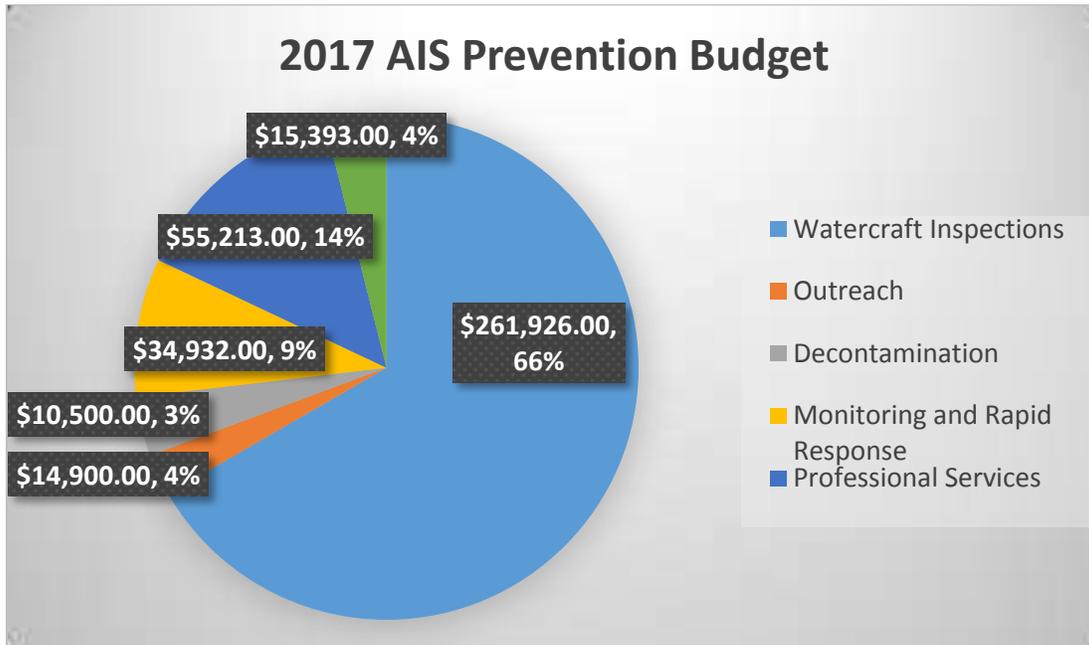


## Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention

Becker Soil and Water Conservation District works with state and local partners to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species in local lakes and rivers. This work is made possible by a 2014 tax bill that provides counties with funding to create and manage AIS prevention programs. Becker County receives approximately \$349,000.00 annually under this legislation. These funds are used for; watercraft inspection and decontamination, outreach and education, monitoring, rapid response, and program administration.



Watercraft inspections are a way to prevent AIS infestations and promote awareness of this issue. Becker County watercraft inspectors completed over 21,000 inspections in 2016, with inspections taking place at 29 public access points across the county.

Watercraft inspectors conduct a brief survey during the inspection process. Results from this survey indicate that at least 2,000 watercraft inspected prior to launch had last been used on designated infested waters. While this represents a significant threat, fewer than 2.5% of entering watercraft were found to be transporting water, mud, or aquatic plants. A large majority of the watercraft inspected in Becker County are in compliance with state law.

Mobile watercraft decontamination is also used to reduce the risk of AIS transmission via trailered watercraft. Becker SWCD operates 4 mobile decontamination units from May through October. In 2016, 291 watercraft were decontaminated by Becker SWCD Level 2 inspectors. Decontamination services were offered at Detroit, Melissa, Bad Medicine, Big Cormorant, and Ida lakes.

Education and outreach are also important elements of this program. AIS prevention practices were promoted via; printed handouts, a website, a tax insert, radio and television advertising, indoor ads, and public presentations to a variety of organizations and classrooms.

AIS monitoring activities include the distribution and installation of zebra mussel sampling devices, fall zebra mussel equipment inspections, and monitoring of vegetation at public access sites.