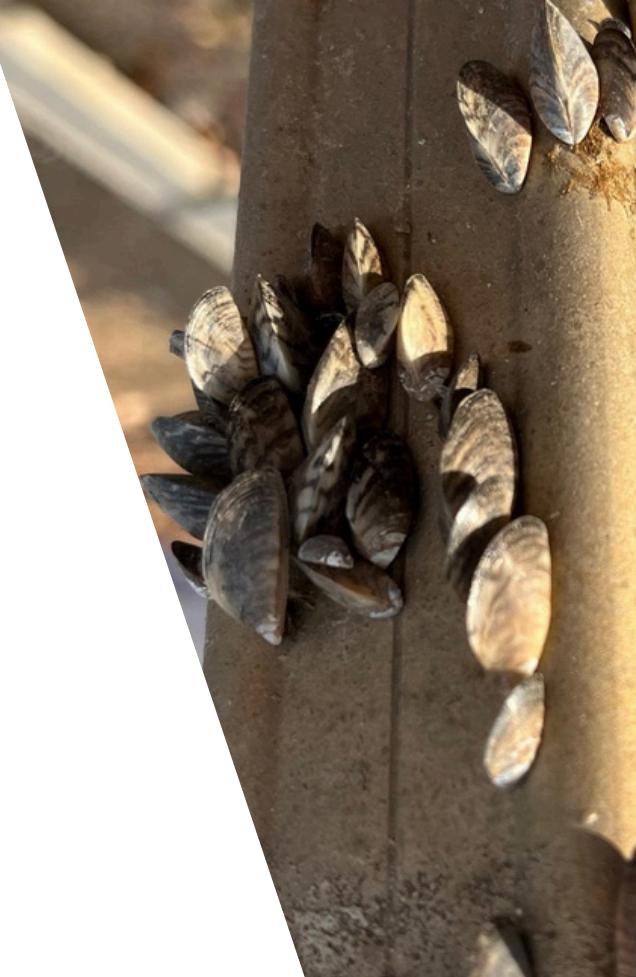




MORRISON COUNTY

# 2024 AIS YEAR END REPORT



Prepared By  
Morrison County  
Land Services

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# INTRODUCTION

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are threatening Minnesota waters. These nonnative species have the potential to harm fish populations, native aquatic plant communities, water quality, and water recreation. This report outlines the efforts that Morrison County undertook to help prevent the spread of harmful AIS within the county.

## 2024 Year in Review

The Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan was first developed and adopted in 2014 as funds were made available to the County through the Aquatic Species Prevention Aid. The first steps into AIS prevention included ground level education of users of Morrison County's water resources, bolstering the ongoing efforts many lake associations/improvement districts have already undertaken, DNR inspections within Morrison County, and services provided by permitted Lake Service Providers. In following years, efforts remained focused on educating lakeshore owners, those who recreate on our waters, and the youth of our community. In 2016, Morrison County created an AIS Partnership Grant available to lake associations and lake improvement districts to help further their efforts in battling AIS. In 2024, education, outreach, and cooperation with our local lake associations were again a high priority of the program with the ability to connect with schools and the general public in a larger capacity.



## MN DNR List of Infested Waters in Morrison County

Water	Species	DOW#
<b>Alexander</b>	Eurasian Watermilfoil Zebra Mussel	49-0079
<b>Shamineu</b>	Eurasian Watermilfoil	49-0127
<b>Fish Trap</b>	Zebra Mussel	49-0137
<b>Crookneck</b>	Zebra Mussel Eurasian Watermilfoil	49-0133
<b>Cedar (New in 2024)</b>	Zebra Mussel	49-0140
<b>Fish Trap Creek</b> from Fish Trap Lake to Long Prairie River	Zebra Mussel	NA
<b>Crow Wing River</b> Downstream of the confluence with the Long Prairie River to Mississippi River	Zebra Mussel	NA
<b>Crow Wing River</b> from Hwy 87 in Hubbard County downstream to the confluence with Mississippi River, including 500 feet upstream into its tributaries	Faucet Snail	NA
<b>Mississippi River</b> from 500 ft upstream of the mouth of Pine River in Crow Wing County to upper St. Anthony Falls, including 500 ft upstream into tributaries	Zebra Mussel	NA
<b>Long Prairie River</b> including 500 ft upstream into its tributaries	Zebra Mussel	NA



