

# WAUKESHA COUNTY AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES STRATEGIC PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

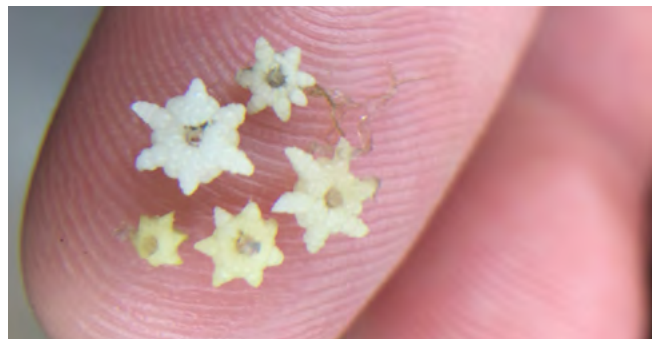
Waukesha County's aquatic ecosystems are experiencing negative impacts from existing aquatic invasive species (AIS) and continue to be threatened by new invasions. Since the 1960s, local residents have noticed detrimental changes in lakes often caused by the presence of AIS. Because AIS affect natural resources, human health, recreation, and ecosystem services throughout the County, their control has become a driving force for the formation of many Lake Associations and Lake Districts. AIS also have significant economic impacts on utilities, tourism, and the value of waterfront property.

AIS enter, and are distributed throughout, Waukesha County by human-assisted vectors including recreational boating, hunting, fishing, tourism, development activities, and the trade of live organisms. Conservation staff and volunteer groups have partnered to invest thousands of hours combatting new invasions of AIS by implementing educational programs to increase awareness of, and compliance with, AIS related laws. Surveying lakes, conducting boater behavior surveys, and talking to specific user groups has allowed County staff to improve awareness of AIS issues among stakeholders, identify and report lakes contaminated with AIS, and begin developing recommendations to prevent the spread of AIS to more lakes, rivers, and streams.

In February 2017, Waukesha County was awarded a three-year grant to continue a cooperative AIS education, prevention, and control program with adjacent Washington County. Additional financial support from local lake groups made it possible to complete a Strategic Plan and hire a second intern to monitor boat launches for AIS at several lakes around the County during the summer. The Strategic Plan describes how AIS affect recreation, ecology, and the economy of the County as well as the benefits of stopping the spread of AIS. The plan also maps specific AIS in local lakes, informs the public of management options, and provides recommendations for AIS education, prevention, and control.



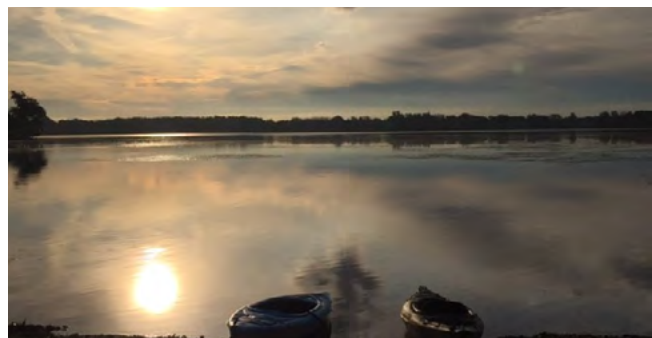
*Credit: Katelin Holm*



*Starry Stonewort - Credit: Brad Steckart*



*Credit: Brad Steckart*



*Credit: Brad Steckart*

For a copy of the Waukesha County AIS Strategic Plan, and to view the interactive AIS mapping system, go to: [www.waukeshacounty.gov/AIS](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/AIS)

Waukesha County's continued success with AIS prevention, containment, and control requires the establishment of priorities. The broad spectrum of challenges, combined with a limited amount of resources, requires that a strategic approach be taken to combat AIS. Working through a local advisory committee, the Strategic Plan establishes a set of goals and action items to guide the implementation of an AIS program in Waukesha County through 2023. The goals include the following:

- Goal 1: **Educate** water users, both residents and visitors, and the general public about the existence of AIS
- Goal 2: **Prevent** the spread of AIS to and from local waters
- Goal 3: **Collect, map, analyze,** and periodically update AIS population, distribution, and density data within Waukesha County to monitor program effectiveness and identify new AIS threats
- Goal 4: **Reduce, Manage, and Control** new and existing AIS populations within Waukesha County
- Goal 5: **Network and Collaborate** with other entities on AIS efforts
- Goal 6: **Sustain** the implementation of the AIS Strategic Plan and utilize it as a living document

To accomplish each of the above goals, detailed action items are described in Chapter 4 of the plan. The spread of AIS can be successfully prevented and managed in Waukesha County through an effective outreach and education program, appropriate control measures, targeted AIS law enforcement, and a robust partnership with local governments, lake districts, conservation groups, and other volunteers. This plan recommends how these items can be carried out. To be effective, the recommended actions require a coordinated effort around the County and the continuation of program funding, either through grants or other more reliable funding sources.



*Credit: Brad Steckart*



*Purple Loosestrife - Credit: Wikimedia Commons User Liz West*



*Phragmites - Credit: Paul Skawinski*



*Zebra Mussel Cluster - Credit: D. Jude, University of Michigan*