

Aquatic Awareness & Prevention Report

By Steve Weeres, Aquatic Awareness & Prevention Programs Committee

I-LIDS Update

Managing the problem of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in the Sauk River Chain of Lakes requires a multi-pronged approach of measurement, control and prevention. As part of our preventive strategy, the SRCLA continues to maintain the Internet Landing Installed Device Sensors (I-LIDS) at the four public access points on the SRCL: Highway 23, Highway 22, County Road 71, and Long Lake. The I-LIDS are designed to increase the boater's awareness of the need to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). When the presence of a rig is detected, I-LIDS plays audio educational messages and triggers the camera

to capture and transmit high-resolution videos of the boat's condition over the internet to a remote server.

There, the videos are reviewed by trained personnel as part of an ongoing service provided by Environmental Sentry Protection. Videos are reviewed for compliance with state law relating to the transfer of aquatic plants on the boater's equipment. Videos of potential violations are further reviewed and posted on a secure website where we can review the videos for confirmation. The SRCLA board has established a collaborative agreement with the Stearns County Sheriff's office to investigate AIS violations and issue a warning or citation to the boater.

For the time period May-August 2023, I-LIDS observed the following number of boat launches by location:

Highway 23 access point: 719 launches

Highway 22 access point: 1041 launches

Co. Rd 71 access point: 608 launches

Long Lake access point: 580 launches

This is a total of 2,948 launches into the SRCL for the season. Each time a boat is launched into the water it is an opportunity to insert AIS into the ecosystem. With this high level of activity, it is paramount that we do all we can to ensure that those launching craft do the right thing and prevent the introduction of invasive species by inspecting their rig before entering the water. Correspondingly, there is a boat retrieval for every launch. It is equally important to emphasize proper procedures to prevent the export of invasive species. So far this season, eight violations have been detected by video review and reported to the Sheriff's Office for review and potential action.



In this case, the Sherriff's Office issued a citation to the watercraft owner. This image is an example of the capability of the I-LIDS system and the review process. The Board believes that the presence of the I-LIDS at our access points emphasizes the importance of proper cleaning and inspection procedures needed to ensure the AIS-safe launch and retrieval. From the data above, we note a low number of violations indicating that there is a consistent effort to Clean-Drain-Dry

The Association is committed to continued investment into strategies to create awareness of this simple message. We can all do our part, both with our own activities and reminding visitors of the importance of following proper procedures when launching and retrieving watercraft.

We are always looking for new ideas to promote awareness of AIS transfer. If you have an idea or are aware of effective methods others have implemented, contact the author at SteveSRCLB@gmail.com.

**CLEAN
DRAIN
DRY
YOUR BOAT
AND
TRAILER**

**Help stop the spread of
Invasive Species**