# 2024 Spending Metrics

Category	Metrics
	<b>AIS Prevention Aid Used</b> \$ 123,770 AIS Prevention Aid used this calendar year \$ 0 saved in a contingency fund this year.
	<b>People Dedicated to AIS Work</b> 2 full-time staff with 30% of their time dedicated to AIS work \$38,765 spent on staff wages.
	<b>Partnerships Created and Maintained</b> Local organizations engaged and/or actively conducting aid-funded AIS work: 9 lake associations 7 schools and/or youth organizations Our county has an AIS Task Force or Committee: No
	<b>Funds Distributed, Contributed and Leveraged</b> \$59,061 of AIS Prevention Aid awarded as grants to other organizations 9 organizations awarded grants for education, prevention and management activities.
	<b>Communities Engaged</b> 1 event held about AIS or that included AIS topics 400 children and 20 teachers taught about AIS at our local water festival event \$ 15,000 of aid spent on advertisements through a cooperative with the Mississippi Headwater Board's social media campaign called Minnesota Traditions. The goal is to create a multi-county AIS complaint that has a consistent message and influences behavior change to prevent the spread of AIS. To date, they have just over 60,000 followers on a variety of social media platforms. In 2024, MN Traditions focused their energy on engagement because it has the highest value in social media data when looking to influence human behavior.



Category	Metrics
 Watercraft Inspected	4 accesses covered by Ambassadors 3 water bodies covered by Ambassadors 100% of watercraft recorded as arriving with drain plugs out 100% of watercraft recorded as arriving free of aquatic plants 1,740 boaters engaged by AIS Volunteers/Ambassadors at water accesses 1,185 hours of coverage by AIS Volunteers/Ambassadors at water accesses
 Law Enforcement Supported	1 local law enforcement officers conducted AIS work by helping with education at local water festival for 6 <sup>th</sup> graders.
 Monitoring Conducted	Total lakes and rivers surveyed for AIS. Surveys, settling plates and Veliger Tows included: 30 zebra mussel settling plates deployed on 5 water bodies 12 waterbodies performed veliger tows 13 aquatic plant surveys conducted on 7 water bodies 1 new detection of Zebra Mussels in the county (Cedar Lake) List of species targeted for monitoring or surveys: Curly Leaf Pond Weed & Eurasian Water Milfoil. Zebra Mussels & Spiny Water Flea
 New Infestation Response Planned	1 response to a new AIS population of Zebra Mussel Cedar Lake Our county: Follows the state New Infestation Response Plan. In that, once we received confirmation of the presence in the lake, we immediately reached out to the two campgrounds on the lake and discussed action plans. Sign identification and brochures were given to the campgrounds to post on the lake access.
 AIS Controlled	\$24,500 of the 59,061 in our AIS grant program spent on in-lake/river control of AIS, including: 8 groups involved or conducting aid-funded control activities 8 total water bodies / sites with aid-funded control activities, including: 2 treatments for Eurasian Water Milfoil 8 treatments for Curly Leaf Pondweed.



# County Grant Program Highlights

## About the Project

Since 2016, the grant project has allocated \$50,000 per year towards the AIS prevention program. The money is granted to lake associations or lake improvement districts to further their goals in AIS management based on their individually identified AIS needs.

## 2024 Project Data



\$59,000 was awarded in 2024 to lake associations and lake improvement districts.

\$23,500 in AIS Prevention Grant Aid was spent on in-lake/river control of AIS, including:

- 8 groups involved or conducting aid-funded control activities
- 8 total water bodies with aid-funded control activities, including:
- 2 treatments for Eurasian Water Milfoil
- 8 treatments for Curly Leaf Pondweed.

\$35, 500 was spent toward plant and zebra mussel monitoring & education. Example activities are lake plant inventories, settling plates and veliger sampling. About \$2,000 of that was awarded for:

- Two lake improvement districts to purchase new AIS pamphlets to be placed at four lake accesses. (top left)
- One lake association purchased AIS tools, and brochures to be mailed to lake group members.
- Two lake associations placed new signage at lake accesses. (bottom left)



# Water Festival

## About the Project

The Water festival is an annual event that Morrison County SWCD holds at Camp Ripley. The main goal of this event is to educate 6th graders about the life that inhabits lakes and rivers and the importance of conserving it. This event provides students a chance to get hands on experience with multiple presentations and stations that vary by year. Youth education aids in developing an interest and appreciation of the water resources around them.

