



2017 MLR Legislative Update

Many of you write with simple questions such as, "Why can't Minnesota tag inspected boats so that they can launch safely without having to be reinspected; can we set up a system so that boaters who launch into and out of one lake can get a special pass since they pose no threat of transporting AIS; why can't Minnesota do mandatory inspection/decontamination at choke points around the state, instead of trying to cover every single boat ramp in Minnesota?"

These are good questions. A tagging system combined with a centralized inspection/decontamination program would make Minnesota's efforts to stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species both more effective and far more efficient. We have laws on the books that would allow us to start using these tools.

So why have we not done these things?

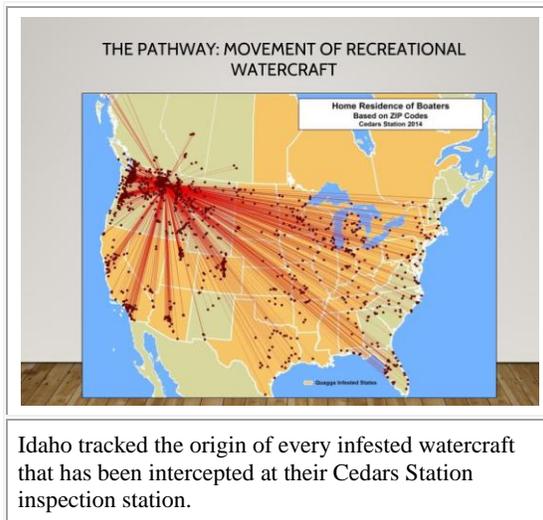
Last week I, and a number of Minnesota legislators, learned the answer. Lack of effective partnership and collaboration. Let me explain.

On Thursday, Feb. 24th, at 3:00 legislators were invited to an AIS learning session held by Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen, Senator Carrie Rudd, and Rep. Dan Fabian, Chairs of the Environment committees in the Minnesota House and Senate. The event was organized and sponsored by MLR, Gabriel Jabbour of Tonka Bay Marina, Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates, and the MN DNR Statewide AIS Advisory Committee.

The speaker was Stephanie Showalter Otts, Executive Director of Sea Grant Law Center. Stephanie has spent the last six years working with the assistant attorney generals of western states to craft a legal framework that is effective, comprehensive and consistent. Western states have been able to accomplish many of the things Minnesota has not, and the reason seems to be the process used to draft the legislation used to create inspection and decontamination programs.

Ms. Showalter Otts convened a series of conferences that built program consensus by inviting AIS specialists, assistant attorneys general, and state law enforcement to help draft the enabling language.

This language was then packaged as a legislative framework that the various western states could change or adopt.



In Minnesota, the MN DNR attorneys who drafted our AIS laws did not first build program consensus by including county attorneys and county sheriffs as they were drafting language.

As Ms. Showalter Otts said during the presentation, "Attorneys are concerned with worst case scenarios, and so we say 'no' a lot. We are trained to say 'no.'"

The take-away is clear - partnering is important in all public policy discussions, and the earlier the partnership forms, the better. It is not just water related stakeholders that must be brought into AIS work, but enforcement agents, including the

attorneys who will prosecute AIS laws and support law enforcement officers.

It is time to bring together law enforcement, including county attorneys, to review the current statutes, agree on a workable framework, and then work to get these changes into law. MLR would like to thank Gabriel Jabbour, the MN DNR and Stephanie Showalter Otts for all the work they did to make last weeks presentation so spot on. Special thanks to Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen, Senator Carrie Rudd, and Representative Dan Fabian for sponsoring the event.

Legislative Update

In the last few weeks a number of bills have been heard in both the House and Senate that could, if passed, impact lake home and cabin owners. Some bills do not yet have a companion in either the House or the Senate, some would be dependent on the amount of money available, either to fund the bill or to pay for the cut in spending associated with the bill, some lack widespread support.

The February forecast will be released today, and then the various committees will set targets for what they have available to spend. Republican leadership in both the House and the Senate have remained focused on cutting both spending and taxes, but the level of those cuts will be determined by the budget forecast.

In addition, March 10th is the first bill deadline so all new bills must be introduced and heard in a committee in order to be included in the final Omnibus bill.

In the coming weeks I will be sending out action alerts related to legislation that appears to have legs.

Please forward this email to all of your lake association members, your neighbors, family and friends, and urge them to sign up for MLR's Citizen Action Network (CAN) emails at www.mnlakesandrivers.org.



No one else is going to protect your lakes for you. It is up to each of us.

Together, we CAN and will make a difference.

Below are some articles, grant opportunities and news that have come into the office over the last few weeks that I thought you or your lake association members might find useful. Please feel free to distribute, forward or use to promote your work.

Best to you, and thank you for your labors towards lake and river protection.

Jeff Forester,

Executive Director

Minnesota Lakes & Rivers Advocates



[Help! We're Surrounded! A Park Rapids Community AIS Event March 20 from 7-8:30 PM](#)

MLR Executive Director Jeff Forester will present at Riverside United Methodist Church which will host a 90 minute 2017 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention event on March 20th, 2017 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at Riverside United Methodist Church, Highway 71 North, Park Rapids, MN Phone: [218-732-5205](tel:218-732-5205)

[Read More](#)

[Region Nine Development Commission Grants Opportunity Forum on March 21st](#)

Join us on Tuesday, March 21st for Region Nine's spring Grant Opportunity Forum at South Central Service Cooperative, North Mankato. Registration is at 8:30 a.m. and breakfast will be provided. Presentations will be 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and will cover both local government and nonprofit funding opportunities. This event is free but registration is required.

[Read More](#)

[How old are Minnesota cabin owners? The answer might surprise you](#)



By [Dave Orrick / St. Paul Pioneer Press](#) on Feb 25, 2017 at 6:55 p.m.

MLR has just released their 2016 Lake Home and Cabin Owner demographic survey. The results are sobering.

"We are facing the largest intergenerational transfer of lakeshore property in our State's history," said Jeff Forester. "And we are not prepared for it."

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