

## Great Lakes AIS Landing Blitz Boat Landing Message

Getting out and speaking to the public can be intimidating. Participants new to the Landing Blitz can feel a little anxious and nervous. This prepared script will help participants practice and role-play before their first boater shows up at the landing. Practicing with other folks will give them the confidence it takes to greet a boater. If new inspectors really want to watch a “pro,” they just need to ask a few kids to get involved. Are kids intimidated? No way!

This prepared script is only one example of the many methods of addressing boaters at the landings and engaging them in taking AIS prevention steps. Each Blitz participant should develop his or her own style and learn how to adapt in a variety of boat landing experiences. Try to approach boaters before they are on the ramp, and use the Outreach Tracking Template to record the information about the boater. At times you may have only 30 seconds to talk to the boater; other times, long lines at the landings may provide you with lots of time to talk. Remember, if the boater is not interested, just hand out educational material and record whatever information you can.

No matter what style you use to approach boaters, any outreach event at the landing should include these points:

1. Tell them who you are, whom you represent, and why you are there.
2. Ask if they have a short time to answer some questions.
3. Use the Prompt Handout to assist you in your conversation and record information on the Tracking Template.
4. Ask if they are familiar with the AIS prevention steps, clean and drain boats and equipment before leaving the landing and dry at home. Briefly explain why these steps are important, using the Prompts to assist you. Be sure to share your local concerns and highlight what species are found in (or nearby) your area.
5. Ask if they will join you in an inspection of their boat and equipment.
6. Talk while inspecting, and point out watercraft checkpoints. If they do not want to assist you in the inspection, continue to talk about invasive species as you inspect.
7. Give your final message, the prevention steps:
  - ◆ **CLEAN** off boats and equipment
  - ◆ **DRAIN** all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment
  - ◆ **DRY** boats and equipment
8. Offer them the “AIS Landing Blitz” postcard, along with any other educational materials pertinent to their questions or your lake.
9. Thank them for their time and cooperation!

## **Sample Script**

*Before starting your conversation, you can record your name, date, and location details on the Outreach Tracking Template. As the boat approaches, add a tally mark to “number of boaters contacted”.*

### **Introduce yourself:**

Good Morning / Afternoon. I am from \_\_\_\_\_. We are working with state agencies and local groups to talk with boaters about invasive species and help them check their boats for aquatic invasive species, like Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) and zebra mussels (ZM). We are trying to keep EWM/ZM and other harmful invasives from spreading from lake to lake. I have some steps I would like to share with you, and then I would like to walk around your watercraft with you and point out a few places where these species can attach to boats and trailers.

**Use conversational approach to discuss the AIS prevention steps listed on the postcard with the boater, asking follow-up questions to engage the boater. Use the educational prompts on the “Prompts” handout as needed to explain the importance of each step and discuss local AIS concerns.**

Before leaving a boat landing, boaters should:

#### **Step 1: CLEAN**

**Inspect** and **remove** visible aquatic plants, animals, and mud from watercraft, motor, trailer, and equipment before leaving water access.

**Scrub** hull using a stiff brush.

**Rinse** watercraft, trailer, and equipment with high pressure hot water when possible.

**Flush** water in motor according to owner’s manual.

Have you heard of this before? (see prompt for why important, if needed)

**Step 2: Drain** water from watercraft, motor, bilge, bladder tanks, livewell, and portable bait containers before leaving water access.

Do you have any questions? (see prompt)

**Step 3: DRY** everything **five days** or more, unless otherwise required by local or state laws, when moving between waters to kill small species not easily seen.

**OR**—If drying is not possible, **wipe** everything with a towel before reuse.

#### **If angler, add the following:**

Do you use live bait? If YES, share message below.

Bait Message: Never dump live fish or other organisms from one waterbody into another. Live or unwanted bait should be disposed of in trash. (bait=minnows/leeches/worms)

**Perform a watercraft check:**

If you would walk around your boat with me, I can show you some areas to look for invasive hitchhikers.

