

2012 Lake Minnetonka Watercraft Inspection Program Summary Report

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Prepared By:

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

Partner Organizations:



INTRODUCTION

The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) coordinated a watercraft inspection program on Lake Minnetonka during the 2012 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. 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 2012:

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); and
9. TRPD- W. Upper Lake (Lake Minnetonka Regional Park).

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:

In 2012, the MN DNR conducted Level 1 and 2 watercraft inspections on Lake Minnetonka (at no cost to the Lake Minnetonka community). In general, these Level 1 and 2 watercraft inspectors may: 1) inspect watercraft for plants, other aquatic invasive species (AIS), and water; 2) notify a licensed peace officer of alleged AIS violations; 3) deny a launch or use of Lake Minnetonka when deemed appropriate; and 4) require actions for problematic watercraft (i.e., remove plants, remove other AIS, or drain water). However, there are two additional authorities provided to Level 2 inspectors. First, Level 2 inspectors may visually and tactilely inspect the inside and outside of a watercraft (Level 1 inspectors may only inspect the outside of a

watercraft). Second, only Level 2 inspectors may conduct decontamination efforts when deemed necessary and appropriate.

Level 1 and 2 inspections conducted by the MN DNR during peak times generally focused on the Grays Bay, Maxwell Bay, North Arm, and Spring Park Bay public accesses. Inspections conducted during non-park times included coverage at the majority of all Lake Minnetonka public accesses. Level 1 and 2 watercraft inspection hours conducted on Lake Minnetonka in 2012, as reported by the MN DNR to date, are as follows:

Public Access	Level 1	Level 2	Total Hours
Carsons Bay	80.50	26.75	107.25
Cooks Bay	214.00	111.25	325.25
Grays Bay	975.25	977.75	1,953.00
Halstead Drive	60.00	0.00	60.00
Lake Mtka Regional Park	236.75	118.00	354.75
Maxwell Bay	702.00	834.25	1,536.25
North Arm	720.25	540.00	1,260.25
Phelps Bay	42.75	0.00	42.75
Spring Park Bay	825.00	588.50	1,413.50
Wayzata Bay	92.50	0.00	92.50
Total Hours:	3,949.00	3,196.50	7,145.50

(*) The MN DNR has also reported an additional 836.50 hours for travel time for Level 1 and 2 inspectors.

LMCD:

The LMCD contracted with Volt Workforce Solutions (Volt), from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, to conduct watercraft inspections at four public accesses on Fridays (11 a.m. to 7 p.m.) and Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.). These public accesses 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 North Arm and Spring Park Bay public accesses when the MN DNR was unable to provide inspector coverage.

Total contracted hours with Volt was 2,420, with 2,192 hours for inspections and the remaining 228 hours for training and supervision. Volt has invoiced the LMCD for 2,464 hours. There were two situations where Volt provided watercraft inspectors outside of the contract duration. First, Ron Schara hosted a Crappie Fishing Tournament on May 5th. During this event, 36 hours of watercraft inspections were conducted by Volt at the contracted public accesses for incoming and outgoing watercraft. This effort was complimented by Minnesota B.A.S.S. Federation volunteers and the MN DNR. Second, watercraft inspections were expanded after Labor Day to

include September 8th, 9th, 15th, and 16th. This resulted in 192 hours of additional watercraft inspections.

In 2012, there was an approved joint powers agreement (JPA) between the LMCD and MN DNR that authorized Volt watercraft inspectors. The JPA authorized Volt watercraft inspectors as Level 1 inspectors, whereas, Volt inspectors in 2010 and 2011 were classified as “volunteers”. The MN DNR provided a series of training sessions and 13 Volt inspectors were approved as Level 1 inspectors in 2012.

TRPD:

The TRPD provided an in-kind contribution to this program through 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 2012. First, the MCWD provided a contribution of \$7,500. Second, the MN DNR provided \$7,750 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 initiatives took place in 2012 relating to education and other AIS efforts. A summary of these initiatives include:

- Prior to the 2012 boating season, the MN DNR and Minnesota Waters educated and trained lake service providers as required by state legislation adopted in 2011. Training sessions were coordinated locally at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and Tonka Bay Marina. A database of local lake service providers, which the LMCD established in 2010, was a key contributing factor to this project.
- Joint educational press releases of the LMCD, MCWD, and MN DNR were coordinated in the spring and fall educating the general public on this new legislation and urging residents to use MN DNR certified lake service providers.
- Prior to the 2012 boating season, the LMCD introduced the Volt watercraft inspector arrangement with other public sector organizations. In 2012, Volt expanded its watercraft inspection services to Carver County, the Cities of Chanhassen and Eden Prairie, Lake Pulaski Improvement District, Minneapolis Park Board, and MCWD.

- The inspection of incoming and outgoing watercraft should continue in 2013 on Lake Minnetonka. However, the LMCD Board of Directors needs to discuss the future role of the agency in how these inspections are funded. Two possible options include the following:
 1. The LMCD could continue to take the lead on this project. Since the early 2000's, the LMCD has partnered with the MCWD, MN DNR and TRPD. All totaled, the LMCD has invested over \$250,000 on watercraft inspections. One possible funding source in the adopted 2013 LMCD Budget is a \$30,000 line-item for unspecified AIS management and prevention projects.
 2. The LMCD could allow another public sector agency to take the lead on watercraft inspections in 2013. In particular, since the primary goal of the LMCD's efforts was to prevent the introduction of zebra mussels. One alternative for the \$30,000 line-item is to spend all (or part) of these funds on whole bay or large scale herbicide treatment projects.