

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 24-0109, **Version:** 1

---

### **Item Description:**

Neg grant agmts for aquatic invasive species prevention projects, various periods, total combined NTE \$158,788

### **Resolution:**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the County Administrator be authorized to negotiate the following grant agreements to provide funding for aquatic invasive species prevention projects during a one-year period beginning on the date of execution:

- PR00006008 with Bolton and Menk Inc., with the amount not to exceed \$17,950;
- PR00006007 with Bolton and Menk Inc., with the amount not to exceed \$18,348;
- PR00005999 with Waterfront Restoration, LLC, with the amount not to exceed \$30,000;
- PR00006003 with Friends of the Mississippi, with the amount not to exceed \$15,410;
- PR00006000 with Lake Minnetonka Association, with the amount not to exceed \$7,000;
- PR00006001 with WaterGuards LLC, with the amount not to exceed \$23,400;
- PR00006004 with Wildlife Forever, with the amount not to exceed \$11,000;
- PR00006005 with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, with the amount not to exceed \$15,000;
- PR00006002 with Fish Lake Area Residents Association, with the amount not to exceed \$7,000;
- PR00006006 with Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission, with the amount not to exceed \$13,680; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that following review and approval by the County Attorney's Office, the County Administrator be authorized to sign the agreements on behalf of the county; that the County Administrator be authorized to approve one 12-month extension of the agreements; that costs incurred by the grantees after the board approval date be eligible for reimbursement upon execution of the agreements; and that the Controller be authorized to disburse funds as directed.

### **Background:**

Aquatic invasive species (AIS), such as zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil, threaten natural resources and can cause economic, environmental, and human health risks. Lakes and other water resources throughout the county have been negatively affected by AIS or are highly vulnerable to the introduction of new AIS. Preventing the introduction of new infestations is the foremost strategy because often no remedy is available and effective after AIS becomes established in a water body.

The State of Minnesota started allocating funding to counties in 2014 to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS. Counties may use the funding for their own projects and programs or may provide funding to other entities in the county.

The Hennepin County Board designated oversight of the AIS Prevention Aid program to the County Administrator and delegated to the County Administrator the responsibility to prepare and implement guidelines for use of aid received for the prevention of AIS (Resolution 14-0438). Since 2014, the county has received a total of \$2,985,856 in AIS Prevention funding.

In the fall 2023, the county released its ninth request for project proposals that prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS. Local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and academic institutions were eligible to apply.

The request for proposals was promoted through city, watersheds, and other natural resource partners, email lists, and the Environment and Energy Department's e-newsletter Green Notes. The county received 16 project proposals requesting a total of \$303,377.

The requests were reviewed and recommended by a six-member committee consisting of both internal and external staff and AIS professionals, including one member from the University of Minnesota Invasive Species Research Center. The grant applications recommended for awards were projects that focus on preventing the spread of AIS with reasonable and measurable outcomes. Successful applicants clearly described the need for the funding and demonstrated the capacity and commitment to implement the proposed projects and comply with grant administration requirements.

In addition to making grant awards through the annual request for proposals, funding is also used to:

- Support AIS inspection programs operated by Three Rivers Park District, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Christmas Lake Association (the only lake association in the county that operates a watercraft inspection program);
- Work with partners to install infrastructure at public water access points that encourage AIS prevention behaviors; and
- Undertake additional projects as necessary to ensure that programming is comprehensive in addressing all important AIS transmission pathways.

**Current Request:** This request is to authorize the County Administrator to negotiate ten agreements to provide funding for aquatic invasive species prevention projects with the following organizations:

- Bolton and Menk, Inc.
  - \$17,950. This project will focus on AIS survey training, technical assistance, and early detection work. This empowers lake groups and residents throughout the county with training to conduct their own lake surveys alongside a professional limnologist.
  - \$18,348. This project addresses risks from pets and plants that are invasive and harmful to ecosystems when released into our lakes. They will work with fourth and fifth grade students including the creation of a 10-minute video.
- Waterfront Restoration LLC - \$30,000. This project will provide Watercraft Ambassadors at up to six high risk county public accesses. The Ambassadors will educate and teach boaters with all interactions focusing on promoting correct boater self-inspection.
- Friends of the Mississippi River - \$15,410. This project is part of its Environmental Stewardship Institute, a youth development program that offers education and career exploration for students of color. The youth will develop and disseminate outreach materials to approximately 500 residents about the threat of invasive species and the importance of limiting the spread of invasive carp.
- Lake Minnetonka Association - \$7,000. The Lake Minnetonka Association will oversee the survey of a two-acre or larger area around 16 public and private accesses on Lake Minnetonka, focusing on any early detection of starry stonewort.
- WaterGuards, LLC - \$23,400. This is a watercraft inspection program spread throughout the county that also focuses on education and encouraging boaters to take the right actions to prevent AIS. These

inspections are randomly conducted from Fishing Opener to Labor Day and focus on accesses without a watercraft inspection program or at times when inspectors are not typically present.

- Wildlife Forever - \$11,000. This project will join the nationwide Clean Drain Dry initiative and the Minnetonka Power Squadron, a boating club focused on improving boater safety, on Lake Minnetonka. Signage, posters, graphics, and branded materials will be distributed at the Power Squadron HQ and website along with local events including the Minneapolis Aquatennial, MN Wakesurf Championship, and Spirit of the Lakes fireworks and parade.
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board - \$15,000. This project will upgrade the AIS informational kiosk at Bde Maka Ska boat launch. Using lessons learned over a decade, the kiosk will be designed to enhance the engagement and education of AIS prevention of an anticipated 8,000 people annually.
- Fish Lake Area Residents Association - \$7,000. The applicant will provide watercraft inspections in May and September at the Fish Lake public access during periods when the existing programs have minimal coverage.
- Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission - \$13,680. Milfoil was identified for the first time in the fall of 2023 on Sweeney Lake in Golden Valley. This project aims to survey and eradicate milfoil before it becomes an established population.

The request is also for the approval to reimburse costs incurred by the grantees after the board approval date and upon execution of the grant agreements.

**Impact/Outcomes:**

The recommended projects will prevent and slow the spread of AIS by supporting early detection/rapid response, education, access re-design, and watercraft inspection with added focus on encouraging action when inspectors are not present. Some projects will develop education and outreach materials and implement them with a focus on reaching students of color.

The grantees will be required to collect data and submit final reports specific to project goals. This includes information such as the number of people reached, the number of watercraft inspected or decontaminated, pictures of the final products in use, or the conclusions for the specific project. The information and results from these projects will be used by county staff and shared with other water resource professionals to support and develop future AIS prevention work.

**Recommendation from County Administrator:** Recommend Approval