

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid Funding 2024

Request For Proposals - RFP's Due March 9, 2024 at 4:30 pm

Introduction

Todd County is the recipient of County Program Aid grant funds for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention from the state of Minnesota as a result of 2014 Session Law Chapter 308. It is anticipated this will be an ongoing aid program, dependent on decisions by the Legislature. The purpose of these funds is to “prevent the introduction or limit the spread of aquatic invasive species at all the access sites within the county” (MN Statutes 477A.19).

The purpose of this request for proposal (RFP) is to utilize these funds to parties interested in conducting work to facilitate this purpose.

Recipients

This RFP is being sent to the following within Todd County: members of the AIS Prevention Committee, all active lake associations, all cities, townships, and watershed districts. It will also be posted on the county web site under the Soil Water Conservation and Development Division and a notice placed in the newspaper of record. Companies that have shown interest in conducting AIS inspections in Todd County will also be mailed this RFP.

Applicant Guidelines

- 1) Applicants must submit an application in the format specified. This includes a completed RFP Cover Page and a narrative outlining the requested information from the scope of work for inspection contractors in specific.
- 2) Funds awarded by Todd County through the AIS Prevention Aid Program do not require a match.
- 3) A proposal may receive full or partial funding or funded over the course of multiple years. If this is expected it should be explained in the application.
- 4) The applicant is responsible for carrying out all activities, materials, and management related to their proposal except as specified in the scope of work.
- 5) A report of completed work funded through this program is due **November 1, 2024** to Todd SWCD. This report shall include awarded funds, a summary of activities, and the results of activities. Failure to submit the report will jeopardize future awards.
- 6) All proposals must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and ordinances.

Applicant Eligibility

- 1) All local government units (LGU's) and organizations operating within Todd County are eligible (see table). In addition, private contractors may submit proposals for AIS inspection services.

| <i>RFP Category</i> | <i>Eligible To Apply</i> |
|---|--|
| AIS Inspection Services | LGU's, organizations and private contractors |
| AIS Species Management or Control | Todd County Lake Associations |
| AIS Watercraft Landing Area Improvement | Any LGU with a Todd County water access |
| AIS Public Outreach and Education | Any |
| AIS Aquatic Plant/Species Surveys | Todd County Lake Associations |

- 2) Proposed activities must follow the scope of work outlined. Additional work may be proposed during 2024 but funding is not guaranteed.
- 3) Applicants requesting funding for projects that may potentially be funded from other grant sources may submit an applicant for county AIS funds and have that award adjusted if the outside funds are

secured. Under no circumstances may an applicant be compensated for the same work or material purchased more than once.

AIS Prevention Aid RFP Activity Categories

Funding is available for work in two categories.

➤ **AIS Inspection Services**

Watercraft inspections will be conducted throughout the county as detailed in the scope of work. Contractors submitting proposals for this work will provide inspectors that have completed the MN DNR's Watercraft Inspector Level I training. Inspectors will move around within the area specified in the scope of work.

Send completed RFP Cover Page and requested information, as specified in the Scope of Work found attached to this notice to:

Attention: Deja Anton, SWCD District Manager
Todd Soil and Water Conservation District
215 1st Avenue South, Suite 104
Long Prairie, MN 56347

Email submission: deja.anton@co.todd.mn.us; Sarah.Katterhagen@co.todd.mn.us

Questions: [320-732-2644](tel:320-732-2644)

➤ **Cost- Share**

There are four subcategories open for cost-share. Soft proposals submitted prior to **March 09, 2024** will receive priority consideration. Submit the form entitled, Request for Cost Share, found at <https://www.co.todd.mn.us/> > Aquatic Invasive Species> AIS Program or copy and paste the following URL into your web search:

<https://www.co.todd.mn.us/divisions/soil-water-conservation-and-development/aquatic-invasive-species/>

Cost-share requests will be considered at a rate of up to 50% until the category budget is expended.

Training requests pre-approved by Todd SWCD may receive up to 100% reimbursement.

SUBCATEGORIES:

A. AIS Control Projects

Only Todd County Lake Associations are eligible to submit an RFP for this category. Lake Associations who meet the Early Bird deadline and/or the proposal deadline of March 09, 2024 will be given first priority.

This category includes various forms of AIS control such as chemical treatments or biological

treatments which receive up either a max limit of 25% for Curly Leaf Pond weed controls or up to 50% for aquatic invasive species control. Projects that include any sort of mechanical harvesting can receive up to 50% cost-share. Lake associations are responsible for obtaining permits and implementing all phases of these projects.

B. AIS Watercraft Landing Improvement

Any Local Government Unit (LGU) with a Todd County water access is eligible for this category. Projects that improve the ability of public water users to clean, detect, identify and control AIS at landings will be considered at cost share rates up to 50%.