*Make sure you talk aloud as you inspect. It helps reinforce the behavior. Talk to boaters about inspecting and cleaning their watercraft and about draining the water from their boat—such as the bilge, bait buckets and livewells—before they leave the access.*

Vegetation can be found on motorboats, the motor/prop, anchors, bunks, rollers, the trailer axle, lights/wiring; for jet skis, it can be found in the intake grate and propeller; and for sailboats, it can be found in the centerboards. Check your anchor and anchor line to see if any plants are clinging to it. Since water is another way invasives are spread, livewells, motors, and equipment need to be drained.

Some aquatic invasives, such as zebra mussels, are also found on the motor/prop, on the sides and bottom of boat below the waterline, on the anchor, and clinging to vegetation. Always inspect the hull and sides of your boat for aquatic invasives. If it feels gritty or sandy, it may be that new zebra mussels are attached. An extra precaution that you can take to eliminate other aquatic invasives is to wash your boat with warm tap water or take your boat through a car wash or dry your boat and equipment in the sun for five days before entering another lake.

**Leave boaters with a final message: “CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY”**

Please make it a habit to:

- ◆ **Inspect** and **remove** visible aquatic plants, animals, and mud from watercraft, motor, trailer, and equipment before leaving water access.
- ◆ **Scrub** hull using a stiff brush.
- ◆ **Rinse** watercraft, trailer, and equipment with high pressure hot water when possible.
- ◆ **Flush** water in motor according to owner’s manual.
- ◆ **Drain** water from watercraft, motor, bilge, bladder tanks, livewell, and portable bait containers before leaving water access.
- ◆ **Dry** everything **five days** or more, unless otherwise required by local or state laws, when moving between waters to kill small species not easily seen.
- ◆ **OR**—If drying is not possible, **wipe** everything with a towel before reuse.

*Offer boaters the “AIS Landing Blitz” postcard (and/or any other educational materials that emphasize your state’s AIS message). Tell them that this postcard can serve as a reminder of the AIS prevention*

*steps. Offer anglers the same postcard and any educational materials from your state that emphasize draining water and live bait best practices.*

**Thank the boaters for their time and cooperation!**

*After you've talked with the boater, record the number of other people at the landing who heard your prevention message on the Outreach Tracking Template. Add a tally mark if any plants/animals were attached to the boat and record any AIS identified. This completes your data collection for this boater interaction!*

## Potential Scenarios/Questions from Boaters

### **“Why are you out here wasting resources when the plant is going to come anyway?”**

*Even the most educated will ask this question. Just be prepared mentally for such viewpoints and think about why you are out here and what you will say in reply. Expect the unexpected. Here are some suggested responses:*

Even if we cannot keep the plants out completely, we can prevent a lot of widespread damage. Prevention also gives us time to adopt new control methods as they are developed in the future. The longer we keep invasives out of a lake, the longer we put off the enormous costs of management and property devaluation.

### **“Aren’t all plants bad anyway?”**

*It is important to clear up this misconception! This is what you can say:*

Native plants are essential lifelines for an aquatic ecosystem, providing the basis for all life within. The problem lies with non-native, invasive plants that have no natural inhibitors and, therefore, outcompete native plants, lowering the water body’s aquatic diversity.

### **“I don’t have time for this... I know all about it already!”**

*This remark is fairly common. If the boaters do not wish to help you with the survey, you must respect their rights and let them be. In such a situation, the suggested action would be to offer them a postcard and wish them a nice day.*

### **“Why did it take this state so long to do something, when milfoil has been a national problem for over a decade?”**

*There is no good answer to this question because it’s a very good point. Here is how you can respond:*

Traditionally, environmental problems become established before we do anything about them. In this case, we have learned from other states, and are trying to take action well before these plants spread to many of our sensitive environments. Instead of focusing on what could have been done, we should focus energies on the present and future.

### **“Why do I have to take these prevention steps when I only use my boat in one lake?”**

*This question gives you the opportunity to talk about the value of changing our behaviors and why it is important.*

That’s a great question! Although you always visit the same lake, it is still useful for you to take these prevention steps every time you boat. Repeating these steps helps the actions become a regular part of your boating behavior, so that if you do ever decide to take your boat to another lake, you will remember to take the prevention steps. Prevention is the key to stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species.