










Sherburne County’s AIS Prevention Aid Program: A Snapshot of Accomplishments in 2025

Program Summary

The Sherburne County AIS Prevention Plan leverages community-based programs to reduce the spread of AIS, manage existing populations, and create an informed public on the importance of the issue and its impact on our water resources. The Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) administers this program on behalf of Sherburne County, with the county and local stakeholders as valued partners.

Category	Metrics
 <p>AIS Prevention Aid Used</p>	<p><u>\$75,200.00</u> AIS Prevention Aid received this calendar year*</p> <p><u>\$62,945.65</u> AIS Prevention Aid used this calendar year</p> <p><u>\$2,254.17</u> AIS Prevention Aid saved for <u>Contingency / Rapid Response</u></p> <p><i>*Remaining unused funds are carried over for future use</i></p>
 <p>People Dedicated to AIS Work</p>	<p><u>1</u> full-time staff with <u>15</u> % of their time dedicated to AIS work</p> <p><u>3</u> staff providing administrative and field support <u>as needed</u></p> <p><u>12</u> total authorized watercraft inspectors, including:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><u>12</u> trained as Level 1 and <u>0</u> trained as Level 2</p> <p><u>\$42,647.67</u> total spent on staff wages, including:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><u>\$25,500.32</u> in AIS Prevention Aid</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><u>\$17,147.35</u> in other funds leveraged from <u>MAISRC for Lab 2 Lakes project.</u></p> <p><u>77</u> volunteers conducted AIS work supporting aid-funded activities</p> <p><u>257</u> volunteer hours served supporting aid-funded activities</p>
 <p>Partnerships Created and Maintained</p>	<p>Local organizations engaged and/or actively conducting aid-funded activities:</p> <p><u>10</u> lake associations</p> <p><u>1</u> conservation nonprofits and/or outdoor groups</p> <p><u>2</u> schools and/or youth organizations</p> <p><u>4</u> businesses</p> <p><u>1</u> local governments</p> <p>County AIS Task Force or Committee established in <u>2014</u></p>
 <p>Funds Distributed, Contributed and Leveraged</p>	<p><u>\$8,576.07</u> of AIS Prevention Aid awarded as grants to other organizations</p> <p><u>5</u> organizations awarded grants</p> <p><u>\$17,742.10</u> in funds contributed by other organizations that directly supported <u>all</u> aid-funded activities in the county (aka leveraged funds)</p> <p><u>5</u> organizations contributing additional funds</p>
 <p>Communities Engaged</p>	<p><u>8</u> events held about AIS or that included AIS topics</p> <p><u>328</u> residents and visitors directly contacted/engaged about AIS during events</p> <p><u>101</u> children/students and <u>2</u> teachers taught about AIS</p>

Category	Metrics	
	<p>\$2,000.00 of aid spent on advertisements (billboards, TV, radio, newspaper, social media, etc.)</p> <p>In 2025, AIS topics were shared on several social media channels including Facebook where the SWCD has 970 followers. The SWCD contributes funding to Minnesota Traditions which produces AIS content and has a following of over 45,000 people.</p>	
	<p>Watercraft Inspected</p>	<p>\$22,185.00 spent on watercraft inspection</p> <p>\$8,325.00 in other funds leveraged from <u>the Briggs Chain Lake Association and Three Lakes Improvement District.</u></p> <p>2,641 inspections performed</p> <p>765 hours of inspections performed</p> <p>11 accesses covered by inspectors</p> <p>12 water bodies covered by inspectors</p> <p>94% of watercraft recorded as arriving with drain plugs out</p> <p>97% of watercraft recorded as arriving free of aquatic plants</p> <p>1,120 boaters engaged by AIS Volunteers/Ambassadors at water accesses</p>
	<p>Law Enforcement Supported</p>	<p>\$4,719.74 in aid provided to local law enforcement officers to enforce AIS laws</p> <p>2 local law enforcement officers conducted AIS work</p> <p>359 boaters contacted by local law enforcement</p> <p>6 AIS warnings and citations written by local law enforcement</p>
	<p>Monitoring Conducted</p>	<p>15 total lakes and rivers surveyed for AIS. Surveys included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 early detection searches on 15 water bodies 55 zebra mussel settling plates deployed on 14 water bodies 5 aquatic plant surveys conducted on 5 water bodies 2 invasive common carp surveys conducted on 2 water bodies 2 carp management projects initiated on 4 water bodies 1 purple loosestrife management project completed on 1 water bodies <p>1 new detections in the county</p> <p>1 volunteers trained and/or active as AIS Detectors</p> <p>5 people participated in the University of Minnesota Extension and Minnesota AIS Research Center’s “Starry Trek” event</p> <p>List of species targeted for monitoring or surveys: <u>Common carp, curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, golden clam, purple loosestrife, starry stonewort, zebra mussels.</u></p>
	<p>New Infestation Response Planned</p>	<p>1 coordinated responses to a new AIS population (no new infestations in 2025)</p> <p>1 new sites controlled/managed</p> <p>Sherburne County and SWCD operate under an existing Rapid Response plan that was developed in 2020 with the Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations</p>

Category Metrics



AIS Controlled

\$146,810.55 spent on in-lake/river control of AIS, including:
\$4,846.21 in AIS Prevention Aid
\$140,014.20 in other funds leveraged from **Local Lake Groups and MAISRC**
\$1,950.14 in Contingency / Rapid Response funds
5 groups involved or conducting aid-funded control activities
5 total water bodies/sites with aid-funded control activities, including:
3 water bodies with invasive aquatic plant management
4 water bodies with invasive common carp management **1,770 carp; 15,340 lbs**
1 sites with purple loosestrife management
 List of species controlled: **Common carp, Eurasian water milfoil, purple loosestrife**