C. AIS Public Outreach and Education

Lake Associations, educators, participating lake resorts, lake volunteers & related organizations are encouraged to apply.

Innovative ways to disseminate AIS information or educate the general public and public water users will be considered for cost-share up to 50%. Pre- approved training for AIS Detection may be reimbursed by up to 100%.

D. AIS Aquatic Plant/Species Surveys

Only Todd County Lake Associations are eligible to submit an RFP for this category. Lake Associations who meet the Early Bird and proposal deadline of March 09, 2024 will be given first priority.

This category includes those aquatic plant/species surveys that lake associations need in order to help determine the extent of potential spread of AIS or to inventory species in their respective water bodies. Lake associations are responsible for obtaining permits and implementing all phases of these projects. Management actions cost shared must be for the purposes of AIS prevention. Survey requests will be considered at cost-share rates up to 50%.

➤ **Submission**

All proposals are due by **4:30 pm on March 09, 2024.**

Email your completed form to deja.anton@co.todd.mn.us, or via USPS to:

Todd SWCD AIS, 215 1st Ave S, Suite 104, Long Prairie, MN 56347

RFP Cover Page

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid 2024

Company or Organization Submitting Proposal

Contact information (address etc.) will be used for billing information

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Company or Organization Name | |
| Address (for billing) | |
| Contact Person | |
| Contact Person email | |
| Contact Person Phone | |
| Tax ID # | |

| RFP Category Check All That Apply | | Expected Total Cost Invoice Amount in 2024 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | AIS Inspection Services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | AIS Control or Survey Proposal | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | AIS Watercraft Access Improvement | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | AIS Outreach & Education | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | AIS Aquatic Vegetation Surveys | |

Notes:

- If a control project cannot be completed due to weather or other factors there are no negative consequences to the organization.

Process

- 1) Submit RFP cover page and additional information outlined to Todd County SWCD.
- 2) RFP's will be reviewed and compared to budgeted funds available.
- 3) Contracts Requests Submitted by the March 09, 2024 deadline will be reviewed and prepared prior to April 1, 2024. Mid-season requests will be reviewed and approved based on available funding throughout the 2024 season.
- 4) Unsuccessful applicants will be notified.

AIS Inspection Services Scope of Work

LGU's or contractors submitting proposals for this work will provide inspectors that have completed the MN DNR's Watercraft Inspector Level I training. Inspectors will move around between landings to give approximate coverage of projected hours in each of the zones as outlined below.

| Lake Zones and Lakes for AIS Inspection (only landings in Todd County) | <u>Minimum</u> Number of Inspection Hours per zone |
|---|--|
| High Traffic Zone - Big Birch, Osakis, Little Birch, Big Sauk, Big Swan, Mound, Fairy and Beauty | 4500 |
| Light Monitor Zone – Maple, Higgins-Long, Moose, Mill, Long, Coal, Big, Lily, and Charlotte | 450-720 |
| Spot Zone – Little Sauk, Cedar, Turtle, Guernsey, Juergens, Thunder, Latimer, Little Swan, Dower, Goose, Mons, Mary, Bass, and Pine Island | 70- 130 |

2024 planning budget for inspection services: ~\$110,000

- Funding provides for AIS Inspector coverage at DNR accesses on the lakes indicated. Inspectors can expect to begin the inspection season on High Traffic Zone Lakes on **May 10, 2024**, Fishing Opener. Inspectors can plan to end the inspection season on the following dates: **September 3, 2024** for all lakes with the exception of Big Birch, Little Birch, and Lake Osakis* which will end on **October 15, 2024****
 - *Lake associations will be expected to provide portable toilets at any access for inspection services that occur after the normal inspection contract end date of September 3, 2024.*
 - **Inspection season is based on seasonal weather conditions and may fluctuate inside of these dates. These high traffic lakes are susceptible by proximity to Starry Stonewort which remain an active threat through October.*
- A plan for Hours Worked should incorporate the following:
 - ❖ **May 10, 2024 Fishing Opener with an emphasis on all High Traffic Zone Lakes**
 - ❖ **May 16- September 3** for a minimum of 16 hours per weekend and a minimum of 24 hours for holiday weekends: Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day on all High Traffic Zone lakes and a minimum of 8 hours per weekend rotating through all Monitor lakes throughout the season, based on access activity. Hours are expected to concentrate around the busiest watercraft landing periods on weekends including some evenings until 8 pm at some accesses* (*Big Birch Lake), and on dates with known events scheduled, i.e. known fishing tournaments, and periods around the 2024 Fourth of July - specifically on Beauty, Big Birch, Osakis, and Mound lakes, and for the “Bob Show” on Big Birch Lake. Weekends, for this purpose, are defined as Thursdays- Sunday evenings. However, additional weekdays leading up to the holidays are supported if activity justifies the need for inspection on those days. (Todd does require that lakes needing inspections late into the evening for events must provide hired security presence at accesses where inspectors are located. Todd also supports doubling the wages of those inspectors willing to work extra late evening shifts for holidays/events for those hours out of normal routine.)
 - ❖ **May 27-September 3** a minimum of 70-130 hours will be split between visits to all Spot Zone Lakes that are less recreated lakes, assessing for activity and condition, throwing rakes, and inspecting. Inactive accesses will require simply notating the condition of the access, lake use activity levels, and lake conditions to be reported each month. Photos are appreciated. It is expected that any inactive lake access will result in relocating the inspector to a busier access.

- Inspectors will distribute education information and materials, clean and throw rakes for Starry Stonewort monitoring, teach visitors how to utilize weed stick stations at applicable landings, and rake and neaten landings in between inspections.
- Lake Associations **with a minimum of 30 days advance notice** may purchase *additional* inspection hours by the contractor. These requests will come to the Todd Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), first. Todd SWCD will negotiate with the contractor.
- Contractor will provide trained inspectors with current year AIS level one inspector status. Contractor will hire, manage, and compensate inspectors and provide insurance to cover the inspectors. It is important to note that inspector training in public discourse and conflict resolution should be emphasized. **Todd County law enforcement may not be immediately available. Todd County law enforcement advises inspectors to avoid raising conflict with access users.**
- The LGU contact for this proposal is designated by Todd County as **Todd Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)**.
- Contractor will designate a coordinator which will serve as the responsible party for maintaining communications. The designated coordinator is responsible for:
 - Ensuring that all inspectors can properly identify the access they are at when entering in data. Sharing of Todd County equipment across county boundaries requires Todd County SWCD approval.
 - Ensuring draft schedules for inspectors are delivered at least two weeks in advance of the start of the season to Todd County SWCD for review and to be shared with lake associations.
 - Communicating any and all issues (new AIS infestations, technology issues, enforcement issues, etc.) as they arise to Todd County SWCD.
 - Educating all Level I inspectors throughout the season, ensuring they are apprised of the most recent AIS regulations, laws and infestations.
 - Corresponding, as needed, with Lake Associations and Todd County SWCD during the season to ensure optimum scheduling at accesses.
 - Submitting monthly invoices indicating all inspection hours for lakes within each inspection zone, and an end of the year annual report on or before **November 1, 2024**.
 - Attending the Todd County End of Year AIS Meeting to present the annual report. Date TBD.
 - Submitting thorough reports detailing total number of inspections, inspection rates, AIS data obtained via inspection and/ or raking, listing associated access name. Data can include but is not limited to AIS detection, boat plugs, disgruntled boaters, needs of inspectors, weather or site conditions, or other note-worthy observations.
 - Todd County SWCD may also take photos/videos, request photos, one oral statement or brief written article- of approximately 300 words for news release, and/or an open invitation to join Todd SWCD on the local KEYL radio show for public outreach AIS efforts.
- Watercraft inspection will follow MN DNR protocol and data will be uploaded daily using their personal phones or tablets provided by Todd County. Any faulty or damaged tablets need to be reported immediately to Todd County SWCD for assessment and repair.

- Tablets for data collection will be available to inspectors by Todd County. Inspection data and notes will be uploaded to MN DNR at the conclusion of each day.

Contractors with the intent to respond to the watercraft inspection RFP should include in the response the answers to the following four questions/ topics of discussion:

1. **Professional Scope and Qualifications:** Briefly outline your organization’s professional scope: experience, credentials, internal resources, references and performance with conducting watercraft inspections for AIS.
2. **Proposal Plan & Cost Effectiveness:** Provide a projection of how you would expect to expend AIS funds trying to stay as close to the RFP parameters and draft budget. Be sure to provide the total bid amount. Include a bid (total expected cost) that covers each Zone and the expected number of inspections per hour you expect to deliver over the season (total inspections/total hours worked in that zone).
3. **Unique Services:** Detail any unique training, guidance, communication and work standards or services that your organization provides, if any, and your plan for continuous service to meet the conditions of the contract -*via employee retention or alternative plan throughout the season*. Detail how your organization addresses the following: employee shortages; changing lake activity over the inspection season; requests by lake associations for evening and holiday hours; and employee safety.
4. **Last:** Briefly describe or outline your final report template and how you would like to present information in the final meeting. Do you have days, months that are better for you to attend meetings?

Proposals will be ranked on how effectively and efficiently the needs outlined in the AIS Proposal and proposed Budget are met. Additionally, points will be assigned for degree of detail outlined in the response to the topics above.

Points Associated with Ranking – 100 points possible

| | |
|---|----|
| Professional Scope & Qualifications | 15 |
| Proposal Plan & Cost Effectiveness | 25 |
| Ability to retain quality inspectors & complete services; | |
| Does the RFP answer to the specific questions? | 30 |
| Thoroughness in detailing reports | 30 |

Submission:

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