

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge

Volunteer Program



AIS Educator

Purpose: To provide aquatic invasive species information to refuge users of aquatic environs to support Minnesota and FWS goals in minimizing the impact of aquatic invasive species within the refuge environment.

General Description:

The Volunteer AIS Educator is similar in function to Minnesota Volunteer AIS Inspectors serving to inform and educate the public to the threats of ecologically harmful aquatic invasive species to Minnesota and Refuge waters (zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil etc.) The Volunteer AIS Inspector works at public water access sites educating the public by providing information to watercraft users and by conducting a brief survey while assisting the owner in inspecting the watercraft for exotic species. Other duties include assisting the Team Leader, assisting FWS LE Officers with access checks, and watercraft users/owners with aquatic plant/animal/debris removal from watercraft entering or leaving the waters of the refuge short of actual physical contact with privately owned property.



Duties and Responsibilities:

- Ability to clearly understand the purpose of the refuge and its wildlife management programs as well as the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Educate the public on invasive species programs and issues.
- Distribute written information to watercraft users when appropriate.
- Assist watercraft users in performing self- inspections of their watercraft for invasive species consistent with current protocol provided by the team leader.
- Conduct a verbal survey and written record of the results on each educational contact/inspection using data collection forms.
- Document and record information requested by the refuge staff.
- Work cooperatively with refuge staff and other volunteer
- Communicate to supervisor any problems or concerns.
- Work and operate and use supplies/equipment in a safe manner.
- Wear an approved volunteer FWS hat, shirt or jacket, nametag giving an official appearance.

Qualifications:

- Ability to understand the purpose of the refuge and its wildlife management programs as well as the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Complete Minnesota AIS Volunteer Inspector Training once every two years and pass the Minnesota criminal background check as well as FWS background checks for the volunteer level.
- Ability to work alone or as part of a small team under indirect supervision after training.
- Ability to work in sometimes adverse conditions and weather situations.
- Must be available weekends either Saturday or Sunday.
- Good physical condition requiring ability to carry plastic folding signs, walking around vehicles, and sitting for sometimes extended periods.
- Valid driver's license is required.

Training:

- Volunteers are expected to attend one day refuge volunteer orientation training.
- Volunteers are expected to attend a one day (3-4 hours) Volunteer AIS Educator workshop (or OJT as approved by the Refuge Volunteer Coordinator) including orientation to the program and use of operational and safety equipment.
- Maintain current knowledge of AIS information bulletins as posted regularly on the TNWR AIS Education Team restricted access webpage.
- Defensive Driving Course is required to operate a government vehicle (1/2 day), if your specific assignment requires government vehicle use. Most Volunteer AIS Educators will provide their own personal vehicle.
- On the job training with staff will be provided.

Program Structure: Volunteer AIS Educators will be assigned to specific areas of responsibility, which can include up to four public water accesses within the TNWR boundaries. Educators will be responsible for their individual assignments and be scheduled for assignment by the Refuge Volunteer AIS Team Leader.

Time commitment: Minimum of two days per month May through September. May include some weekends/peak fishing periods.

Supervisor: Direct supervision by the Refuge Volunteer AIS Team Leader and overall by Refuge Staff.

Contact: Janice Bengtson at 218-847-2641 ext 16 or Janice_Bengtson@fws.gov