

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** MCWD Board of Managers  
**FROM:** Eric Fieldseth, AIS Program Manager  
Jillian Bjorklund, AIS District Representative  
**DATE:** August 13, 2015  
**SUBJECT:** AIS Volunteer Early Detector Program

The AIS volunteer monitoring program was created by the MCWD AIS Program in early 2015. The goal of the program is to not only create awareness of AIS, but to add on to the early detection work staff is already doing. The more people actively looking for new AIS, the higher likelihood of finding new infestations early, leaving an opportunity for a rapid response. Staff has developed a how-to-guide that walks volunteers through the steps to monitor for new AIS, suggested equipment (including a kit provided by the MCWD), and an easy to use identification guide. Also developed was an online reporting tool that can be accessed via a smart phone, or a paper copy that is available as well. There has already been a lot of interest in the program, with close to 50 volunteers on various waterbodies including Lake Minnewashta, Christmas, Piersons, Wassermann, Schutz, Zumbra, Tamarack and Minnetonka. Many of the volunteers are lakeshore homeowners and are mainly interested in checking for zebra mussels with their samplers. We have had no new reports of AIS being located on any lakes yet, and people are actively looking. Next season we hope to build up our volunteer network even more, reaching out to recreational users who may not live on the lake, and hopefully get more people interested in looking for other AIS in addition to zebra mussels. We will also work with the MCWD Education Department in getting AIS monitoring training or demonstrations to school groups and other groups who may have an interest.

The AIS Early Detector Guide Book has been a huge success thus far. Word of mouth has spread fast, and many other organizations have already reached out to see how they can get copies. Interest has ranged from those in our District, including lakeshore owners, Carver County, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board and Three Rivers Park District, as well as agencies and groups outside our District including watershed districts, lake associations, UW-Extension, U of M Extension, MN DNR and U of M AIS Research Center. We are working with the District Communications and Education Department to further distribute the books to agencies, related business and other groups in the District.

Early detection has really gained a lot of interest since the Christmas Lake zebra mussel discovery and subsequent rapid response. The U of M Extension is also developing a volunteer early detection program, and has looked at what the MCWD has already developed. The MCWD has been at the forefront of many AIS related activities, and the creation of this book is another example of the way we are leading the way in AIS.