

2016 Michigan AIS Landing Blitz Handbook



The following background information and talking points are for volunteer partners to use during Michigan's second annual AIS Landing Blitz. This document summarizes key messages that should be delivered at the event. To view a short video recorded during last year's AIS Landing Blitz, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KITfLBT4eb4>.

Background

Recreational boating can be a significant pathway for the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) between bodies of water. Michigan has more than 900,000 registered boats (not including out-of-state boats) that can potentially move between one or more water bodies, including 11,000 inland lakes and the Great Lakes, bays and connecting channels. The AIS Landing Blitz is designed to increase public awareness about AIS and assist boaters in taking preventative steps to avoid spreading AIS and comply with current AIS related laws.

Michigan's AIS Landing Blitz is a collaborative outreach event that presents an opportunity for the Quality of Life agencies (Michigan DEQ, DNR & DARD) to work with local partners from July 1 through July 10, 2016, in an on-the-ground effort. State agency staff are working to coordinate and empower local partners at boating access sites across the state to convey consistent messaging about preventing the introduction and spread of AIS from the movement of watercraft and equipment between water bodies.

More specifically, AIS Landing Blitz partners will:

- 1) Demonstrate how to visually check boats and recreational equipment for aquatic invasive species;
- 2) Demonstrate where and how to clean and decontaminate boats and recreational equipment;
- 3) Raise awareness for Michigan's laws and regulations focused on preventing the spread of AIS; and
- 4) Distribute handouts with AIS prevention messaging such as key chain floats, winch post stickers, can koozies, towels and watch cards.
- 5) Record data about the event (see below)

Sample Script for approaching people during the AIS Landing Blitz

Only approach boaters before they are on the actual launch ramp or after they have moved away from the launch ramp. The parking lot and/or other areas where staging occurs are the most convenient locations.

Always begin by telling people who you are, who you represent, and why you are there. Ask if they have a few moments to talk about aquatic invasive species.

Sometimes you may only have a very short (~30 seconds) time to talk to boaters. If a boater is not interested in talking, simply offer them an AIS handout (floating key chain, towel, etc.) and wish them a nice day.

Other times you may have a longer period to interact. You can use the following script to help guide your discussion.

“Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ from _____. We are working with state agencies and local partners to talk with boaters about aquatic invasive species. Our focus is to prevent aquatic invasive species such as Eurasian water-milfoil and zebra mussels from spreading between lakes.”

Sample questions to guide your interaction:

“Are you familiar with aquatic invasive species and the harm they can do to Michigan’s lakes and rivers?”

“Do you know how to inspect and clean your boat and equipment to help lessen the likelihood of spreading AIS?”

“Do you mind if I demonstrate some inspection and cleaning tips?” (See below for watercraft inspection information)

“Are you aware of Michigan’s laws and required actions for boaters that protect our lakes from the spread of AIS?” (See **Required Actions** and **Additional Recommended Actions** below)

As you’re talking to boaters during the Landing Blitz, remember these do’s and don’ts:

Do:

- Be courteous and polite
- Listen to boater’s concerns and remember we are trying to encourage boaters to become interested and take action to prevent the spread of AIS
- Make sure boaters know that they can make a difference
- Always introduce yourself and mention your organization and why you are at the boating access site

Don’t:

- Don’t delay boaters, cause a backup
- Don’t approach boaters while they are on the launch ramp
- Don’t begin by asking questions. Introduce yourself and the event first!
- Don’t overly-emphasize or stress yourself out on identifying species correctly. The simple message is to remove all animal or plant matter, regardless of whether it is an invasive plant or native plant.

Whenever possible, try to mention the required and recommended actions below. The provided winch post stickers also contain this information, so be sure to hand them out. The required

actions are enforceable by civil fines from Conservation Officers, but mentioning them as part of the AIS Landing Blitz is a means of offering compliance assistance and raising awareness.

Required Actions – It's the Law in Michigan!

- **Remove** aquatic plants from boats, boating equipment, and boat trailers before launching or placing in the water (NREPA Part 413 Sec. 41325).
- **Drain** live wells, bilges and all water from boats before leaving the access site (MI DNR Fisheries Order 245).
- **Dispose** of unused bait in the trash. Do not release bait into the water (MI DNR Fisheries Order 245).
- **Don't transfer** fish to water bodies other than where they were caught (DNR Fisheries Order 245).

Additional Recommended Actions – Protect Our Natural Resources!

