

Aqua Weed Stick is the Latest Tool in Douglas County's AIS Control Program

Anglers and boaters using the public access ramps on Douglas County's Miliona, Mary and Geneva lakes this year will notice a new feature that will help them immensely with the "Clean" part of their "Clean, Drain, Dry" AIS prevention protocol.

Early last fall an Aqua Weed Stick Landing Station was installed at a public access ramp at each of the three lakes. The tool, on a retractable cable spool, is designed to allow a boater to easily remove weeds from even the most hard-to-reach spots on the hull and trailer before departing the access.



The simple, yet ingenious, device is a combination hook and scraper/cutter on a 4-foot handle that allows the user to gather and pull clumps of vegetation from their rig without marring the finish of the boat or trailer.

Inventor Michaela Kofoed says the idea for the Aqua Weed Stick was born out of frustration. "I was pulling my boat out of a local lake where the wind had been blowing into the ramp all day," she said. "When it came out the trailer was covered with weeds; you could barely see any part of it."

It took her more than an hour, much of the time lying on the wet pavement, to rid her rig of vegetation, she explained. “By the end of it, I was wet, full of weeds and dirty from crawling around the boat ramp...and I was just frustrated.”



Kofoed grew up fishing at her grandparent’s cabin, then later fished competitively through high school and college. As an adult, she went on to fish tournaments affiliated with the B.A.S.S., FLW and TBF trails, following her dream to make a living in the angling world.

Many times along the way she’d have to get down on hands and knees to clear weeds from her boat trailer; but it was this time, after scouting a lake where she’d later compete against other bass anglers, when she decided she’d had enough.

“I told my boyfriend (now husband) about what I’d gone through that day,” she said. “He’s an engineer, and I knew he’d be able to help create what I had in mind.”

The pair went through about 30 iterations before landing on the design that fit the bill, and the couple began marketing the Aqua Weed Stick through the Internet and at boat and sport shows. The next step was to explore ways to put it to use at public lake accesses, and the Landing Station was born.

“Douglas County and our AIS Task Force are interested in sustainable, long-term AIS prevention infrastructure,” said Justin Swart, AIS Prevention Specialist for the county. “We received a grant from Minnesota DNR last year which helped pay for the stations; each include a bait disposal bin.”

Though there was only about six weeks left of the boating season when they were installed, numbers of boaters used the stations and offered

positive feedback. “The Aqua Weed stick was well received and several boaters indicated they would use it again if they needed to get vegetation off their trailers,” said Swart. “We’ll continue to evaluate how the stations are utilized this year and then decide if there are other good locations for them, or other equipment.”

If it means cleaner boats and trailers, made that way with less effort by their owners, leave Milona, Mary and Geneva lakes, it’s a good bet there will be more Aqua Weed Stick stations in Douglas County’s future.



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