

Aquatic Invasive Species sticker is now the law

In a nutshell, "the commissioner shall establish a statewide course in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. The commissioner must develop an educational course and testing program that address identification of aquatic invasive species and best practices to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species when moving water-related equipment, as defined under section 84D.01, subdivision 18a. Upon successful completing the course a sticker will be issued.

"The commissioner shall issue an aquatic invasive species trailer decal for each trailer owned by a person that satisfactorily completes the required course of instruction."

Currently the cost of the taking the course and test is yet to be determined. The sticker will be good for three years and will be a requirement for anyone moving water related equipment in or through the state of Minnesota, July 2015.

The law, a continued effort by state representatives to do something, anything, to try and curb the spread of aquatic invasive species, is still a work in progress.



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News of the aquatic sticker requirement was met with mixed opinions by anglers and the boating public. It was not limited to residents. The law applies also to nonresidents. Comments from some include much to do about nothing, another money grab by the Minnesota DNR and threats from nonresidents to avoid Minnesota and not spend another dime in the state if nonsense laws like this one continue to be put on the books.

There are good reason anglers and boaters are skeptical about another aquatic invasive program. Early on, an aquatic invasive sticker was distributed at public accesses by inspectors after being inspected and before putting the boat in the water.

Later, a hastily slammed through

aquatic invasive sticker program in 2011 eventually was scrapped. Some feel that aquatic invasive species are already here and any effort to stop them now is a waste of time and money.

In my opinion spending the price of a couple dozen night crawlers and twenty or so minutes of time to take a test is a small price to pay, which in the end learn something new.

Consequently, if it will lower the non-compliance percentages, now around 20 percent, I am all for it.

I question if taking the course and test will help, though. Some just don't care about complying with the current AIS laws on the books. Kiosks at the access, together with the constant media exposure, and still there are those who have their heads in the sand and are not getting the message or are willing to obey AIS laws.

The aquatic test and sticker requirement is clearly an effort to raise awareness of the AIS laws in the state of Minnesota. What remains to be determined is will it reach or convince more to comply to these laws?