

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Experiences

A Survey of Local Efforts Related to the AIS Prevention Aid Program



This handout was created for participants attending the 2015 Regional AIS Prevention Workshops.

Workshop Dates	
May 2015	June 2015
Wed. 27 th – Andover	Mon. 1 st – Duluth
Wed. 27 th – Brainerd	Tues. 2 nd – Little Falls
Thurs. 28 th – Bemidji	Wed 3 rd – Thief River Falls
Thurs. 28 th – Mankato	Thurs. 4 th – Montevideo
	Fri. 5 th – Owatonna
	Tues. 9 th – Fergus Falls

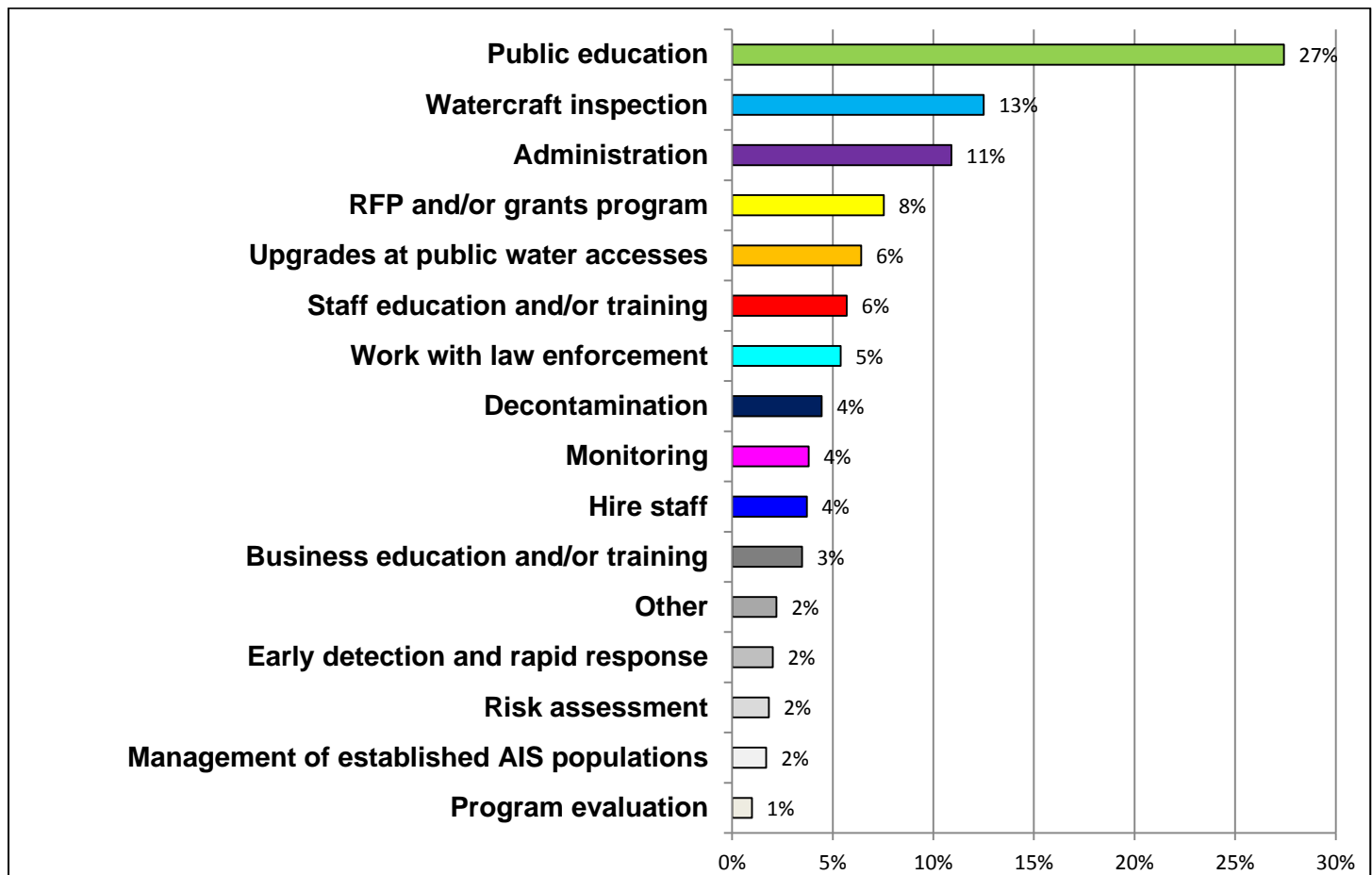
In early May 2015, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) asked all 83 counties that received Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Aid to complete a survey about their AIS prevention experiences to date. We asked for one response from each county as a whole. We plan to use the results of this survey to better understand what is happening across the state and to help us organize a series of regional workshops. The workshops will bring neighboring counties together to share their collective AIS prevention experiences and build stronger inter-county relationships. A summary of the survey responses are outlined below.

