



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Land Services Seeks Comments on Proposed 2026 Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department is requesting public comments on the proposed 2026 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Plan. The plan can be viewed on the County website at www.crowwing.gov/AIS. Written comments on the plan will be accepted until Wednesday, December 10th at 9 am, and may be submitted to Crow Wing County at landservices@crowwing.gov or mailed to 322 Laurel Street, Suite 15, Brainerd, MN 56401, attention AIS Plan Comments.

The County Board will review the proposed 2026 AIS Prevention Plan at a regularly scheduled meeting in December of 2025.

Crow Wing County was allocated \$471,391 by the State legislature to assist in the prevention and spread of AIS within County lakes and rivers in 2026. The AIS Prevention Plan proposes to accomplish this through several activities, including:

- **Watercraft inspections:** Crow Wing County optimized an online dashboard developed by MAISRC and the USDA Forest Service called AIS Explorer. This online dashboard uses existing infestation information, water connectivity risk modeling, and over 1.6 million boater movement survey results to forecast the introduction risk of four priority AIS (zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, starry stonewort, and spiny waterflea) at individual lakes throughout the County. Crow Wing County also used watercraft inspection per-hour data to determine allocated hours at multiple landings throughout the County. In total, 13,208 watercraft inspection hours are proposed to be allocated at 43 landings in 2026.
- **Decontamination units:** The County plans allocate 784 hours to operate two mobile decontamination stations located at multiple public landings including Edward, Lower Hay, North Long Lake – Merrifield, Lower Cullen, Pelican – Halverson Bay, and Upper South Long that will be open Friday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Watercraft users are encouraged to call the Crow Wing County Decon Hotline at 218-824-1055 or text “CWCDECON” to 1-833-258-7509 for more details during the summer season. Watercraft decontaminations consist of a hot water rinse to kill zebra mussels and if needed, a high-pressure spray to remove AIS from boats, motors, trailers, and personal gear.
- **Grant Program Funding:** AIS monies will be administered as available grant funding for the prevention, treatment, and early detection of aquatic invasive species to lakes across the county. Funding may be available to lakes for the following activities: Eurasian watermilfoil treatments, Starry stonewort treatments, Starry stonewort sampling, Zebra mussel veliger

sampling, Spiny water flea sampling, and other opportunities to be vetted based on policy standards.

- **Education & Awareness:** The County will be allocating funding towards education materials for public schools, youth groups, resorts, and civic organizations in the County.

The Land Services Department is committed to providing excellent customer service while helping our residents make wise decisions that protect Crow Wing County's extraordinary natural resources. Citizens are encouraged to contact the Land Services Office at (218) 824-1010 or landservices@crowwing.gov to discuss AIS or other land use related activities.

Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.

Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.