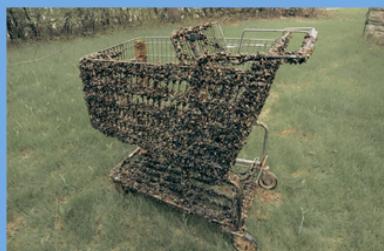


### Wanted!

Dead or Alive



Last seen in Lake Alexander, Fish Trap Lake, Crookneck Lake, and the Mississippi River



This invasive species is known to cut feet of innocent swimmers walking along the shoreline and clog up and gather on pipes, docks, and lifts.

### What We Do

This year the Morrison County AIS Program provided education about AIS to attendees and provided a t-shirt with an AIS message. \$5,000 was utilized for the t-shirt purchase.

Part of the presentation is through the use of posters (example pictured left).

# Water Festival

## Images of AIS Station

A- Boat with fake weeds placed in and on it to let children look for common places to find AIS.

B. Children receiving a briefing on how to care for a boat and gear.

C. The 2024 front & back of the t-shirt design.



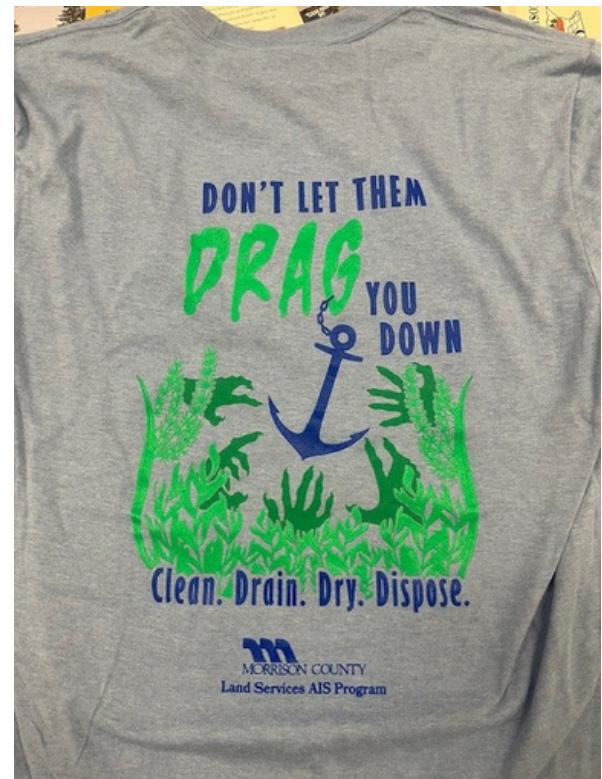
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# Aqua Weed Stick Project



## About the Project

The Aqua Weed Stick (AWS) is a Minnesota based product that is designed for the easy removal of weeds, milfoil and aquatic invasive species from boat trailers, personal watercraft trailers, docks and boat lifts. In 2024 the county gave away all of the remaining sticks. The sticks were given away at the locations listed below.



## Distribution Data

## Cost

250 sticks = \$6,800. (2023 expense)  
About \$300 for sticker (bought 500)  
branding with Morrison County Logo  
and website information.

Where	How Many
Staff Use	12
Sullivan LID	30
Shamineau LID	28
Staff distributed at Fish Trap LA Meeting	25
Staff distributed at Alexander LA Meeting	20
Local school fishing team	9
Alexander	55
Crookneck	9
Pine Lake	1
Sullivan	15
Platte	1
Mississippi River (multiple accesses)	12
Fish Trap Lake	17
Pierz Fish Lake	6
Green Prairie Fish Lake	10

# Watercraft Ambassadors

## About the Project

Since 2016, dollars have been awarded to lake improvement districts to employ ambassadors. These individuals attend the required training from the DNR and provide inspections and data collection at local lake accesses. These ambassadors look for drain plugs being pulled, weeds on boats entering and leaving the water, etc.

## Cost Estimates

In 2024; \$15,400 were awarded to three lake programs though our grant program.



## Project Data

These dollars provided for 1,200 hours of access coverage from May -October on two lakes. About 1,700 boats were looked at entering or leaving the water in the 2024 season.



A- trailer after launching a boat that needs the weeds removed.  
B- A lake ambassador speaking to a boater before launching  
(Source: Green Prairie Lake Association)

# Public Outreach

## About the Project

Land Services typically has AIS items on hand to give the public for outreach purposes. Items such as cozies and coasters were available at the county fair and Halloween events with the goal of introducing information and spreading AIS awareness to recipients. In the past, local lakeside restaurants were given posters and coasters to put up/give to customers. This year the items given away are boat towels, fridge magnets, plastic tools for unscrewing boat plugs, and informational pamphlets.



