

2014 Lake Minnetonka Watercraft Inspection Program Summary Report

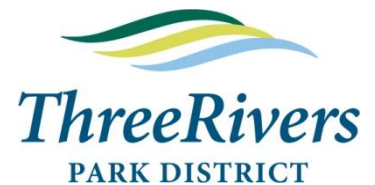
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INTRODUCTION

The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) coordinated a watercraft inspection program on Lake Minnetonka during the 2014 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 2014:

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) LMCD, 2) MN DNR, and 3) TRPD. Further background of each component is detailed below.

WATERCRAFT INSPECTION COMPONENTS

LMCD:

The LMCD entered into an approved Delegation Agreement with the MN DNR to allow the LMCD to contract with Volt Workforce Solutions (Volt) for 2,396 hours (100 for training and 2,296 for inspections) of MN DNR trained Level 1 watercraft inspections at four public accesses from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day (Fridays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.). These public accesses included Carsons, Halstead, Cooks, and Wayzata Bays (Cities of Deephaven, Minnetrista, Mound, and Wayzata, respectively). Volt invoiced the LMCD a total of \$31,223 (1,939 hours). Additional expenses incurred included \$2,007 for a Project Coordinator and \$2,333 for the purchase of tablets to collect MN DNR survey data entry.

MN DNR:

In 2014, 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 (Decon.) 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-peak times included coverage at the majority of all Lake Minnetonka public accesses. Level 1 and 2 watercraft inspection hours conducted on Lake Minnetonka in 2014, as reported by the MN DNR, are as follows:

MN DNR Public Access Inspection Hours

Public Access	Level 1	Level 2 (No Decon.)	Level 2 (With Decon.)	Total Hours
Carsons Bay	83.25	2.25	0.00	85.50
Cooks Bay	126.75	35.25	2.00	164.00
Grays Bay	679.75	97.00	255.00	1,031.75
Halstead Drive	33.75	2.50	0.00	36.25
Lake Mtka. Regional Park	74.25	3.50	0.00	77.75
Maxwell Bay	634.75	154.75	318.00	1,107.50
North Arm	615.25	145.25	249.50	1,010.00
Spring Park Bay	677.75	89.50	317.50	1,084.75
Wayzata Bay	50.50	0.00	0.00	50.50
Total Hours:	2,976.00	530.00	1,142.00	4,648.00

A 2014 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Lake Minnetonka is anticipated from the MN DNR in the near future.

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 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 worked well.

FUNDING SOURCES

There were three primary funding sources for this program in 2014. First, the MCWD provided a contribution of \$23,979 or 50% of the project costs, whichever is less. Second, the MN DNR provided \$4,000 of grant funds. Third, the LMCD budgeted \$30,000 of AIS Management Funds, which will be used to pay the balance of the project costs. 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.

INSPECTION RESULTS

Total Inspections (LMCD and MN DNR)

	Carsons Bay	Cooks Bay	Halstead Bay	Wayzata Bay	Totals
Total Inspections	1,680	1,146	743	638	4,207
Total Inspection Hours	614.50	442.25	515.50	523.00	2,095.25
Inspections Per Hour	2.73	2.59	1.44	1.22	2.01

Inbound Watercraft Inspections (LMCD and MN DNR)

	Carsons Bay	Cooks Bay	Halstead Bay	Wayzata Bay	Totals	Mtka. All	State Wide
Inbound Inspections	1,139	776	454	387	2,756	16,758	125,106
Drain Plug In On Arrival	63	42	30	17	152	661	7,298
Violation Rate	5.53%	5.41%	6.61%	4.39%	5.52%	3.94%	5.83%
Plants/Animals Found on Arrival	28	24	12	13	77	339	3,574
Violation Rate	2.46%	3.09%	2.64%	3.36%	2.79%	2.02%	2.86%
Decon. Required (Denied Launch)	28	24	12	13	77	339	3,714
Sent Away to Drain Water	1	2	0	1	4	17	250
Denial Rate	2.55%	3.35%	2.64%	3.62%	2.94%	2.12%	3.17%
Last on Mtka.	731	559	319	253	1,862	10,844	13,742
Same Lake Rate	64.18%	72.04%	70.26%	65.37%	67.56%	64.71%	10.98%

Outbound Watercraft Inspections (LMCD and MN DNR)

	Carsons Bay	Cooks Bay	Halstead Bay	Wayzata Bay	Totals	Mtka. All	State Wide
Outbound Inspections	541	370	289	251	1,451	10,139	83,933
Drain Plug In On Exit	3	16	22	9	50	169	2,041
Violation Rate	0.55%	4.32%	7.61%	3.59%	3.45%	1.67%	2.43%
Plants/Animals Found on Exit	10	34	3	8	55	438	2,454
Violation Rate	1.85%	9.19%	1.04%	3.19%	3.79%	4.32%	2.92%
Next on Mtka.	410	259	212	180	1,061	7,167	8,242
Same Lake Rate	75.79%	70.00%	73.36%	71.71%	73.12%	70.69%	9.82%
On Lake Less than 24 Hours	505	335	277	244	1,361	9,469	73,311
Rate	93.35%	90.54%	95.85%	97.21%	93.80%	93.39%	87.34%

SUMMARY

The inspection of incoming and outgoing watercraft has been coordinated on Lake Minnetonka since the early 2000's. The level of watercraft inspection hours has been more comprehensive in recent years and this has occurred because of the partnerships with the MCWD, MN DNR, and TRPD. Some of the challenges that the program faced in 2014 included:

1. Volt staffing levels (in particular early and late season openings);
2. A higher turnover rate of Volt watercraft inspectors;
3. A reduced quality of watercraft inspection protocol by some inspectors;
4. A reduced number of car/trailer launches through the public accesses (most likely due to high lake levels and associated minimum wake restrictions from May 13th through August 3rd); and
5. Inspectors did not fully hand out educational brochures due to lack of knowledge and/or availability of supply at the Cooks Bay public access as requested by the City of Mound.

The inspection of incoming and outgoing watercraft should continue in 2015 on Lake Minnetonka. However, the LMCD Board of Directors needs to discuss the future role of the agency in how these inspections are coordinated. Two possible options include:

1. The LMCD could continue to take the lead on this project. Should the LMCD decide to continue to be the project manager, a decision needs to be made on whether these inspectors would be seasonal employees of the LMCD or another public agency. Staff believes that the LMCD should consider alternative employee sources outside of the private sector to improve consistency of watercraft inspection protocol.
2. The LMCD could allow another public sector agency to take the lead on watercraft inspections in 2015. In particular, since the primary goal of the LMCD's effort was to prevent the introduction of zebra mussels. This would not prevent the LMCD from contributing grant funding to this public sector agency.