

Our Threatened Lakes
By Steve Henry
Former PGOLID Lake Coordinator
We wish him the best!

Our lakes are threatened by Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) such as fish, plants, and diseases that do not naturally occur in our area. These invaders are often transported from their homes far away by human activity into our local waters where they can change the character of our lakes. Once introduced into our waters these species flourish without their natural competitors and natural diseases common in their homeland. There are simple steps each of us can take to limit the risk of additional invasive species impacting our local lakes. [Learn More.](#)

Aquatic Invasive Species outcompete native species for resources, changing how energy and nutrients move through and settle in our lakes. Zebra mussels consume most of the algae and other particles from the water, but then re-deposit what they consumed onto the shallow lake bottom. The increase in nutrients and organic matter on the lake bottom fuels excessive plant and algae growth changing our lake experience.

Invasive plants can form dense mats that interfere with lake recreation and harbor nuisance species such as swimmers itch. Invasive fish have few predators and can reproduce to the point that they dominate the lake reducing the populations of native fish and disturbing the natural balance. Invasive diseases impact our native fish, plant, and aquatic insect populations which have no natural resistance to these new threats.

Clean, Drain, & Dry

To protect our waters each of us needs to take several simple steps in line with the motto Clean, Drain, and Dry.

- Clean all items you intend to use in our lakes including flip flops, inflatables, boats, and other equipment that has been exposed to other waters.
- Drain all water from recreational equipment before leaving the area including the live well, bilges, ballast, and engine cooling water by pulling plugs.
- Wipe down surfaces with a dry sponge, and dumping bait containers.
- Allow your equipment to dry completely before launching in other waters – ideally for a week or more.
- Dry equipment for at least 21 days before transferring to a new lake or location, if this is not possible visit MN DNR online to find a courtesy decontamination station where a professional inspector can check and wash your equipment.

Dispose of unused bait in a trash can and do not dump it into the lake or onto the ground near the lake. Aquarium fish, plants, and other aquatic pets are often not native to our area. Never release these items into our lakes or onto the landscape where they may survive to infest our waters. Together we can keep our lakes safe.

PGOLID'S Rapid Response Plan

The Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District has a Rapid Response Plan for AIS with funding set aside to implement control and eradication measures once new invasive species are discovered in our area.

The biggest threat to our lakes is currently **Starry Stonewort** (an invasive algae that forms dense mats to the water surface). Starry Stonewort is barely affected by most herbicides and once in a lake is almost impossible to control. Another threat is **Spiny Water Flea** which consumes many of the tiny zooplankton that consume algae and are the base of the fish food chain, impacting native fish populations.

With the zooplankton reduced algae can grow to nuisance levels causing poor water clarity and limiting recreational opportunities. If you see something suspicious in our lakes please [contact](#) the Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District.