



Bureau of Water Quality
Procedural Document

Water Quality Policy Management Team
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster Street, P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

**Aquatic Invasive Species Signage
Overview and Instructions**

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EGAD Number 3200-2020-10

Boat Launch and Other Water/Wetland Access AIS Prevention Signage

Updated 11/10/2020

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Overview

This guide addresses the installation and management of signs used to remind Wisconsin residents and visitors to follow the requirements of NR40 to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) by following these prevention steps:

INSPECT, REMOVE, DRAIN, NEVER MOVE

It is never possible to know with 100% certainty that our waters are free of all AIS. The goal of AIS Signage is to reinforce Wisconsin’s AIS prevention message and law. All versions of the current signage contain the NR40 requirements to remove all plants, animals and water prior to leaving a boat launch. Each sign includes the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! (SAH!) logo, branding for AIS prevention that is recognized by boaters nationwide.

Aquatic invasive species warning signs and signs noting specific species present in a waterbody are no longer utilized or funded by WDNR, although some lake and river organizations may opt to include such educational information at launches at their own expense. If all water users focus on prevention, we know we can greatly reduce the actual and potential spread of AIS.

Thank you to the UW Madison Division of Extension-Natural Resources Institute, WDNR and AIS Partnership staff who assisted with this updated guide and the new reporting form: Chris Acy, Tim Campbell, Patricia Cicero, Natalie Dutack, Chris Hamerla, Cathy Higley, Jeff Jackson, Kyle Mosel, Amanda Smith, and Matt Wallrath.

Sign types and costs

The Prevent the Spread boat launch and stream access signs pictured below are provided by the WDNR at no cost. The artwork for boot brush stations and large cleaning station signs is provided, but those building and placing the stations may need to purchase the actual signs and other materials. Funding is sometimes available through grants. Contact DNRAISinfo@wisconsin.gov or 608-266-0061 for current details. WDNR and Wisconsin AIS Partnership staff generally have launch and stream access signs available in their offices. The most up-to-date listing of your AIS Coordinators can be found here: [Aquatic Invasive Species Contacts](#)

Please be aware that any signage being considered for placement on WDNR property cannot be mounted until a Land Use Agreement is in place with the land manager. Never place a sign on any property until you have contacted the property owner and gotten the permissions they require.



Cleaning Station
Kiosk - Land Use Agree

It is very important to work closely with the launch owner. Launches may be owned by WDNR, Townships, Cities, Counties, or private, such as one at a campground or tavern. Directions to find the launch owner are on page 6. You can also contact your AIS Coordinator for assistance.

“Prevent the Spread” Sign for boat launches on lakes and rivers

There are multiple signs currently utilized at boat launches and water access points throughout the state. All boat launches should have a “Prevent the Spread” sign. A permit from WDNR is not needed to have this sign present but working with the launch owner for proper placement and installation is important. Do not relocate a sign without the launch owner’s permission.



Figure 1: Boat Launch AIS Outreach Sign

Signs for Stream and Wetland Access Points

At stream and wetland access points, either a “Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers” stream access sign or a boot brush station with AIS sign are often used. You can include a boot brush station in a practical location even if there is already a Prevent the Spread or stream access sign present. Work with local landowners, including those who manage public lands, as you consider where to place these signs.



2: 8" X 10"-may be available in larger sizes



3: Boot brush stations signs can have a hunting or wading angler focus; Left-wader/boot brush station at Horicon Marsh (WDNR)

You may see these types of signs at:

- Put In, Take Out (PITO) locations for paddlers in parks and at pullouts on roadsides
- Stream access points for anglers
- Wetlands accessed by hunters from a public parking area, including those with a boat launch

Waterfowl Boot Brush Stations Sign Images – each has the same text but images vary

Protect the Places You Hunt

Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species

Follow these simple steps:

INSPECT decoys, blinds, dogs, boats, trailers, carts, vehicles, paddles and push-poles before leaving your hunting location.




