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## State agencies urge the public to help control the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species

The Water Commission in collaboration with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) encourage residents and tourists to please help monitor, control, and prevent the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) in North Dakota.

Over the past decade, North Dakota has seen a dramatic rise in ANS. Invasive species are not native to our ecosystems and introducing them causes environmental effects, economic impacts, and public health concerns. ANS can cause harm to established habitats, endanger recreational fisheries, destroy infrastructure, and negatively impact communities that rely on lakes and rivers for their water supplies.

"If precautions are taken and individuals comply with recommended guidance, the spread of these invasive species can be controlled," noted Interim State Engineer John Paczkowski. "It is imperative that we take action now and help safeguard a reliable water supply for future generations, empower our communities to follow best practices, and limit the harsh and expensive repercussions of ANS."

By following a few simple steps, citizens can protect our state's aquatic resources and water-based recreation. NDGFD has established the following guidance and best practices concerning aquatic nuisance species: **Clean**, **Drain**, and **Dry** all equipment, every time you use it.

Clean and remove all debris, plants or animals from your watercraft or construction equipment prior to leaving any waterbody, and drain and remove water from all equipment prior to exiting designated access points. Not draining water can be extremely hazardous and may cause negligent transportation of ANS to various locations. Afterwards, verify that all equipment is completely dry before utilizing it again.

The Water Commission and the NDGFD acknowledge May 16 – May 22, 2021, as National Aquatic Nuisance Species Awareness Week. For more information or ANS guidance, please visit [www.gf.nd.gov/ans](http://www.gf.nd.gov/ans).

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