coordinated by RAW.

- Chose new locations based on input from Alex Selle in late July
- Hosted La Crosse event, chose rendezvous site, led all outreach activities, and recruited volunteers for AIS Snapshot Day
 - 6 sites were monitored, including locations where water lettuce and water hyacinth had been found in previous years
 - Verified findings with UW-La Crosse
 - Reported data into SWIMS

2.d: Install new WDNR AIS signs, Asian carp watch signs and AIS trout stream signs at high-traffic boat landings and access points; replace old signage as necessary.

- The Round Lake access in Trempealeau County was identified as a high priority for waterfowl signage in 2020; we are in the process of obtaining permission from the US Fish and Wildlife Service for station placement in 2022.
- Worked with Andy Morton with the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association on sign design for placement at Salmo Pond (a popular fishing location along Black Earth Creek) that included aquatic invasive species content. Attended the sign rollout event on June 26, 2021.
- Ty assessed signage at the boat landing where he conducted CBCW inspections during the summer and reported any problems (none found)

2.e: Lead local AIS outreach efforts at angling tournaments.

- Tournaments:
 - August 17-22: Tackle Warehouse Title Championship
 - September 1-3: BASS Northern Divisional
- Participants were informed about AIS concerns on the Mississippi River and shown the boat wash station for decontamination

2.f: Conduct AIS outreach at high-traffic access points to educate waterfowl hunters about the specific aspects of duck hunting that risk AIS movement.

Maintain partnerships with local law enforcement officers.

- Ty was trained on September 21, 2021
- Ty conducted waterfowl outreach in October 2021.
- Bird bands, towels, brushes, and pamphlets were distributed.
- Major focus was placed on heavily used landings
 - Lake Onalaska -- Brice Prairie Walk-In Access
 - Mississippi River/Wigwam Slough - Goose Island County Park Boat Landing (Middle)
 - Mississippi River/Wigwam Slough - Goose Island Boat Ramp (North)
 - Trempealeau River -- Access
 - Trempealeau River -- Perrot State Park

- All data were uploaded into SWIMS
- Data are currently being verified (February 2022)

2.g: Conduct AIS outreach at Youth Outdoor Fest.

- Due to pandemic-related concerns, Youth Outdoor Fest was cancelled in 2021.

- **Goal 3: Expand AIS monitoring, rapid response and control efforts.**

3.a: Train volunteers to monitor for AIS in rivers, streams and creeks by floating, wading or conducting shoreline surveys using RAW's Project Riverine Early Detectors (Project RED) program, which uses WDNR-approved protocols. ~~There will be a project RED reboot in 2021, and based on analyzed feedback from volunteers and group leaders, the improvements will include a new name/logo, tiered AIS prevention activities (training, monitoring and control) and new multimedia education and outreach materials. The manager will work with the statewide AIS and Watershed Groups Manager to improve the overall messaging and scope of the program.~~

- Trained Ty on Project RED protocols on May 24, 2021.
- A Project RED training (10 participants) was held with Ted Wilson's Environmental Science class at Viterbo University in La Crosse on September 15, 2021. The paddle component was held at Black River Bottoms, La Crosse, on September 16, 2021 (12 participants).

3.b: Assist the WDNR, USFWS, USGS and other organizations (agency and nonagency) with their AIS monitoring, rapid response and control efforts as needed (time permitting). Coordinate water hyacinth and water lettuce reconnaissance monitoring on Lake Onalaska (Pool 7 of the Mississippi River). ~~Contribute to the development of "Fall Invasion Month" with the statewide AIS and Watershed Groups Manager.~~

- Investigated historic location of giant knotweed in La Crosse County as part of a genetics study (none found)
- Monitored historic locations of water hyacinth and water lettuce during Snapshot Day
- Participated in NZMS rapid response effort after snails were found at two new locations in Dane County

3.c: Expand AIS outreach efforts to cold water anglers and stream users. Determine the potential for expanding AIS monitoring and conservation partnerships in other Driftless Area counties (e.g., Vernon, Crawford and Grant).

- Working with local fishing guides and trout fishers, priority locations in the Driftless were identified for potential boot brush/NZMS signage
 - Bob Jackson, Timber Coulee
 - Avalanche, West Fork Kickapoo/West Fork Sportsman's Club
 - Avalanche on bridge kiosk

- Tainter Creek
- Reeds Creek
- Blue River
- Big Green River
- Castle Rock
- Willow River, northeast of Richland Center
- All DNR access sites (Bishops, Elk, etc.)
- Esofea
- Will work with partner groups (Trout Unlimited, scout troops, etc.) for possible boot brush station construction in 2022
- Contributed article to Wisconsin Trout on the NZMS findings in Dane County and the need to decontaminate using Formula 409