

Pink Bucket program continues

Eagle Waste donates services to AIS collection effort

Several years ago, the Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association (ERCLA) instituted the Pink Bucket program which provides a means for anglers to dispose of weeds, including Eurasian water milfoil (EWM), brought into their boats while fishing.

It is a well-known fact that EWM spreads when plant pieces break off and float in the water. Eventually, these fragments take root in new locations, spreading the aquatic invasive species (AIS).

In an effort to control the spread of EWM, bright-pink three-gallon buckets and AIS/EWM identification materials were placed at nine critical boat landings on the Eagle River Chain. The pink buckets are provided for recreationists to take with them while on the water, according to Carole Linn of the Chain of Lakes association.

"In addition to providing an onboard AIS message, the users are prompted to put EWM fragments into the

bucket and dispose of the plant materials in containers at the boat landings," said Linn.

Alan Albee, owner of Eagle Waste & Recycling Inc., offered his services again this year to help ensure success of the program. Eagle Waste has provided waste receptacles at seven Eagle River Chain of Lakes boat landings and will pick up all refuse free of charge for the entire summer season.

Recreationists will find containers with pink buckets at all public boat landings. A bucket is borrowed for use on the boat. Any weeds obtained while fishing are placed in the bucket and then disposed of in the refuse containers supplied by Eagle Waste back at the landing. Waste receptacles are labeled to accept both weeds and boat refuse.

"By placing weeds in the bucket rather than disposing of them in the lake, the spread of EWM can be slowed," said Carole Linn.

The Pink Bucket program

is part of the Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission's EWM management plan on the Lower Eagle River Chain. The ERCLA supports the efforts of the commission both financially and through volunteer efforts.

"The Pink Bucket program is an example of how the ERCLA supports the work of the commission, as all expenses associated with this program are paid for by the ERCLA," said Carole Linn.

The Pink Bucket program sponsored by the ERCLA, according to Linn, is an innovative way to help bridge the gap between traditional AIS signage at the boat landings and boaters utilizing the lake system.

"This program would not be possible without the services of Eagle Waste & Recycling and ERCLA volunteers Dick Matkin, Paul Hennes and Steve Linn who maintain the Pink Bucket supplies at the boat landings," said Carole Linn.





Eagle Waste & Recycling Inc. in Eagle River has donated waste receptacles to the Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association for weeds and boat refuse. —Contributed Photo