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# Michigan DNR – Parks & Recreation Division

## AIS CONTROL PLAN FOR HIGGINS LAKE

### BOATING ACCESS SITES *BAS*

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*Last Updated November 14, 2018*

This plan was developed to supplement ongoing management activities at each DNR boating access site (BAS) on Higgins Lake, specifically:

- The navigational channel at North Higgins Lake State Park,
- The navigational channel and lagoon at South Higgins Lake State Park, and
- The navigational channel at the west launch.

These sites are maintained and managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Parks and Recreation Division (DNR/PRD). Activities discussed in this plan will clarify 2019 actions that will strategically enhance current management actions at the boating access sites, including treatment and control of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

## Goals

Goals for the DNR/PRD in 2019 include:

- ❖ Maintenance of the navigable channels at all three DNR sites to ensure ingress and egress of boating traffic.
- ❖ Utilization of best management practices for AIS control within the limits of DNR/PRD's legislative funding sideboards, which are strictly confined to the navigational channel from the BAS to the larger body of water.
- ❖ Discontinuation of use of the Higgins Lake Foundation (HLF) DASH boat at the boating access sites, which will allow the HLF DASH boat to focus its efforts on the lake more globally.
- ❖ Identification of funding and a contractor for AIS control measures to be conducted within the boating access sites and legislative boundaries.
- ❖ Continuation of information sharing with the HLF and Higgins Lake Property Owners Association (HLPOA) about efforts being made by DNR/PRD at the boating access sites. DNR/PRD will focus resources and restricted funds on activities to control AIS within the sites.
- ❖ Continuation by the DNR and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to provide resource materials, best management practice information, and technical support to the HLF and HLPOA for the lake more globally.
- ❖ Maintenance of the CD3 boat cleaning stations for public use during the boating season.
- ❖ Continuation of educational efforts and encouragement to the boating public to use best practices for AIS decontamination (e.g., boat washing, Clean Drain Dry activities, visible weed pulling from boats and trailers, etc.). The DNR/PRD will hire short-term workers for the South

Higgins BAS for the summer season to facilitate this outreach and overall management of the site.

- ❖ Application of stenciled messages on the pavement of the launch sites reminding boaters to clean, drain, and dry their equipment. Additional signage at all BAS's and addition of AIS waste containers at the sites which will include the clean, drain, dry message.

## AIS Control Methods

The following work plan will be followed in 2019:

1. January: DNR/PRD will request a DEQ permit to dredge the entire South Higgins lagoon for navigational purposes.
2. February: DNR/PRD will request an AIS mechanical harvest permit from the DEQ.
3. May: Pending DEQ permit approval, the DNR and a selected contractor will dredge, as appropriate, the three boating access sites prior to Memorial Day weekend.
4. June: An AIS survey at the three boating access sites will be conducted. Pending the results, a treatment plan for the management of the AIS will be developed. Any necessary DEQ permits will be requested.
5. July: Best management practices for AIS control will be initiated. This may include a multi-faceted approach involving algaecide/herbicide treatment followed by physical removal as needed.
6. August: A post-treatment AIS survey will be conducted.
7. September: Continuation of AIS control efforts will occur based on findings and best management practices.

## Actions to Date

The DNR/PRD has taken several actions to prepare for 2019 activities. These include:

- ✓ Consultation with the DEQ about the permit process for dredging the three boating access sites, including a one-time dredge of the entire lagoon at South Higgins State Park.
- ✓ Discussion with AIS experts about best management practices for starry stonewort and Eurasian watermilfoil, specifically about treatments of these species and permitting requirements for various control methods.
- ✓ Commencement of drafting a DEQ permit application for the dredging of the South Higgins Lake State Park navigational channel and lagoon.