



Aquatic Invasive Species 2024 Communications Plan

As a component of the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Strategic Plan, the AIS Communications Plan is a critical component of education and awareness regarding AIS in South Dakota. Educating all water users in South Dakota regarding Clean, Drain, Dry and the regulations related to AIS in the state is critical to slowing the spread of these species across the state.

Communications Plan Objectives

- Informing boaters that stopping at inspection stations is required, inspections are easy, and if they see an inspection station, they need to do their part.
- Reinforcing “Clean, Drain, Dry” for anglers, boaters, and other water users.
 - Clean, Drain, Dry covers all species of AIS-zebra mussels, vegetation, and fish.
 - Enhanced focus on cleaning of aquatic vegetation.
- Increasing awareness of AIS species, particularly species beyond just zebra mussels, and AIS infested waterbodies.
 - Focus primarily on AIS vegetation in imagery and messaging.
 - Additional focus on the cleaning aspect, as opposed to draining.
- Showcasing AIS awareness and prevention efforts are critical for all recreational water users across South Dakota.

Target Audience and Main Messages

Every individual who recreates on the water in South Dakota is included in the target audience. This includes anglers, recreational boaters, and all other water users.

Messages include:

- Reinforcing “Clean, Drain, Dry” and directing to SDLeastWanted.sd.gov for more information.
 - Pull all boat plugs-including main boat plug as well as live well plugs before leaving launch or access point.
 - Plugs must be pulled prior to transporting back to campsites, cabins, lake houses, or other dwellings away from the immediate boat launch.
 - Drain ballast tanks and remove all possible water before transporting away from launch.
 - Drain lower unit of motor after loading and prior to transporting away from the launch.
 - Inspect for and remove all weeds, mud, and other debris from your boat/trailer.
 - Clean plants, mud, and other vegetation that may contain zebra mussels and other AIS by physically removing and/or spraying with a high-pressure hose/wash system.
 - Primary focus on cleaning aquatic vegetation for 2024.
 - Dry all equipment submerged in water.
- Never move water when transporting bait and/or fish away from an access point.
 - Drain water from bait buckets that have been submerged in lake/river water.



- Replace with treated tap water if planning to keep bait.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in a fish cleaning grinder or trash can.
- Drain live wells before transporting fish away from the launch.
- Stopping at inspection stations is required, inspections are easy, and if boaters see an inspection station, they need to do their part.
 - All watercraft are required to stop at inspection stations including nonmotorized watercraft such as kayaks and paddleboards.
- Decontamination practices for simple and complex boats.
- AIS species and infested waterbody awareness.
 - Showcasing AIS species with a particular focus on zebra mussels.
 - Showcasing AIS infested waterbodies, particularly those with zebra mussels present.
- Never release animals from pet stores into local waterbodies.

Reaching all users who utilize South Dakota's waters requires a wide variety of communications platforms. These platforms will reach users digitally via email and social media as well as in-person including physical signage at boat ramps and at gas stations.

Digital Communications

Digital communications revolve around a "Protect Your Waters" campaign, which includes email and social media messages highlighting key messages to respective audiences.

Social Media

Organic Posts

Organic social media posts on both Facebook and Instagram are an effective, cost-free way to reach anglers, boaters, state park visitors, and hunters across the state. Organic posts are scheduled on both platforms during the primary boating season with an emphasis on holiday weekends.

Instagram Stories

Continued usage of Instagram Stories. The graphics designed for this will be used to educate followers on AIS and how they can do their part to protect South Dakota waters. There will be several "series" targeted to the different kinds of watercrafts, these include:

- Kayaks;
- Wakeboard boats;
- Fishing boats;
- Pontoons; and,
- Jet Skis.



Additional series will cover:

- “What is AIS and how do I do my part?”
- “What should I do with my bait?”
- “What should I do when leaving an infested water body?”
- “Where are the areas I should be inspecting on my boat?”
- “What should I do with my equipment that has been submerged in water?”
- “What to look for when removing docks, lifts and boats from the water at the end of the boating season?”
- What to do if I catch an invasive species, such as carp?

Each series will have a link at the end where users can swipe up to be taken to the SDLeastWanted.sd.gov website or the GFP YouTube to learn more about AIS.

Email

AIS-Specific Email List

GFP maintains a current list for AIS communications that is approximately 100,000 individuals. This includes anglers who have purchased a fishing license as well as designated recreational boaters that have been captured via SDLeastWanted.sd.gov giveaway entries. This list receives specific AIS communications related to reminders and regulations.

Angler Recruitment Messages

A priority for GFP is to recruit and reactivate new anglers in the sport of fishing. Messages sent to current and potential anglers will include reminders on how to Clean, Drain, Dry. Clean, Drain, Dry reminders will also be shared in all messages that are sent to nonresident anglers, reminding them of how to prevent the spread of AIS on their trip.

