

REPORT ON THE NEBAGAMON LAKE ASSOCIATION

2008 AIS PREVENTION GRANT

By Ann M. Parker

Our AIS prevention project was a mixed bag this year—many positives, but also some negatives. On the opening weekend of fishing, Channel 10 came out and did a story on our program—that was pretty awesome! Most boaters are aware of the laws, and nearly all boaters were appreciative of what the monitors were doing, but a few were downright nasty! Another of the positives was that the Village of Lake Nebagamon contributed enough so that we could monitor for 25 more five-hour sessions than the DNR grant would cover. Another positive was the great student workers we hired. Recruiting in the local high school science classes helped us get responsible students committed to protecting the lake. (I've attached the ad for student workers and the application form developed this year.) We had hoped to cover 75 five-hour sessions at the boat launch, and we actually did cover 70 sessions plus several partial sessions! We also checked over 500 boats in the course of the summer. I did write to a local business that stores boats and puts them in, and we had no reports of their drivers coming to the landing with weeds this year.

We couldn't have done it without our part-time supervisor, who was doing this for the third year with us. However, there were some problems. Although she really cares about protecting the lake, she was too busy with other jobs to be available when people needed to contact her—and she did not have a cell phone or an answering machine most of the summer. Also, after we would meet, she couldn't remember what we had decided, and after some problems, I had to email her or actually tape notes to her door to make sure things were done correctly. She was out of town when we were recruiting, interviewing, and training the students, plus the first two weekends of the program (which I covered), and two other weekends later in the summer (I covered one, and one of our students covered the other).

We also had a hard time recruiting new volunteers this year—we only trained three new ones. Thank goodness for our previously-trained volunteers! However, they weren't all available to help this year, either. We discussed the program at our annual meeting, and many said they'd gladly contribute money to hire workers—that they believe in the program, but they are too busy or not able to volunteer themselves.

Another frustration is the fact that we can only inform/educate and help clean weeds off boats and trailers, but we don't have the authority to require them to go to the car wash if they've been in another lake in the last five days and haven't thoroughly cleaned their boats/trailers.

When I went to put the data on the CBCW Web site, I discovered that a couple of questions on the Web site were not the same as those on our daily watercraft inspection sheets, which we got at a CBCW workshop in Spooner in April. (I did inform Jennifer Filbert of this, also.) The question on the Web site asked whether plants were present on the boats and whether they were removed or not. Our inspection sheets did not ask whether plants were present, but only if they were removed or not. This was quite ambiguous. It doesn't make sense to say "yes, the plants were removed" without noting whether they were plants visible. It also doesn't make sense to say "no, there plants weren't removed" if you don't say the boat/trailer had plants to start with.

At our fall Nebagamon Lake Association board meeting, the board members again felt strongly that we need to continue the program next year. Now we have to decide the most effective way to do that, considering how things went this year.