



TITLE: CWC AIS Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Program Policy
DATE: 1/5/2023
TO: Non-county entities that partner with Crow Wing County on the watercraft inspection program
FROM: Crow Wing County – Land Services Department

In order to implement an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) watercraft inspection program that is consistent, transparent, and effective, the following policy is effective immediately.

- A. Crow Wing County will be the delegated local government unit (LGU) and responsible for assigning inspectors to landings and decontamination stations. Crow Wing County will also provide all required equipment such as, but not limited to, tablets, vests, flags, etc.
- B. Alternatively, Crow Wing County will provide, to any LGU that agrees to sign a delegation agreement with the MN DNR and has at least a portion of jurisdiction adjacent to the lake, funding equal to the number of inspection and decontamination hour's per-lake plus the cost of DNR training. The funding will be for watercraft inspections, decontamination, and DNR training only. The payment on a per-hour basis for inspections and training for LGUs with a signed delegation agreement will be \$18.70 in 2023. Specific inspector wages can be set by the LGU. The County reserves the right to discontinue funding if funds are spent for other purposes. Non-county entities (such as lake associations) will be responsible for securing the LGU funding. The entity will be responsible for working with the LGU to hire and schedule inspectors and provide all other MN DNR required equipment. For more information about watercraft inspection delegation agreements, see the MN DNR's ["Watercraft Inspection Delegation Agreement Q & A"](#).

Non-county entities that partner with Crow Wing County on the watercraft inspection program ("partners") agree to the following:

- 1. Crow Wing County's "master schedule" and inspector availability are the sole basis for scheduling inspectors at landings.
 - a. The master schedule is based on "peak" usage at landings and reflects the overall best times for performing watercraft inspections.
 - b. The master schedule will be shared with partners (e.g., lake associations).
 - c. The master schedule will be implemented with the following benchmarks:
 - i. March: Master schedule is created by County staff using only the County allocated hours from the County Board approved AIS Plan. The draft schedule will then be sent to partners for feedback on additional / expanded inspection hours beyond the County's allocation.
 - 1. Partners provide feedback and expanded coverage requests. Expanded coverage requests must follow Crow Wing County shift schedule of 9 am to 6 pm. Inspectors will not be scheduled at landings prior to 9 am or later than 6 pm.
 - ii. Early April: Master schedule is revised to reflect partner feedback.
 - iii. Late April: Final master schedule is published.
 - d. Requests for changes to the "master schedule" after it is published will only be considered if communicated to the Environmental Services Coordinators at least two weeks prior to the proposed change.

- e. Regardless of the source of funds paying for inspectors, Crow Wing County will abide by the master schedule and inspector availability for the entire duration of the AIS watercraft inspection season.
 - f. The master schedule is to be interpreted as a guide which is ultimately subject to inspector availability (inspectors may become sick, have an excused absence, etc.)
- 2. Crow Wing County will not provide partners with access to weekly or bi-weekly schedules except that:
 - a. Crow Wing County will inform partners with an active DNR trained certified volunteer program when an inspector is unable to make a scheduled shift or when major changes to the scheduling patterns occur upon request so that volunteers can be arranged.
 - b. The Environmental Services Coordinators may be contacted directly for verification of hours scheduled on an as-needed basis.
- 3. Crow Wing County will not schedule inspectors prior to walleye open-water fishing opener weekend for any reason, typically the second weekend in May. Staff will only be scheduled after Labor Day weekend, typically first weekend in September, if adequate staffing is available for expanded coverage requests.
- 4. Scheduling at the landing will occur in the following priority order: (1) MN DNR inspector schedule, (2) Crow Wing County / LGU inspectors, and (3) volunteers.
 - a. Crow Wing County will not schedule inspectors around volunteer schedules.
- 5. Crow Wing County will use the following priority of landing coverage when inspector availability is limited:
 - a. Coverage on high risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan.¹
 - b. Coverage on medium risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan.¹
 - c. Coverage on low risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan.¹
 - d. Coverage on very low risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan.¹
 - e. Expanded coverage on high risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan.
 - f. Expanded coverage on medium risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan.
 - g. Expanded coverage on low risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan
 - h. Expanded coverage on very low risk lakes in the County's approved AIS Plan.
 - i. Expanded coverage on non-County AIS Plan inspection hours. *NOTE: *Will only receive hours if the County has available staff beyond the County's core inspection program.*
- 6. Crow Wing County will not staff non-County AIS Plan public accesses unless /until staffing needs on the County's allocated landings have been met.
- 7. Inspectors are to adhere to the CWC Watercraft Inspection Policy Manual and MN DNR Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Manuals. Together, these policies address issues such as leaving the landing, appropriate appearance, lunch / breaks, weather events, inspection and decontamination protocol, etc.
- 8. Partners who wish to financially provide additional hours of inspections on County AIS Prevention Plan lake accesses or new hours on non-County AIS Plan lake accesses shall be invoiced directly from Crow Wing County. Partners will be invoiced monthly for all expanded inspection hours fulfilled. Partners must provide Crow Wing County payment within the timeframe identified on the invoice. Failure to provide timely payment will result in the County not scheduling expanded coverage requests and/or not considering future expanded coverage requests by the partner indefinitely in the future. Unfilled scheduled hours in the Crow Wing County AIS plan has no bearing on the reimbursement. The rate partners will be invoiced on a per-hour basis will be the inspector wage plus applicable payroll taxes (i.e., Medicare, social security, etc.). For an inspector with 3 or more years' experience, this will be \$20/hour, a new and 2nd year returning inspector, will be \$19/hour.

¹ If an inspector does not live close to the County's preferred high risk landing or is not available at the amount of hours the landing is allocated per-week, then the County will staff another AIS Plan landing using the priority under item #5a, b, & c.