State Park Weekly Summer Newsletter

Beginning with Open House Weekend in May, a weekly State Park newsletter is sent to approximately 165,000 individuals. This list includes campers, state park visitors, and is an effective way to reach recreational boaters and anglers as well.

Acknowledgements on *Go Outdoors South Dakota*

Anglers and campers utilizing the *Go Outdoors South Dakota* license and reservation system must acknowledge reading a pop-up box prior to purchasing a fishing or combination license and/or making a campsite reservation at a park where aquatic invasive species are present.



In-Person Communications

Physical Signage

Increased emphasis will be placed on installing large signage at infested waters to inform boaters/anglers the waterbody is infested with zebra mussels. As part of the Zebra Mussel Rapid Response Plan, signage will be placed at newly infested waterbodies to inform water users of the new discovery.

In partnership with South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT), when available, GFP will utilize roadway billboard messages reminding boaters to practice clean, drain, dry while enjoying the water. Timing of these messages, if possible, will coincide with major holiday weekends, such as Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Labor Day. Mobile SDDOT electric sign boards may be used for AIS messaging at newly-infested waters or in association with special events, if available.

Gas Station TV

Use of Gas Station TV for outreach and education will be similar to 2020 through 2022. Gas Station TV has proven to be an effective communications tool, particularly when the content is engaging from an audio standpoint. Gas Station TV has been implemented for the past two years and has proven to be successful with a 30 second video. While the imagery of the video is dependent on the screen and other factors, engaging audio has proven to be the most important element of a successful message on this platform.

Watercraft Inspection Stations

Watercraft inspection stations provide boaters the opportunity to visit with inspectors one-on-one. This allows these boaters to ask experts any questions they may have and provides an opportunity just to visit regarding the topic of AIS. These interactions provide some of the best face to face communications possible as boaters are with their watercraft and in the process of heading to or leaving the water. This also gives inspectors the opportunity to correct any actions in the moment.

Sport Shows and Community Events

GFP has a strong presence at sport shows across South Dakota and the Midwest. These sport shows present an excellent opportunity for staff to visit one-on-one with individuals and discuss topics such as AIS. Additionally, events such as the South Dakota State Fair present another excellent opportunity to share information regarding AIS with individuals on a one-on-one basis.

Bait Shops



GFP will create educational material, such as a poster, rack card, and/or sticker, that can be shared with bait shops to increase user awareness of AIS species, specifically invasive carp. This effort will be primarily focused in the southeast for 2024, with additional geofenced social media advertisements surrounding the area to further increase the message.

Print Materials

Rack Cards

AIS rack cards will be shared with local Treasurer's offices, the Department of Revenue, at inspection stations, GFP offices, boat retailers, lake associations, and at public events such as the South Dakota State Fair. GFP will also be distributing rack cards to individuals who participate in educational events at the Outdoor Campuses and across the state. GFP will also work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Forest Service for distribution when available.

Information will also be shared with the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources as they work with surface water users and irrigators.

Print Advertisements

Print advertisements regarding Clean, Drain, Dry will be incorporated into the South Dakota Vacation Guide, Missouri River Tourism Guide, and Southeast South Dakota Tourism Guide. These advertisements will reach individuals who recreate on high traffic areas and are visitors to the state. Additionally, there will be an AIS advertisement in GFP's magazine, the Conservation Digest.

Partner Newsletters

GFP will also provide a brief, informational article regarding AIS to individuals that share newsletters and information such as South Dakota Walleyes Unlimited, Black Hills Fly Fisherman, South Dakota Wildlife Federation, and other partners as opportunities present themselves.

Press Release and Media Communications

A component of the Zebra Mussel Rapid Response Plan, a press release will be issued for all newly infested waterbodies to increase awareness of these waters. In addition to new infestations, information will be shared at the beginning of the summer reminding individuals to practice clean, drain, dry and to emphasize the importance of stopping at watercraft inspection stations.

As additional opportunities present themselves to spread the word on AIS, GFP will conduct interviews, share stories/content with news outlets, and participate in radio shows across the state. The GFP Podcast and Blast, the department's own podcast, will also include AIS messages and discussions.

Communications Kit for Partner Organizations

Communications Kit for Partners



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

523 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE | PIERRE, SD 57501

- A communications kit will be developed by GFP to share with all lake associations. This communications kit will include:
 - Social Media Posts (8 total)
 - Email Content (3 total)
 - Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day themes.
 - Letter Content
 - A letter that can be shared with all members/residents.
 - Rack Cards
 - Banner and Signage
 - A banner and/or signage to be placed at designated locations with partner logos should a lake association or other entity wish to partner on that signage.