REMOVE mud, aquatic plants and animals from dogs and all hunting gear.




DRAIN all water from decoys, boats and other hunting equipment.




WHERE TO LOOK:



DOGS:
 fur paws
 collar vest

WADERS:
 boot treads
 neoprene

EQUIPMENT:
 decoys and bags
 decoy lines and anchors
 push poles blinds
 paddles carts

BOATS:
 motor interior
 anchor hull

VEHICLES:
 tires/treads
 truck bed
 trailer

Why should hunters take action?

INVASIVE SPECIES CAN:

Damage Habitat
 Invasive plants and animals outcompete native species for resources and destroy waterfowl habitat. Dense areas of invasive plants destroy brooding and feeding habitat required by waterfowl.

Impact Wildlife Populations
 Most invasive plants and animals are not suitable waterfowl forage, they can spread disease to waterfowl that may result in death. Waterfowl may leave invaded areas in search of better habitat.

Limit Hunting Opportunities
 Dense areas of invasive plants can decrease land available for hunting.




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“AIS Removal Station” signs with tools

Some locations may also have larger (4 x4 or 4 x 8) signage that was created in conjunction with UW Extension Outreach staff and holds cleaning tools. You may also hear them called Boat Cleaning Station Signs. For all signage, the maintenance of the sign is the responsibility of the organization that puts it up. Managing the tools and possibly other items, such as bleach and water solutions sprayers is often, but not always handled through a local AIS Partner or volunteer program, not the launch owner/manager. **It is especially important to establish a relationship with the launch owner and have their full permission before installing these types of signs. Some locations will not allow them.**

Tools hung from the sign are provided by the organization and usually include:

- A rake to help clear plants from the landing
- A “grabber” tool for plants hanging on trailers
- A pole with a rubber coated hook on the end for plants hanging on trailer
- A broom for cleaning off the hull

Location considerations, particularly if allowed to have a bleach solution sprayer at the sign:

- Away from where vehicles will be turning around/backing up.
- Away from a slope into lake and upward further on land, if possible.
- Away from areas where trailers will be parked.
- Be knowledgeable of property lines.



Figure 4: Left—4x4 Cleaning Station Sign; Right—8x8 Cleaning Station with bleach solution at Potato Lake, Washburn Co (Joe Adler)

Obsolete signage:

There are three signs now considered obsolete that should be removed. Recycle where possible.

1. “Exotic Species Advisory” – yellow, shows some specific animals and plants
2. “HELP prevent the spread of aquatic exotic plants and animals” – white with green lettering, somewhat similar to the current sign, shows a car pulling a boat
3. “Please stop and remove all aquatic plants and animals and drain water from boat and trailer”- Green with red stop sign

Finding contacts for permission to place new signage OR to find sign locations for inspections/replacement

For boat launches on lakes, visit the WDNR Find a Lake page: <https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/findalake/>
Once you navigate the page to the lake of interest, click on the boat launches link, then on "Details" after the launch. Be aware these steps may change with webpage updates but help is available.

Beaver Dam Lake

Dodge County, 6718 Acres

[Overview](#) [Map](#) [Facts & Figures](#) [More](#)

Beaver Dam Lake is a 6718 acre lake located in Dodge County. Visitors have access to the lake from public boat landings. Fish Northern Pike and Walleye. The lake's water clarity is very low.