49 Out of 83 Counties Responded To the Survey

What Are Your County's Current Priorities?

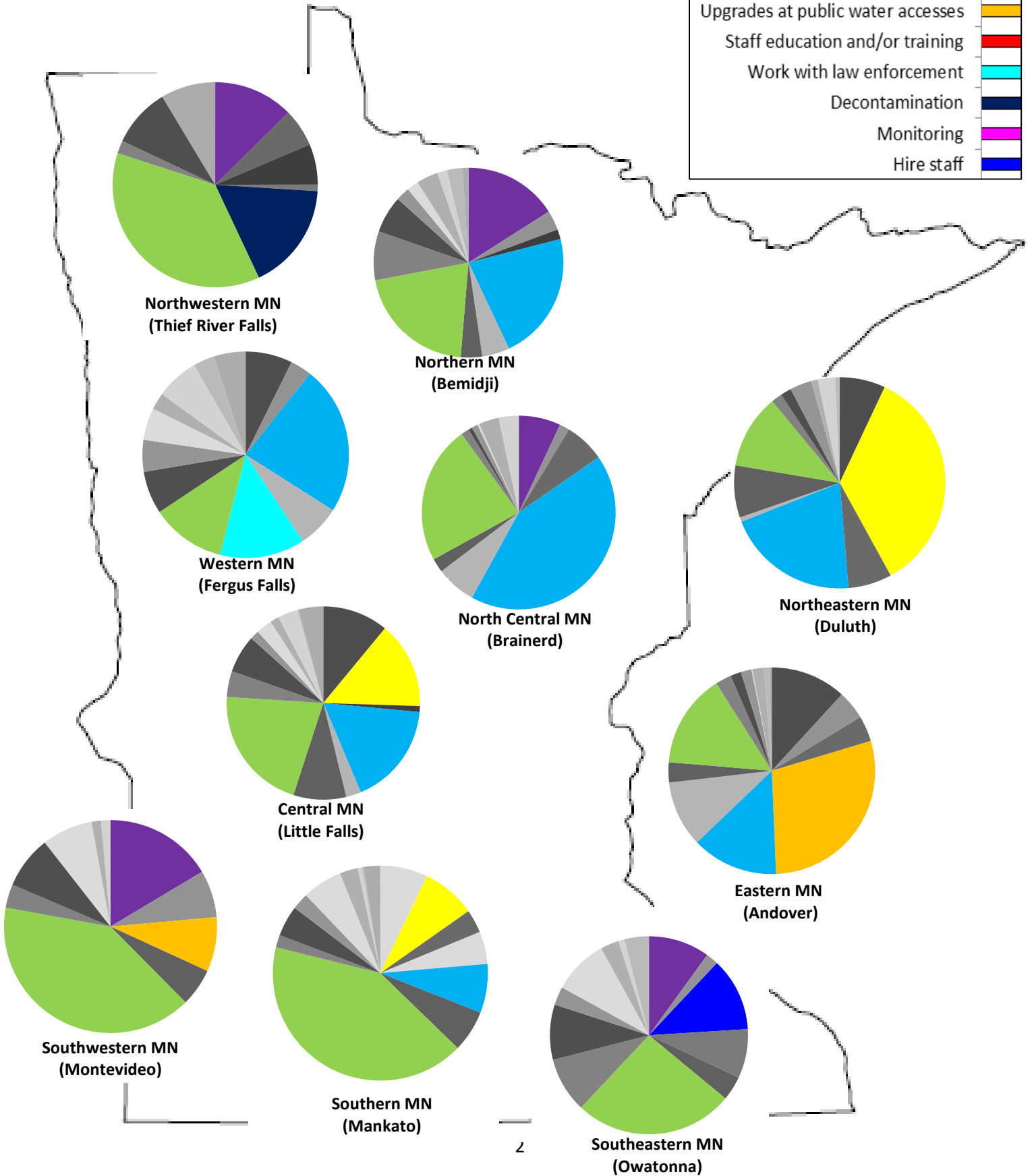
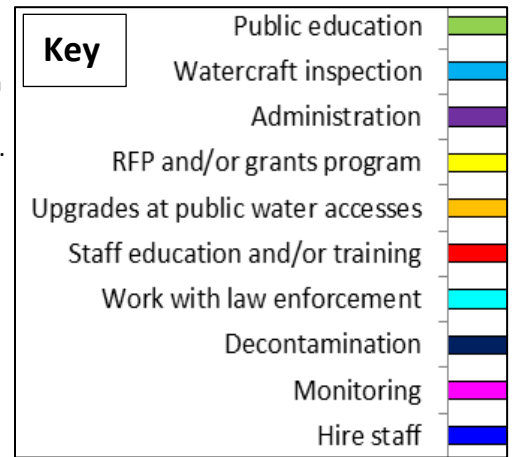
In other words, how is your county currently spending or planning to spend the AIS prevention funds?

