

***Habitattitude*[™] How Can It Help Us?**

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Habitattitude is a national education campaign aimed at preventing the release and escape of pets, plants and study specimens by aquarists, water gardeners, teachers and students. In fall 2004, the campaign was launched in partnership by the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Sea Grant Network (GLSGN), led by Minnesota. Soon afterward, the campaign received recognition by the Bush Administration as a model partnership between industry, government and academia. Based on Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding, the campaign is being reinvigorated by the GLSGN and its partners. *Habitattitude*'s logo and 'don't release' message are appearing on model displays, lawn and table banners at festivals, fairs, and consumer and trade shows across the region. Prevention messages are on fish bags, new aquaria, pet care sheets, brochures, bookmarks, magnets, and newsletters, mass and social media. The campaign's Web site, www.habitattitude.net, provides resources to campaign partners and consumers. Minnesota led a pre-campaign mail survey conducted in two communities each in Minnesota and Pennsylvania, which showed that over a three year period consumers released unwanted aquarium fish, plants, crayfish, snails or turtles a total of 50 times. Importantly, most aquarists and water gardeners viewed releases as preventable and an environmental problem. Congruent with these attitudes, over 90% agreed that the *Habitattitude* campaign's logo and messages were acceptable, easy to understand, attractive, positive, and clear. This presentation will cover the campaign's history: past, present and how it can help us into the future.