Features

- [Boat Landings \(7\)](#)
- [Public lands or parks within 1000 feet of the lake \(4\)](#)

Fish

- Largemouth Bass (Abundant)

Beaver Dam Lake

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Boat Landings

Boat Landing	Details	Map
Beaver Dam Lake -- Tahoe Park	Details	Google Map
Beaver Dam Lake -- Mill Road Boat Launch	Details	Google Map
Beaver Dam Lake -- Edgewater Park	Details	Google Map
Beaver Dam Lake -- Access at Spring Road	Details	Google Map
Beaver Dam Lake -- Fish Camp Boat Launch	Details	Google Map
Beaver Dam Lake -- Access at Derge County Park	Details	Google Map
Beaver Dam Lake -- Waterworks Park	Details	Google Map

At the bottom of the next page, you will find a section for Property Management.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Landing Name	Tahoe Park Boat Ramp
Landing Type	RAMP
Waterbody Name	Beaver Dam Lake
Municipality	CITY OF BEAVER DAM
County	Dodge
Latitude	43.45386702
Longitude	-88.84766899
No. of Launch Lanes	2
Launch Surface	Paved
Launch Depth	deeper than 3 feet
Boarding Dock Present	Yes
No. of Vehicle and Trailer Stalls	Gr25
No. of Vehicle Stalls	1-5
Type of Restrooms	Flush
Fish Cleaning Area	No
Lighting Present	Yes
Potable Water	Yes
Marine Pumpout	No
Ramp Slope %	14
Utilities Present	NONE
Comments	The boat launch is located within Tahoe Park. There are several fishing piers available in the park. A launch fee is charged. There is designated, accessible parking and the restroom is accessible. The transitions, to the boarding docks, are not ADA accessible (August/2010).
ADA ACCESSIBILITY	
ADA Accessible Features Present	No
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT	
Manager	CITY
Manager Name	Parks & Forestry Dept.
Manager Phone#	(920) 887-4623

Access points other than lakes:

Public Lands-State:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/boataccess/> will help you find river access points.
<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/PAL/> will help you find other possible access points used by waterfowl hunters, trappers and paddlers.

Public Lands-County and municipalities:
Contact the County Land and Water Conservation Department, City or Town offices as appropriate.

AIS Signage inspections

In 2011, the WDNR adopted the currently used Prevent the Spread signs at boat launches. A statewide effort was made to place the signs at every boat launch. Stream access signs were originally funded through a WDNR Surface Water grant to The River Alliance of Wisconsin. The message was focused on prevention messaging to trout anglers. These signs have been replaced by the new sign which features silhouettes of multiple types of water users. Boot Brush (AKA Wader Wash) stations began to be utilized in 2014-15 in response to the first discovery of New Zealand mudsnails in the state. The effort has been led primarily by The River Alliance of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Trout Unlimited, and the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association, but any group is welcome to use the signs.

Signs eventually begin fading or showing other damage. On occasion, they are also reported stolen, vandalized, or are destroyed during flood events. It is important they be inspected and replaced as needed by WDNR and AIS Partnership staff and their local partners. Often this is easily done because of sites being visited for other work, such as water chemistry and AIS surveys, but the large number of signs also means a planned effort for monitoring is important.

The following has been suggested by our experienced AIS Partners for signage monitoring:

1. It is possible to create a list of known sign installations from SWIMS. Contact WDNR AIS Coordinators for assistance. The River Alliance of Wisconsin also has a list of all known river/stream signage, including boot brush stations they have installed with partners.
2. All sign inspections, new signs and replaced signs should be reported on the AIS Signage Survey



AIS Signage Survey
2019 APRIL FINAL.pdf

form:

The information is then entered into the SWIMS database. If you are not a SWIMS user, provide the form and site photos to the [Regional DNR AIS Coordinator](#) or DNRAISinfo@wisconsin.gov for entry. They can also be mailed to:

AIS Outreach Specialist, WY/4
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53549

3. If you discover a sign that is not in the SWIMS database, use the AIS Signage form to report it. Over the years, some signs have been added but not reported for a variety of reasons. If you are not sure, please report the sign.
4. With a list of all county signage known, develop an annual schedule to do a portion of the list each year. It is rarely necessary to check every sign, every year.
5. If your area experiences damaging floods, you may need to inspect signage in impacted areas annually.
6. While doing signage inspections, have 2-3 signs of the appropriate type and tools with you to avoid making second trips.
7. If you are a county or regional partner who has local partners monitoring the signs, please provide the AIS Signage Survey form to them. It may increase return to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Installing New Signs or sign replacement

