

# 2011 Lake Minnetonka Watercraft Inspection Program

## Summary Report



### Prepared By:

**Greg Nybeck, Executive Director  
Lake Minnetonka Conservation District  
23505 Smithtown Road (Suite 120)  
Shorewood, MN 55331**

### Partner Organizations:



**MINNEHAHA CREEK  
WATERSHED DISTRICT**



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) coordinated a watercraft inspection program on Lake Minnetonka during the 2011 boating season. The two primary goals of this program were to: 1) inspect incoming watercraft/trailers, as well as educate watercraft owners and operators, to assist in preventing the introduction of new aquatic invasive species (AIS) into Lake Minnetonka, and 2) inspect outgoing watercraft/trailers, as well as educate watercraft owners and operators, to assist in preventing the spread of zebra mussels from Lake Minnetonka. This was a cooperative effort of the LMCD, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), and Three Rivers Park District (TRPD).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Nine of the 11 designated public accesses on Lake Minnetonka were covered as part of this program in 2011. The remaining two designated public accesses were not covered for the following reasons: 1) City of Minnetrista- Phelps Bay (there are only 4 designated car/trailer spaces), and 2) City of Tonka Bay- Echo Bay (there is no parking lot and on-street parking of car/trailer spaces is prohibited east of County Road 19).

The following nine designated public accesses were covered in 2011:

1. City of Deephaven (Carsons Bay)
2. City of Minnetonka (Grays Bay)
3. City of Minnetrista (Halstead Bay)
4. City of Mound (Cooks Bay)
5. City of Wayzata (Wayzata Bay)
6. Hennepin County (North Arm)
7. Hennepin County (Spring Park Bay)
8. MN DNR (Maxwell Bay)
9. TRPD- W. Upper Lake

There were three different watercraft inspection components. These included: 1) MN DNR, 2) LMCD, and 3) TRPD. Further background of each component is detailed below.

## **WATERCRAFT INSPECTION COMPONENTS**

### **MN DNR:**

Prior to the 2011 boating season, the MN DNR's goal was to provide at least 4,000 hours of watercraft inspections at no cost to the Lake Minnetonka community. 2,000 hours of inspections were to be done on weekdays, with the remaining 2,000 hours of inspections to be done on Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays.

Peak time coverage by the MN DNR Watercraft Inspection Program was to parallel coverage by the LMCD watercraft inspectors from Memorial Day weekend through Labor. This coverage included: 1) Fridays (11 a.m. to 7 p.m.), and 2) Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays (6 a.m. to 6

p.m.). The MN DNR agreed to conduct inspections at the following four public accesses during these peak times:

- City of Minnetonka (Grays Bay);
- Hennepin County (North Arm);
- Hennepin County (Spring Park Bay); and
- MN DNR (Maxwell Bay).

Of the 4,000 watercraft inspection hours targeted for Lake Minnetonka, 2,331 hours (or 58.3%) were provided. Two key contributing factors include: 1) the State shutdown for most of July, and 2) staffing concerns with the Lake Minnetonka crew. Some of the coverage lost by this State shutdown was covered by the LMCD watercraft inspectors, where possible. Further details are provided below.

#### LMCD:

The LMCD contracted with Volt Workforce Solutions (Volt), from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day during the days and times outlined above, to conduct watercraft inspections at four public accesses in 2011. These included:

- City of Deephaven (Carsons Bay);
- City of Minnetrista (Halstead Bay);
- City of Mound (Cooks Bay);
- City of Wayzata (Wayzata Bay); and
- As a substitute to the first four public accesses when the MN DNR was unable to provide inspector coverage.

Total contracted hours with Volt was 2,292, with 2,064 hours for inspections and the remaining 228 hours for training and supervision. Volt provided watercraft inspector coverage of 2,005 hours (or approximately 97% of the contracted inspection hours). Training sessions were coordinated in the LMCD office, in coordination with the MN DNR Watercraft Inspection Program, on May 20<sup>th</sup> and June 24<sup>th</sup>. Watercraft inspections conducted by Volt paralleled those performed by the MN DNR, with an Inspector Handbook created. Inspections seem to have gone well in 2011 and the use of Volt (or other private sector watercraft inspectors) seems to be a viable compliment and/or sub substitute for future years.

During the State shutdown, Volt watercraft inspectors were redirected to conduct watercraft inspections at the North Arm and Spring Park Bay public accesses due to the amount of car/trailer launches at these two sites. In some cases, shifts were split at the four public accesses detailed above. In some cases, two additional inspectors were provided by Volt and all six public accesses with watercraft inspectors. Because the MN DNR classifies the LMCD watercraft inspectors as volunteers, Volt inspectors were unable to provide coverage at the MN DNR public accesses during the State shutdown (Grays Bay and Maxwell Bay).

#### Three Rivers Park District (TRPD):

The TRPD provided an in-kind contribution to this program in 2011 with gate attendants inspecting incoming watercraft/trailers at the Lake Minnetonka Regional Park. Weekends were covered from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. prior to the Memorial Day weekend, with seven day a week

coverage from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. These gate attendants were conducting inspections similar to the MN DNR and LMCD, which included educational and inspection components. Estimated in-kind hours contributed to this program were 1,000. This partnership has worked well and the LMCD hopes that it can continue in the future.

### **FUNDING SOURCES**

There were three primary funding sources for this program in 2010. First, the MCWD provided a contribution of \$7,500. Second, the MN DNR provided \$6,200 of grant funds. Third, the LMCD budgeted \$30,000 of AIS Management Funds. The LMCD greatly appreciates the financial contribution to this program by the MCWD and the MN DNR, as well as the in-kind contribution by the TRPD.

### **SUMMARY**

A number of efforts took place in 2011 as a result of the discovery of zebra mussels in Lake Minnetonka in 2010. A summary of these efforts include:

- The LMCD, as well as a number of other Lake Minnetonka stakeholders, supported new legislation from the State of Minnesota. This legislation further enhances the MN DNR's ability to prevent the spread of AIS within the State of Minnesota.
- Implementation of this new legislation was slightly delayed with the State shutdown in July. Some efforts have been implemented in 2011, with the remaining efforts planned to be implemented in 2012.
- During the State shutdown, the LMCD watercraft inspectors were not allowed to inspect watercraft and trailers at the MN DNR public accesses due to these inspectors being classified as "volunteers". As a result of this, the two busiest public accesses on Lake Minnetonka (Grays Bay and Maxwell Bay) did not have watercraft inspections conducted for most of July. This seems flawed and efforts should be made to change this policy.
- The LMCD has been working with lake service providers to ensure compliance with State law. In particular, the LMCD has been working with the lake service providers on what needs to be done with watercraft (and other equipment) as it is pulled from the Lake this fall. Currently, the LMCD is working with the MN DNR on finalizing a training session(s) to ensure compliance with new State law prior to the 2012 boating season.
- The MCWD has taken an active role in the monitoring the extent of the zebra mussel infestation in 2011. The MCWD has solicited the assistance of lake service providers this fall as watercraft (and other equipment) is pulled from the Lake.