In 2024 we purchased materials from Wildlife Forever for our public outreach. The county purchased about \$1,000 worth of educational and promotional materials. Brochures, rally towels, and plug docks were purchased to give away at accesses. Magnets were purchased to give to licensed short-term rentals to place on refrigerators.

# Landing Informational Station

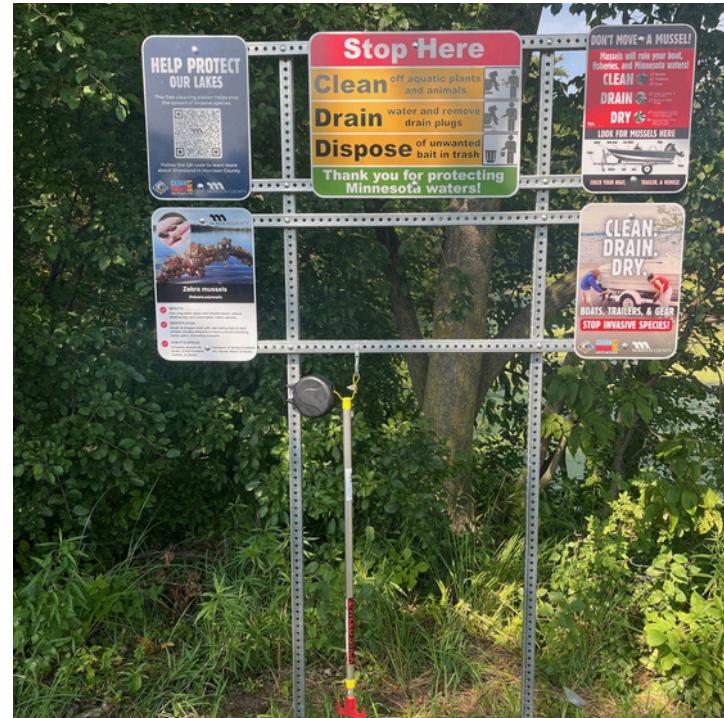
## About the Project

This year, Land Services partnered with Public Works to install informational stations at Pike Creek and Belle Prairie Park landings on the Mississippi River. Currently, these stations are equipped with multiple informational signs, a QR code that leads to the shoreland page on the Morrison County website, and a retractable aqua weed stick for public use. The goal of this project is to provide a more immersive and visually appealing kiosk for patrons to view and interact with. The locations were chosen due to their popularity with the public and the orientation of the landing funneling vehicles to a particular area after loading watercrafts. The photos shown are a pilot-project with plans for further development and more locations in the future.

The county spent about \$1,500 to make the signs and install them at the two locations.



Belle Prairie Landing Station



Landing at Pike Creek



# Veliger & Spiny Waterflee Sampling

## About the Project

Since 2017, Morrison County has partnered with lake landowner volunteers to do early detection sampling for zebra mussel larva (veliger) and Spiny Water Flee within the major lakes in the county. Early detection of veligers provides the best opportunity to identify zebra mussel infestation. Samples are collected from specific points on the lake by gathering lake water in a net, pouring the sample into a bottle, and sending samples to an environmental lab to be tested. After tests, each lake is given a report of the results.

## Costs

Every year the county spends around \$2,700 on sampling and lab expenses.

Spiny Water Flee Below

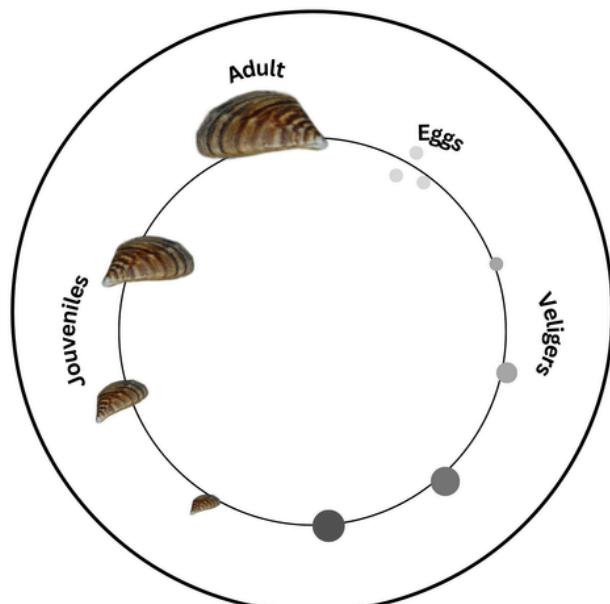


Source: University of MN AISRC



Source: Green Prairie Lake Association

## Zebra Mussels Life Cycle



A female can produce 100,000 to 500,000 eggs per year.