Respondents were asked to provide approximate percentages for each of the 16 categories. The online survey program provided limited data (average, total, and number of responses). Results shown: the sum of each category divided by the total sum of all categories. Percentages for the state and for each region can also be found in the table on page 3.



What Are Your County's Current Priorities?

Responses to this question were also separated into "regional groupings," which contain 5 to 10 counties each. The top 3 categories for each region are displayed in color. All other categories are in greyscale. Exact percentages can be found in the table on page 3.



What Are Your County's Current Priorities?

Values for the graph on page 1 and the diagram on page 2 are displayed in the table below. Percentages for each "regional grouping" and for "statewide effort" were calculated as follows: The sum of each category divided by the total sum of all categories.

Category	Montevideo	Mankato	Owatonna	Andover	Little Falls	Duluth	Bemidji	Fergus Falls	Thief River Falls	Brainerd	Statewide Effort
Administration	16.4%	7.1%	10.0%	11.8%	11.0%	7.0%	16.0%	7.3%	12.6%	7.0%	10.9%
RFP and/or grants program	7.1%	8.1%	2.0%	4.5%	14.5%	35.0%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%	1.7%	7.5%
Hire staff	0.0%	3.5%	12.0%	4.0%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	6.7%	3.7%
Upgrades at public water accesses	8.3%	4.9%	0.0%	29.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	6.4%	0.0%	6.4%
Watercraft inspection	0.0%	7.4%	8.0%	13.5%	17.2%	20.3%	22.0%	23.3%	1.0%	42.7%	12.5%
Decontamination	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	2.5%	0.7%	4.7%	6.7%	17.0%	6.7%	4.4%
Work with law enforcement	5.7%	6.3%	4.0%	3.2%	8.8%	8.0%	3.7%	13.3%	0.0%	2.3%	5.4%
Public education	40.3%	41.6%	26.0%	14.7%	21.0%	11.3%	20.7%	11.7%	37.0%	23.0%	27.4%
Business education and/or training	3.6%	1.9%	9.0%	2.5%	4.3%	1.7%	8.3%	0.0%	2.0%	1.3%	3.5%
Staff education and/or training	8.0%	4.6%	9.0%	1.7%	6.3%	1.7%	6.3%	6.7%	9.4%	0.7%	5.7%
Risk assessment	0.0%	2.5%	3.0%	1.7%	1.5%	3.3%	2.3%	5.0%	0.0%	1.0%	1.8%
Monitoring	7.7%	6.0%	9.0%	0.2%	2.7%	0.0%	2.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.3%	3.8%
Early detection and rapid response	1.4%	2.8%	3.0%	1.8%	1.5%	1.0%	3.7%	2.7%	0.0%	3.3%	2.0%
Management of established AIS populations	1.4%	0.6%	1.0%	0.0%	3.3%	2.7%	1.7%	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%	1.7%
Program evaluation	0.0%	0.3%	4.0%	0.8%	0.2%	0.7%	2.7%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Other	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%	0.3%	4.2%	0.0%	1.0%	5.0%	8.6%	0.0%	2.2%
# of Responses	7	8	5	6	6	3	3	3	5	3	49 Responses

Statewide Commonalities & Themes (drawn from open-ended questions)

The total number of comments that contained each listed theme is noted in parenthesis (#)

What aspects of your county's program seem to be working well?