Equipment you may need, depending on the sign type and location:

- Copy of the Signage Survey form
- Camera (or phone/tablet) and GPS capability (phone, gps unit, mobile app)
- 7-8 foot metal fence post (U-channel posts) – usually only for new signs
- OR Pressure-treated posts large enough to support the sign
- Post pounder/sledgehammer
- Step Stool
- Hammer
- Cordless drill and drill bits (in case post is wood)
- Wrench and sockets



Generally only a wrench is necessary. A channel lock is useful if removal is necessary or when using Tufnuts.

- Recommended hardware: 5/16ths bolts, Tufnuts and washers for mounting boat launch signs on a common U-channel posts. Signs are pre-drilled so that the holes will line of up with those in post. BE SURE to have bolts that are fully threaded vs partial threading on the shaft. They do not work with 4 x 4 posts or kiosks.



Tufnut systems were provided free during the initial posting of signs starting in 2011. As stock runs out people will need to provide their own.

- Stream access signs can also be mounted on U-channel posts but take 1/4" hardware. Fit to post is often not exact.
- The following hardware will work with metal and wood posts. The 1/4 "size needs at 7/16th wrench.



1" x 1/4" Hex bolts
1/4" standard nut or vinyl lock nuts
1/4" flat washers
1" x 1/4" lag screws
1/4" lock washers optional

- It may also be helpful to have a contact numbers for the property manager, county Sheriff and Warden

How to install a sign:

1. Request permission to install a new sign and complete Land Use Agreement before ordering signs
2. Contact Diggers Hotline (811 or 800-242-8511) to mark site if putting in or replacing posts
3. The ideal sign location is facing water and is easily visible to water users as they exit the water
4. Make sure sign is out of way of vehicle traffic
 - Signs should never be installed on traffic regulatory signposts
 - DO NOT install signs on any existing posts without permission of the county emergency manager. Often emergency managers will use the existing posts for notices, such as high-water warnings. If there are any questions about appropriate sign location at public access sites, consult the property manager.
5. Use post pounder or sledgehammer and secure U-post 2-3 feet in ground making sure the open end of “U” faces the water
6. Align the top of sign with the top of U-post and insert bolts from front of sign through predrilled hole in the top and bottom of the sign and post. (Make sure both holes line up with holes in post before securing with nut or Tufnut. Use a socket and/or wrench to secure nut or Tufnut to bolt. This webpage from shows proper Tufnut installation:
https://www.allstatesign.com/tufnuts_instructions.html
7. Make sure sign is secure
8. Take a photo of the sign from a perspective that captures its location on the landscape and launch type (concrete, gravel, etc.) When you save the photo, it will help to name it following this format:
Signage_(Lake, Stream or Boot)_County_Waterbody or Wetland Name_Last Name_Date
Example: Signage_Boot_Jefferson_Zeloski Marsh_Scherer_06012020
Complete AIS Signage survey form and upload information and photo into SWIMS or send the form and photo to your WDNR Regional AIS Coordinator, your local AIS Partnership AIS Coordinator or WDNAISinfo@wisconsin.gov. The most up-to-date listing of your AIS Coordinators can be found here: [Aquatic Invasive Species Contacts](#). They can also be mailed to:
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Disposal of old signs:

The metal signs can sometimes be recycled by the original manufacturer. Badger State Industries is the supplier used by WDNR and most groups who are having any of the cleaning stations types of signs printed themselves. WDNR does not have a current method in place to collect them from across the state to return and recycle. However, some county partners have discovered their county Highway Departments are recycling their signs, so it is worth checking with your Highway Department to avoid putting the signs in a landfill. County and local Parks departments may also have a way to reuse the signs.