# Settling Plates

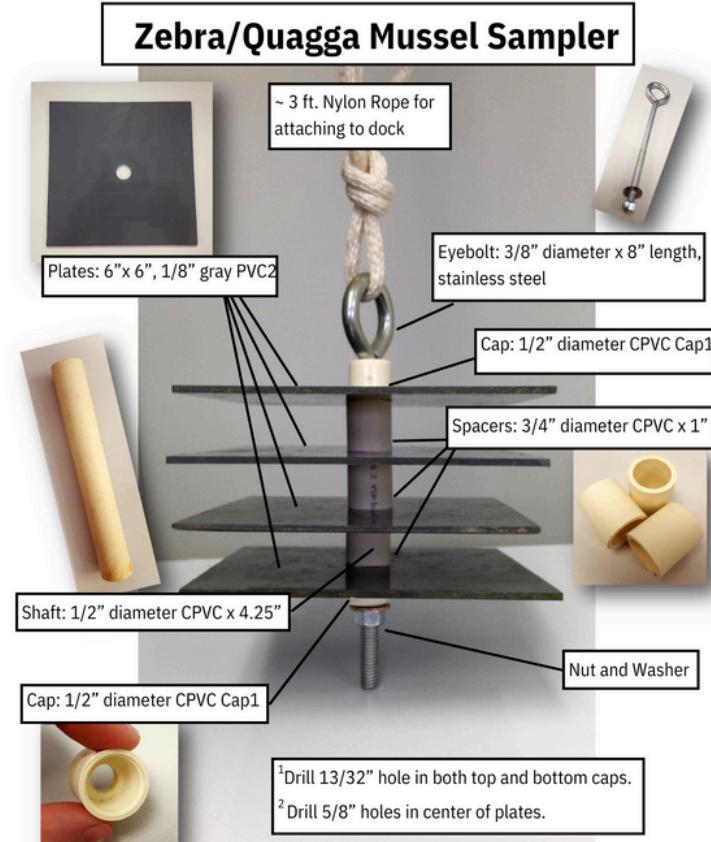
## About the Project

Building off the philosophy that early detection provides the best opportunity to prevent the spread of zebra mussels, another method of early detection is offered to volunteers, to which equipment and training is provided. Zebra mussel settlement samplers. These provide surfaces on which zebra mussels will settle after they complete their veliger stage.

The settling plates are placed in lakes between May and September, near the bottom of the lake. They can be near shore or in open water as long as they are shaded part of the day and the location is consistent. The plates are checked monthly.

## Cost

in 2024, about \$600 was utilized to build and monitor the plates throughout the summer.



\*Visit your local hardware store for help with materials and construction. Can be constructed for approximately \$10.

Instructions on building a zebra mussel settlement sampler from MN DNR website.



# CD3 Machine

## About the Project

This was a partnership with the Fish Trap Lake Association to install at the lakes only access. CD3 Systems are waterless, boater-operated, and provide the tools to empower boaters to clean, drain, and dry their watercraft & trailer. This unit has been in use since 2020. Tools provided include: wet/dry vacuum, air blower, tethered hand tools, and LED lights.



## Public Use Data (2024)

Type of Use	Amount of Use
Air Uses	737
Brush Uses	455
Light Uses	2146
Plug Wrench Uses	293
Reach Grabber used	408
Vacuum Uses	2006*