Program Spending Summary

Budget Category	AIS Prevention Aid Spent by the County in 2025	AIS Prevention Spent by Local Grantees in 2025	In-Kind Funds Contributed in 2025	Description
Public Outreach and Education	\$3,798.89	\$2,930.00		SWCD and grantee education projects
Watercraft Inspection	\$21,768.75		\$8,325.00	Level 1 watercraft inspections
Enforcement	\$4,719.74			Sherburne County Sherriff's Department holiday weekend patrols
Monitoring		\$2,750.00	\$5,073.00	Grantee projects and leveraged funds
New Infestation Response		\$1950.14	\$1,950.14	
AIS Control		\$4,846.21	\$6,294.24	Existing population control grant projects and leveraged contribution
Administration	\$25,500.32			Fiscal administration, project management, education and outreach
Totals	\$52,926.42	\$9,546.21	\$19,692.24	

Plans for 2026

The Sherburne SWCD will continue to implement the 2025-2030 Sherburne County AIS Prevention Plan in 2026 with many of the same components as which were enacted in 2025. Wherever possible new forms of outreach will be pursued and new partnerships developed while maintaining the existing tried-and-true programs that have proven themselves successful. Staff will engage with the Sherburne County AIS Task Force to navigate uncertainty in 2027, as there is a projected cut in AIS Prevention Aid that would dramatically change the layout of annual activities and progress towards elements included in the 2025-2030 AIS Prevention Plan. Some preliminary decisions may be made about how to structure the county program with reduced aid, while also brainstorming ways to communicate to legislators and public the importance of AIS Prevention Aid.

2025 Highlights

In 2025, Sherburne County operated under the first year of a new 2025-2030 AIS Prevention Plan which was adopted by the County Board of Commissioners in January. The new plan leverages a number of existing successful programs while also incorporating several new activities and focus areas. New forms of education included an increase in tabling events and community gatherings, new approaches of outreach to engage with non-typical watercraft users, and a shift in priorities with the AIS grant program to focus on public education, capacity building, and on the types of AIS that are targeted for control.

Success Stories

- Despite continuing with a similar level of early detection monitoring as previous years, no new AIS infestations were discovered in 2025.
- The Sherburne SWCD leveraged funding from two other sources, MAISRC Lab to Lakes program and the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment, to complete carp management projects in the county.
- 2025 represented the first year of outreach to local sporting goods stores that sell fishing bait and tackle to consumers. Informative signage was provided to four local stores in 2025 and we anticipate this form of outreach to continue and potentially expand in 2026.
- Eurasian watermilfoil was discovered through a grant-funded aquatic plant survey on Lake Orono. EWM was previously discovered in 2020 and was treated with herbicide through contingency funds in partnership with the Orono Lake Improvement District. However, it was not observed in 2021-2024 after that initial treatment and a lake drawdown/dredging project. The 2025 re-discovery was met with another rapid response treatment in hopes of a successful suppression of the colony.

Engaging Diverse Audiences

- Through the new 2025-2030 AIS Prevention Plan, there was an increased effort to engage with youth. Sherburne SWCD staff attended a table at three community events where there were plenty of elementary and older youth present. AIS handout materials and fun exercises were provided to engage with the public about the Clean, Drain, Dispose and Dry concept.
- Through MAISRC's Lab to Lakes program, a "Carp Management Field Day" event was held at Lake Fremont with the primary audience being the Jr. High and High School Conservation Clubs from City of Zimmerman schools. Roughly 25 students joined and heard presentations on lake ecology, native and invasive plants, fisheries management and carp control techniques. The majority of conservation club members are female; a highlight of the event was that student researchers from the University of Minnesota, many of which were also female, provided insight through a Q&A session on what it takes to create a career path in the field of natural resource management.

Multi-County Collaborations

- In recent years there has been new discoveries of golden clam in Central Minnesota. Dr. Valerie Brady of the University of Minnesota is completing a genetic analysis of several invasive species, including golden clams. Staff from Sherburne SWCD and Ramsey County Parks and Recreation teamed up to survey several Sherburne County lakes and several Mississippi River sites for golden clams. No new infestations were identified, however relative abundances were documented and samples were submitted to Dr. Brady to include in her research project.

Reports and Products

- Vegetation survey reports completed for Briggs Lake, Eagle Lake, and Lake Orono (through grant program).
- AIS surveillance completed on 15 major Sherburne County waterbodies, including the Mississippi River.
- Minnesota Public Radio completed a video and [newspaper article](#) about Lake Fremont Lab to Lakes Carp Management Project.
- New Carp Management [webpage](#) created, along with a [Story Map](#) for the Lab to Lakes project.

Photos of AIS Activities

All photos by Sherburne SWCD unless otherwise noted.



Lab to Lakes Field Day with Zimmerman Jr. High and High School Conservation Club, Carp Solutions, MAISRC, and University of Minnesota researchers.



Non-native common carp removed from a baited box net in Lake Fremont by Carp Solutions staff.



2025 Starry Trek Participants



Live golden clam specimens from the Mississippi River



~70 attendees at the Lab to Lakes Kickoff Meeting learning about lake ecology, carp, and other AIS.



Eurasian water milfoil specimen found on Lake Orono. Photo by Matt Berg of Endangered Resource Services LLC.

