



MINNESOTA AQUATIC INVASIVE
SPECIES RESEARCH CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to Discover®

Minnesota Organizations, Individuals, Honored for Aquatic Invasive Species Research Support

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 10/9/2024

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Four individuals/organizations have been announced as the recipients of the 2024 Research Partnership Awards, as presented by the **Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC)**. This award recognizes individuals, groups, and organizations who have gone above and beyond to contribute to MAISRC's mission: advancing aquatic invasive species (AIS) knowledge, and inspiring action to protect and restore Minnesota's cherished lakes, rivers, and wetlands. 2024 honorees include Kevin Zahler, the Gull Chain of Lakes Association, Wendy Crowell, and Tony Brough.

MAISRC launched the Research Partnership Awards in 2021 to acknowledge the critical work that community partners have contributed to the field of AIS research and management. The recent advances using research to solve real-time threats to Minnesota lakes and rivers would not be possible without these champions:

- **GROUP/ORGANIZATION: The Gull Chain of Lakes Association (GCOLA)** is devoted to the restoration and continued preservation of the highest water quality and environmental standards achievable, promotion of the responsible use of land and water resources and recreational safety on the Gull chain of lakes. For a decade, GCOLA has been engaged with MAISRC's work - as a legislative advocate, donors, a host for research activities and productive discussions, and so much more.
- **MANAGER/AGENCY: Wendy Crowell**, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, is an incredible asset to aquatic invasive species management in Minnesota. She consistently excels in her role as the state's Aquatic Invasive Species Management Consultant in the Department of Natural Resources Invasive Species Program, and has been a critical partner in multiple MAISRC projects. Wendy is an outspoken advocate at the DNR for AIS research, collaboration, and data management and sharing.
- **MANAGER/AGENCY: Tony Brough** has long been a valued research partner and advocate for MAISRC. His support of MAISRC's Extension programs, like the AIS Detectors Core Course and volunteer program, have led to hosting 3 workshops sponsored by Hennepin County

where participants are able to join free of charge. He has given voice to the science and sought to ensure decisions are made with the best available information.

- **INDIVIDUAL: Kevin Zahler's** face and name has become a mainstay of MAISRC events, inboxes, and Extension programs. He has been a Certified AIS Detector since 2018 and over the years has reported over 480 hours of volunteer service aimed at addressing aquatic invasive species issues in Minnesota. Kevin is regularly first in line to figure out how he can help support MAISRC research and Extension programs.

Nominations for the award were solicited from MAISRC research teams, and partner program staff. Final selections were made by MAISRC staff and were announced at the Center's annual Research and Management Showcase event on September 25, 2024.

The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center was founded in 2012 with funding from the Clean Water Fund and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and with the support of the Minnesota Legislature. Its mission is to develop research-based solutions that can reduce the impacts of aquatic invasive species in Minnesota by preventing spread, controlling populations, and managing ecosystems; and to advance knowledge to inspire action by others. Learn more about findings and current research at maisrc.umn.edu.

###

CONTACT

Ethan O'Brien, Communications Manager

Email: ejobrien@umn.edu

Phone: 612-626-1412

Website: maisrc.umn.edu