## Costs

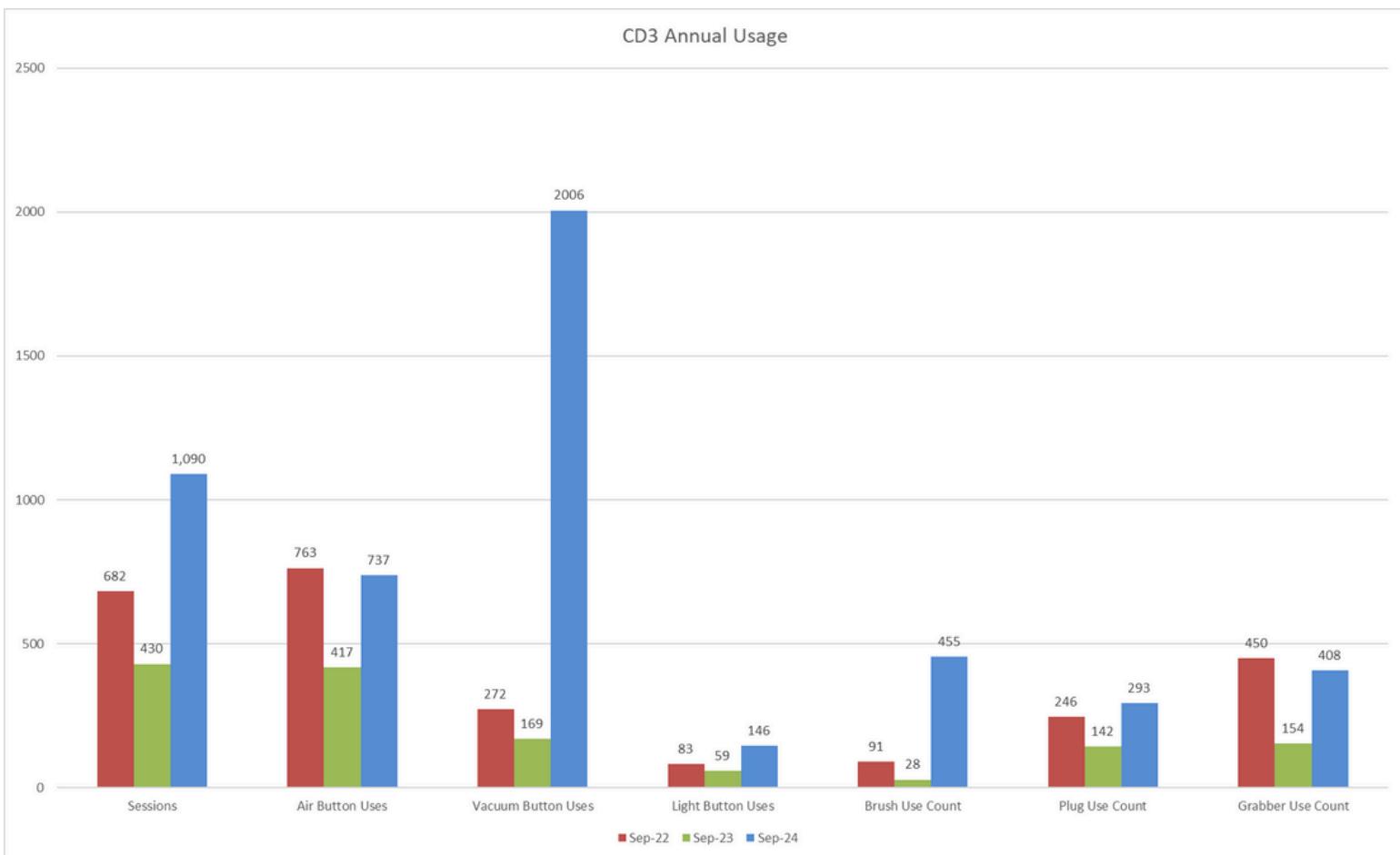
The installation was a one-time cost in 2020, with estimated annual costs of \$1,200-\$1,600; this expense and maintenance is done by the lake improvement district.

\*There was an issue reported with the vacuum, that was repaired, that may lead to a larger usage reported then the actual usage.

# CD3 Machine



## Usage Over the Years



\*The 2024 vacuum numbers appear to be more than actual results. This is due to a malfunction of the system that required repair work.



# MN Traditions

## About the Project

MN traditions is a multi-county social media campaign launched in 2016 by the Mississippi Headwaters Board. MN Traditions is geared around shifting the perspective, and in turn attitude, of Minnesotans along with focusing on educating youth and citizen engagement on preventing the spread of AIS. There is a presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The campaign targets people based on geography and water geared interests.

## Costs

Annually Morrison County has provided \$15,000 to the MN Traditions campaign.



## Engagement Data

These accounts were launched in 2016 with zero follows and have since grew to over 45,000 on Facebook, and over 10,000 on twitter. In 2020 Instagram was added and has over 400 followers. At this point in the following, posts are reaching far beyond the target audience in magnitudes of the hundred thousand. Below is the example targeted campaigns timeline.





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