On Successes "Our educational programs have been our focal point since we learned what our county has and where the threats are the strongest."

- Public awareness and education programs (21)
- "Unsure," "too early to tell," or "still trying to get our program up and running" (16)
- Watercraft inspection and decontamination (9)
- Formation of Task Forces (4)
- Setting up request for proposals (RFP) / grant processes (4)
- Hiring staff (4)

What are the greatest challenges your county has encountered so far?

On Challenges "Building the infrastructure to implement the program"

- "just starting," or "understanding the process" (13)
- Stakeholder engagement, developing contacts, and "getting everyone involved on the same page" (9)
- Responsibilities added to current workload "I have a lot of other job duties" (8)
- How to prioritize activities (lack of knowledge and/or conflicting interests) (8)
- Coordinating decontamination stations and watercraft inspections (5)
- Not enough DNR training sessions; Need better coordination with the DNR (5)
- Lack of staff knowledge and expertise on AIS issues (4)
- Partnering with organizations in the region (3)
- Uncertainty from county commissioners (3)

How is your county evaluating the success of your program?

On Evaluating Success *“Since education is the primary concern for the county, how do we evaluate the success for our education programs?”*

- “Evaluation methods have not been determined,” “not at that stage yet,” or “nothing to evaluate yet” (15)
- Analysis of inspection data / reports (10)
- No or no additional waters designated as infested (7)
- Feedback from community. Ranging from general input from citizens/businesses/lake associations up to “behavior change evaluation” (7)
- Refer to Prevention Plan, check to see if the objectives were met (6)
- Number of: people attending events, events, publications distributed, contacts made (4)
- Meetings (2)
- “Harder to evaluate the true effectiveness when you can’t quantify it”

What resources or tools are your county missing that would help your county be more successful?

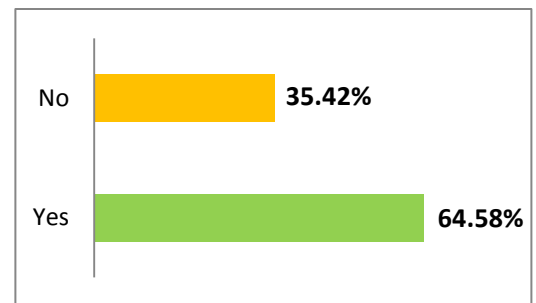
On Resources Needed *“More DNR trainers!” and “Staffing to promote and educate people about AIS prevention”*

- “Too early to tell” and “uncertain” (10)
- Need resources from the DNR: More trainings; trainings earlier in the year; flexibility with grants; AIS signage; general AIS training (10)
- Staffing (more staff or staff time for the project, staff training and expertise) (8)
- None. “There seem to be sufficient resources available...” (7)
- Additional direction on set up and implementation of plans (6)

Has your county been collaborating with neighboring counties? If yes, how so?

On Current Collaboration (33 responses) *“we are part of a large educational media campaign”*

- “Initial discussions,” “open communications,” and “bouncing ideas off of each other” (10)
- Meeting in person with one or more partners (9)
- Public education (cost-share on publications, regional public service announcements, media campaigns) (5)
- Partnering to do inspections and/or decontamination stations (5)



What does your county see as opportunities for future collaboration amongst neighboring counties?

On Future Collaboration *“Invasive species do not have boundaries so educational and prevention measures shouldn’t either”*

- Public education (cost-share and production of education materials, advertisements, newsletters, billboards, etc.) (20)
- Share decontamination equipment and watercraft inspectors (12)
- Sharing resources, ideas, effective tools, and experiences; consistent communication; attend collaborative meetings (7)
- Share monitoring and rapid response results (3)