- **Inspect and remove** plants and mud from boats and trailers and dry equipment before leaving the access area. Dispose of the material in a trash receptacle or otherwise away from the water body, if possible.
- **Wash** boats and trailers before leaving the access area if possible, at a nearby car wash, or at home.
- **Dry** boats and equipment for at least 5 days before launching into a different body of water.
- **Disinfect** livewells and bilges with bleach solution (1/2 cup bleach to 5 gallons water).

Boat inspection and cleaning tips

Use the following diagram to point out the important locations to check during an inspection for aquatic invasive species:



As you're talking about or demonstrating boat and equipment inspections for AIS, keep in mind the simple "Clean, Drain, Dry" phrase and remind people to:

- **Clean** boats and equipment after each use to remove aquatic plants, mud and other debris or materials. Cleaning can be done by physically removing plants and other material with your hands, a rag or with pressure water from a boat wash system.
- **Drain** live wells and bilges before leaving the boating access site
- **Dry** boats, trailers and equipment at the boating access site with a towel and then allow them to dry for at least 5 days at home before going to other waters

Landing Blitz Event Data (see data sheet at the end of this document)

Data and metrics to be collected during the event include (data sheet will be provided for each location):

- Number of participants (QOL staff, volunteer partners, others)
- Number of hours spent during the event at your location
- Number of people contacted (boaters/recreational users during the event)
- Number of boats inspected and/or washed.

Clean Boats Clean Waters

The *Clean Boats Clean Waters* (CBCW) program trains volunteers to organize and conduct watercraft inspection demonstrations and AIS education efforts in their local communities. The mission of the program is to promote water resource stewardship by actively involving individuals in preventing the spread of harmful aquatic invasive species.



The CBCW program handbook contains detailed information about volunteer watercraft inspections and additional information that may be useful during the AIS Landing Blitz. To learn more about the program or to enroll, view the resources below:

Clean Boats Clean Waters website: <http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/>

Clean Boats Clean Waters factsheet: <http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/downloads/cbcw/11-720-Clean-Boats-Clean-Waters-fact-sheet.pdf>

Clean Boats Clean Waters handbook: <http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/downloads/cbcw/11-722-CBCW-handbook-WEB.pdf>

Clean Boats Clean Waters "Volunteers in Action" video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtWFJs6HSvc>

Frequently Asked Questions

Be prepared to answer a variety of questions from the public. These may include:

- I can't get all the water out of my live well or bilge. Does that matter?
 - *Do the best you can by removing drain plugs, running pumps and using towels.*
- I don't see any mussel shells attached to my boat. Why worry about water in the boat?
 - *Certain life stages of zebra mussels (veligers) and other AIS can be very small and difficult or impossible to see. Additionally, diseases such as VHS can be transferred and spread through bilge and livewell water.*
- Do I have to clean my jetski or kayak?
 - *Yes. Any equipment or watercraft that comes in contact with the water can potentially spread invasive species. See the above answer regarding veligers and diseases.*
- Isn't the spread of AIS inevitable? Why is the state wasting resources?
 - *There are still many water bodies that do not have AIS. Even if we can't keep all AIS out completely we can still prevent a lot of widespread damage. The longer we can keep AIS out of a lake, the longer we put off the enormous costs of management, control and property devaluation.*
- What is going on with Asian carp?
 - *Michigan is working with regional partners on short-term control measures to prevent the introduction of Asian carp. Additionally, Michigan supports hydrologic separation in the Chicago Area Waterway System. DNR Fisheries Division continues to conduct early detection surveillance through the use of environmental DNA and training exercises to increase overall preparedness and effectiveness of a response.*
- Aren't stocked coho salmon and chinook salmon non-native? Isn't the state intentionally introducing those invasive species?
 - *Invasive species are defined as non-native species that cause harm. Most people don't generally think that stocked non-native salmon are causing harm. In fact, they are beneficial for the economy in many ways.*
- I am not a scientist. How am I supposed to know how to identify these critters?
 - *It is more important to simply "Clean, Drain, Dry" your boat and equipment remove all animal or plant matter, regardless of whether it is an invasive plant or native plant. Proper identification is not necessary for this type of prevention.*

**Michigan's AIS Landing Blitz
Event Data Sheet**

Location (waterbody, boating access site, county): _____

Launch site (circle one): Private Public

Date: _____ *Time event began*: _____ *Time event ended* _____

Weather conditions during event: _____

Data recorder (person's name): _____

State of Michigan staff present (names): _____

Local volunteer partners present (names): _____

Approximate number of people contacted during the event: _____

Number of boats inspected for AIS: _____ *Number of boats washed*: _____

Number & approximate percentage of boats/trailers observed w/ AIS attached: _____

AIS observed on boats, trailers, and equipment during the Landing Blitz (common or scientific names):

Notes/comments: