

Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.

Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Strategic Plan



Revised 2019

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Acknowledgements

Golden Sands RC&D would like to express its appreciation to the all our local partners and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for their funding support towards our Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) programs.

Golden Sands RC&D would also like to thank the multiple county conservationists, lake residents, volunteers and UW-Extension Lakes staff for their hard work and dedication in helping preserve Central Wisconsin's aquatic ecosystems.



Table of Contents

<i>Our Mission</i>	3
<i>Our Vision</i>	3
<i>Values</i>	3
<i>Purpose of This Plan</i>	4
<i>Summary</i>	4
<i>Cooperating Entities</i>	5
<i>Goals, Actions and Timeline: Prevention, Detection and Management</i>	6
<i>Prevention</i>	6-7
<i>Detection</i>	8-10
<i>Management</i>	10-14
<i>Implementation</i>	14
<i>Plan Assessment and Revision</i>	14
<i>Conclusion</i>	14
<i>Reference</i>	15

Our Mission

To prevent, detect, and manage aquatic invasive species from Central Wisconsin's lakes, rivers, and wetlands by training and educating people using impacting conservation practices.

Our Vision

To improve the health of Central Wisconsin's aquatic environments, by bringing people together in science-based projects that manage the spread of invasive species.



Values

At Golden Sands RC&D we believe that managing and conserving our aquatic ecosystems is essential to a prosperous community, not only for the wildlife that inhabit those ecosystems, but for people as well. A healthy lake, river, or wetland provides valuable environmental services in addition to possessing substantial recreational and economic benefits. We value a thriving and healthy relationship between people and the natural environments they live in, to ensure that both can live together in harmony and benefit one another.

The Purpose of This Plan

The Golden Sands RC&D Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Strategic Plan creates a framework for minimizing the negative effects of aquatic invasive species in Central Wisconsin's lakes, rivers, and wetlands. This plan outlines steps Golden Sands RC&D will take to improve the elements of prevention, detection and management of aquatic invasive species, in ways that are environmentally and economically efficient. The plan identifies needs that must be met by all stakeholders and agencies in cooperation with one another.

Summary

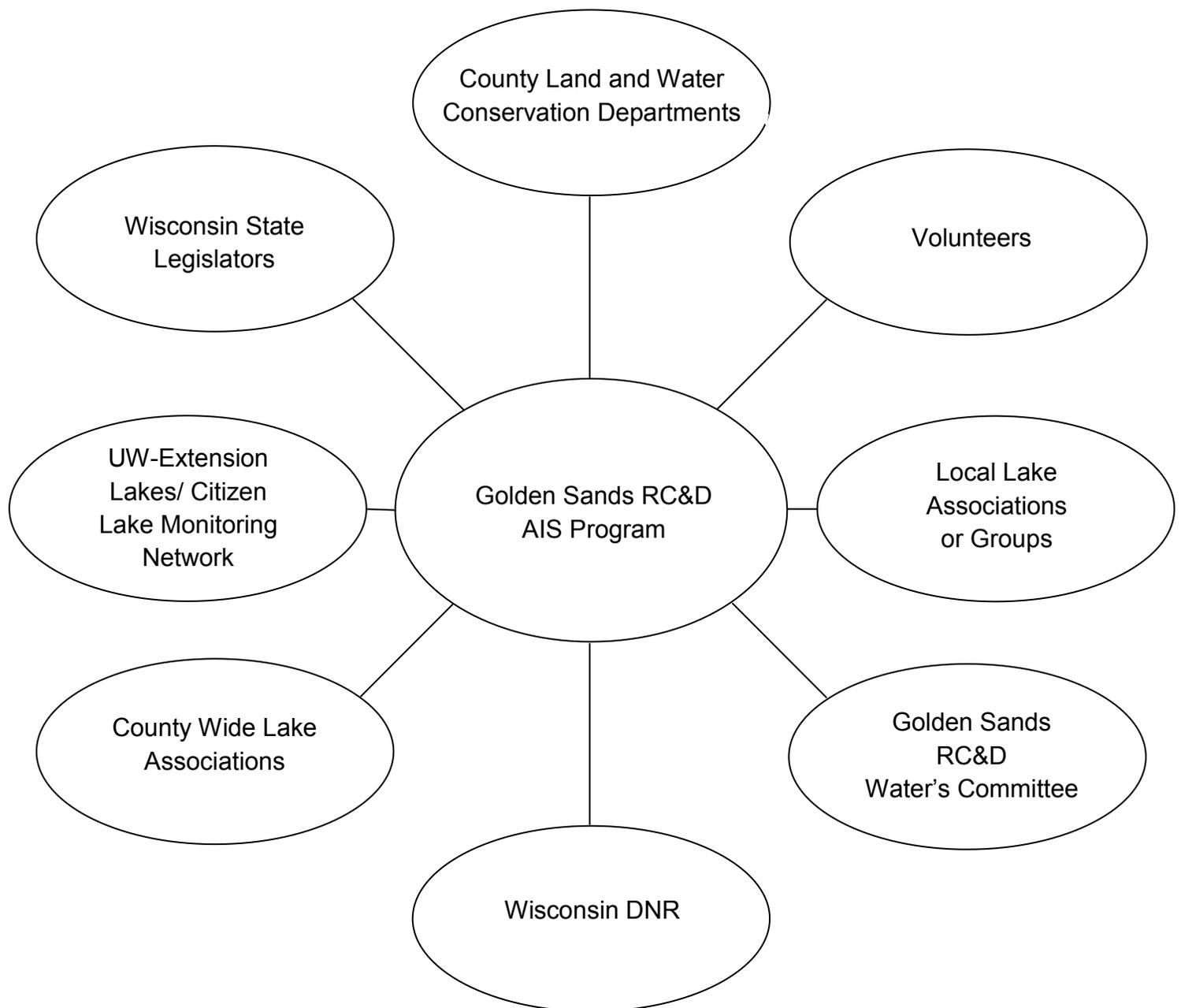
Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are a direct threat to Central Wisconsin's aquatic ecosystems, and are not only damaging ecologically but economically as well. These nonindigenous organisms, which can be plants, animals or other microorganisms, disturb our native environments by way of competition, predation, spread of disease and more. AIS also have direct negative impacts on humans such as reducing property values, damaging recreational equipment, and being physically harmful. These organisms are primarily introduced by human mechanisms, such as transport by boat or trailer, aquarium dumping, and bait release. Due to the lack of natural predators or other means of control, these organisms, upon introduction, spread rapidly over the landscape or waterbody. As new aquatic invasive species, like water hyacinth and red swamp crayfish, make their way into the state, working together and communicating on all fronts will be crucial for management. The network of partners, from local to statewide, is continuing to grow and many citizens are realizing the serious negative impacts these organisms cause. This plan outlines the ways that Golden Sands RC&D will bring people together to address the threats and issues AIS are causing in Central Wisconsin.



Eurasian watermilfoil

Cooperating Entities

Golden Sands RC&D's AIS program began in 2003. Since the AIS program's inception, Golden Sands RC&D has collaborated with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UW-Extension Lakes, Wisconsin's lawmakers, and nine Central Wisconsin counties in order to prevent and manage AIS across the region. With the help of these partners, we have worked with lake groups and dedicated volunteers to restore Central Wisconsin's waterbodies and natural areas. Golden Sands RC&D provides realistic management solutions for its stakeholders and empowers homeowners and lake users alike to make a direct impact in AIS prevention and management. Our volunteer programs give lake groups and concerned citizens the tools and training needed to prevent, detect and manage AIS on their waterbodies. Golden Sands RC&D will continue to partner with the following entities to support our regional AIS program:



Goals, Actions, and Timeline: Prevention, Detection and Management

The following tables outline the three goals of this plan, as well as the objectives and actions needed to accomplish these goals. These tables provide realistic guidelines to assist the AIS Regional Coordinators in properly managing aquatic invasive species in Central Wisconsin. The goals of this plan are consistent with our current AIS grant deliverables, County Land and Water Resource Plans and needs of our partners. Portions of this plan may be limited depending on available grant funding (AIS Techs will not be hired unless AIS grant funding is successful in 2019).

For the following tables: GS = Golden Sands RC&D
 Co = County Land and Water Conservation
 DNR = Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 LG = Lake group/ association
 UWEX = UW Extension Lakes

Prevention

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources states that preventing non-native and invasive species is the most efficient, economical and effective form of management. Preventing the introduction of invasive species is a high priority and cannot be accomplished without a collaborative effort from multiple partners and networks. These prevention efforts, including educational outreach and enforcement, are occurring at both the local and state level. Golden Sands RC&D is the leader in prevention activities in Central Wisconsin and will continue our ongoing work in preventing aquatic invasive species through action and awareness.

GOAL: Actively prevent and reduce the introduction of AIS in the aquatic ecosystems in Central Wisconsin.

Objective	Action	Accountability	Measurement Tools	Timeline
Develop a greater interest among citizens, on the importance and value of healthy aquatic ecosystems.	Incorporate more in-depth presentations and handouts, covering the benefits of native plants in Central Wisconsin, with AIS education and prevention efforts.	GS, UWEX, DNR	Help update & use outreach materials on native aquatic plants & AIS provided by UW Extension Lakes and DNR.	Ongoing

	Advocate the benefits of healthy lakes, rivers, and wetlands at aquatic recreational activities or events.	GS	Visit 3 recreational events to promote healthy aquatic ecosystems.	Complete by the end of year 2019
	Provide more training opportunities with volunteers to learn about the native aquatic plant communities in their lakes.	GS, LG, UWEX	Conduct 3 native aquatic plant identification trainings.	Complete by the end of year 2019
Increase AIS prevention education for volunteers to reduce the spread of AIS in Central Wisconsin.	Public outreach through booth spaces at conventions, fairs and recreational events.	GS	Booth spaces/displays at minimum of 4 events.	Complete by the end of year 2019
	Youth outreach, indoor and outdoor, to schools and other youth organizations.	GS	Work with 4 schools or youth organizations.	Complete by the end of year 2019
	Develop "Clean Boats Clean Waters" (CBCW) partnerships with lake group volunteers.	GS, LG	Provide at least 2 CBCW workshops and others by request.	Complete by end of June 2019
	Partner with local outdoor recreational businesses or events to reach out to new audiences about AIS prevention.	GS	Promote AIS prevention with 2 different partners.	Complete by the end of year 2019
	Invite local media to participate in and report on AIS educational events and workshops.	GS	Contact media organizations regarding 3 events.	Complete by October 2019
Annually participate in statewide AIS prevention programs e.g. Bridge Snapshot Day, Landing Blitz...	Determine AIS programs Golden Sands RC&D will choose to participate in, and establish early lines of communication with those organizing the programs.	GS, DNR	Participate in at least 4 events.	Complete by October 2019

Use local promotion to increase participation in these programs via newsletter, PSA etc.	GS	Put out 3 forms of promotion.	Complete by October 2019
Utilize limited term employees to complete seasonal objectives e.g. CBCW, AIS booths...	GS	Hire 2 summer AIS Techs for 2019, regional coverage.	Complete by May 2019

Detection

Early detection is pivotal when considering potential eradication or management of AIS. Small populations of AIS that are found soon after entering a system can typically be more easily and cost effectively managed. If caught early enough, it may even be possible to eliminate the species from a system completely. Golden Sands RC&D recognizes the importance of early detection in our AIS program and will increase detection efforts.

GOAL: To increase detection and reporting of aquatic invasive species in Central Wisconsin and generate appropriate response actions.

Objective	Action	Accountability	Measurement Tools	Timeline
Increase AIS detection efforts in all counties.	Conduct WDNR recognized early detection surveys on priority waterbodies.	GS, Co	Report survey results in SWIMS. New findings as well as a lack of new findings shall be reported.	Complete by end of October 2019
	Provide CBCW watercraft inspections in all counties.	GS	Interns will provide a total of 200 hours of landing coverage throughout all counties.	Complete by end of September 2019
	Promote CLMN AIS identification and monitoring trainings and provide volunteers with the necessary tools for lake monitoring.	GS, LG	Hold 4 AIS identification and monitoring volunteer trainings	Complete by end of October 2019

Use NR-40 Rapid Response protocol immediately after discovering new AIS.	Use Rapid Response prioritization methods to determine potential risk to the waterbody and efficient action based on that risk.	GS	Respond to all new Early Detection findings.	Ongoing
	Utilize established networks to maintain continuous communication and ensure the proper actions are taken following a new AIS finding.	GS, Co, DNR, LG	Communicate appropriately using rapid response protocol.	Ongoing
Develop a more extensive and responsive communication network within our counties and state for AIS detection efforts.	Provide frequent updates on projects and events with partners and stakeholders via email, newsletter, press release etc.	GS, Co, LG	Provide monthly updates to DNR and other partners.	Spring through Fall of 2019
	Use social media e.g. Facebook, to share AIS activities and initiatives.	GS	Post to Facebook at least 2 times per week on projects or interesting info.	Spring through Fall of 2019
	Share information about newly discovered AIS in timely, appropriate ways to Golden Sands RC&D's partners and stakeholders.	GS	Release information about new discoveries in appropriate timeframe or as approved by DNR.	Ongoing
	Record all detection and monitoring data in SWIMS.	GS	Record data in SWIMS.	Complete by the end of year 2019
Increase volunteer empowerment and self-sufficiency within AIS projects.	Develop time and effort commitments for AIS detection with volunteers.	GS, LG	Establish monitoring delegates on lakes that have interest.	Ongoing

	Create timelines with volunteers with clear and achievable goals for future efforts. Update timelines with accomplishments to show progress.	GS, LG	Develop timelines for volunteers.	Ongoing
	Encourage volunteers to engage with neighbors about AIS issues and projects on their waterbodies.	GS, LG	Collect new contacts from existing lake volunteer contacts.	Ongoing
	Acknowledge volunteer AIS prevention and management efforts with the public.	GS	Develop a volunteer spotlight or partner profile section in Golden Sands RC&D press releases and highlight publications.	Ongoing

Management

Once an invasive species is detected, an effort to properly manage the organisms should be taken to reduce its negative impacts on the natural environment. Control efforts reduce invasive species to levels that the native environment can tolerate and also reduces further spread. Golden Sands will continue to provide support to its partners and stakeholders to help manage AIS populations in our region.

GOAL: To control current populations of aquatic invasive species in Central Wisconsin and prevent their spread, protecting existing native ecosystems.

Objective	Action	Accountability	Measurement Tools	Timeline
Encourage the formation of county wide lake groups	Reach out to lake groups in each county with the proposal to create county wide lake groups.	GS, LG, Co	Contact all lakes in counties without an association.	Ongoing
	Work with county and lake group partners to structure and assemble the group.	GS, LG, Co, UWEX	Organize and hold 2 meetings annually with county and lake group members.	Initiate by December 2019
	Attend meetings regularly and encourage active participation and feedback to maintain the organization.	GS, LG, Co, UWEX	Attend 50% of meetings.	Ongoing
Improve how citizens can make a positive impact in AIS management	Provide technical assistance/ guidance to lake groups on control vs. eradication, methods of control, and costs. Promote understanding of what can be accomplished.	GS, Co, UWEX, DNR	Provide AIS management information to at least 6 lake groups on removal methods and costs for their lakes.	Complete by October 2019.

Promote and hold AIS manual removal trainings to provide volunteers with a low-cost and proactive management tool.	GS	Hold at least 6 AIS hand removal trainings of which volunteers will complete subsequent results	Complete by November 2019
Encourage volunteers to be proactive in managing aquatic invasive species on their waterbodies.	GS, LG	Actively seek new lake groups to work towards management or eradication efforts.	Ongoing
Attend lake group meetings to explain how volunteers can utilize the services Golden Sands RC&D provides.	GS, LG	Present to at least 6 lake group meetings.	Complete by the end of year 2019



Utilize and promote Golden Sands RC&D Contracted AIS management services.	Keep RC&D website updated with contracted services and previous successful projects.	GS	Promote successful projects on our website.	Ongoing
	Reach out to new audiences about our contracted AIS management services.	GS	Info available in at least 2 new locations. (Eastern Lakes and Waushara Co Lks Assoc. newsletters.	Complete by May 2019.



Create new volunteer connections to aid in management projects.	Reach out to younger audiences such as Boy Scouts of America, YMCA summer camps and schools. (>14 yrs old per DNR)	GS	Contact at least four organizations about upcoming volunteer opportunities.	Complete by September 2019
	Utilize the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to advertise volunteer opportunities.	GS	Promote volunteer opportunities to clubs or promotional outlets at least 3 times at the university.	Complete by the end of year 2019
	Reach out to organizations and corporations not necessarily associated with natural resources. Many organizations are looking to do various types of community service and could be potential partners.	GS	Contact at least three new organizations.	Complete by the end of year 2019
Utilize external and internal training opportunities.	Attend AIS relevant conferences and workshops in order sharpen profession skills.	GS	Attend at least 3 trainings/meetings annually. Spring and fall AIS Coord. mtngs and UWEX Lakes Convention.	Ongoing
	Hold an annual company meeting, in the spring, to refresh employees on current AIS issues, field work procedures and other important concerns or topics.	GS	Hold meeting with Golden Sands RC&D staff	Complete by end of April 2019

Reduce large populations of aquatic invasive species within Central Wisconsin.	Work with DNR and regional counties to continue and expand effective large scale projects such as Purple Loosestrife beetle rearing.	GS, LG, Co, DNR	Continue purple loosestrife project region wide.	March through July 2019 and ongoing
	Collaborate with partners on new bio-control research.	GS, UWEX, DNR	Share research findings and work.	Ongoing
	Continue and develop new volunteer opportunities for large group removal projects.	GS	Continue existing projects and develop new projects where approved.	Ongoing
Continue to implement flexible approaches to aquatic invasive species management.	Provide a multitude of management solutions and funding options with stakeholders.	GS, UWEX, Co, DNR	Research and provide the best possible management option for each specific lake.	Ongoing
	Assist stakeholders with grant writing to support new projects.	GS	Assist at least one lake group.	Complete by the end of year 2016
	Utilize relationships with DNR or private consulting companies for specific projects where outside expertise is needed.	GS, DNR, Co, Lake Consultants	Refer lake groups for management solutions where and when appropriate and as needed.	Ongoing

Implementation

This plan was submitted as a component of the Wisconsin DNR Grant AEPP-442-14 and has been implemented by Golden Sands RC&D's regional aquatic invasive species coordinators, in conjunction with our partners since 2016.

Plan Creation and Revision

The original Golden Sands RC&D AIS Strategic Plan was created and reviewed by its staff over a two-month period and submitted to county partners for review. Revisions to this plan were made in January of 2019. Updates should be made annually although many of the goals are ongoing and reoccur. New objectives/actions will be added as needed.

New funding channels for core AIS services are currently being developed by DNR and partners. The proposed change will transition competitive grants for AIS Coordinator funding into contracted services. The timeline for this change is unclear but looks to be fall of 2020. These changes will likely alter current goals to some extent. Early indications show that competitive grants may still be available to continue AIS services not labeled as "Core Services". Golden Sands RC&D will continue to evolve with these changes and collaborate with local partners to provide uninterrupted exceptional regional AIS coordination.

Conclusion

Aquatic invasive species are a threat to Wisconsin's waterbodies and natural areas. With hard work, dedication, and adequate resources, Golden Sands RC&D and our partners can prevent, control, and reverse invasive species' degradation of our waterbodies and natural areas. Everyone in Central Wisconsin has a part to play in protecting our aquatic ecosystems from aquatic invasive species. Recognizing and implementing the goals, actions and opportunities outlined in this plan will provide the necessary tools for success.

Reference

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