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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES TRAINING SCHEDULED FOR LAKE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Saint Cloud, MN. January 6, 2012: Minnesota Waters is pleased to announce that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is initiating statewide training and permitting for people who install and remove water recreation equipment as required by new state laws passed in 2011.

According to the law, service providers are individuals or businesses hired to install or remove water-related equipment, such as boats, docks, boat lifts or structures, from waters of the state. They are now required to obtain a permit from the DNR before providing any of those services. The DNR will begin to implement and enforce this during the 2012 open water season.

All service providers must complete invasive species training and pass an examination in order to obtain a permit. A new page on the DNR website provides information about service provider training and permitting — www.dnr.state.mn.us/lsp/index.html. The DNR has partnered with Minnesota Waters, a nonprofit organization promoting responsible stewardship of Minnesota's water resources, to provide training and testing of service providers. The assistance of Minnesota Waters increases the DNR's capacity to fully implement the statewide training and permit requirements in 2012.

"Minnesota Waters looks forward to working with the DNR to provide training and resources for Minnesota's lake service providers, and to supporting the integral role these businesses play in aquatic invasive species prevention," said Lois Sinn Lindquist, Executive Director at Minnesota Waters. "We're delighted that this training is mandatory and it's critical that all lake service providers are identified, contacted and certified in the steps they must take to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species."

Training materials will be uploaded to the Web page (www.dnr.state.mn.us/lsp/index.html) when finalized in mid-January. The initial 21 training dates and locations are listed on the Web page. The training opportunities, which will be offered across the state, will begin in late January and run through March.

Service providers' employees are also required to complete DNR aquatic invasive species training, which will be offered online. Those employees will be able to log on to a training Web page, complete the training about aquatic invasive species, laws and precautions, and receive a printed certificate upon completion. This online training will be made available by March on the DNR website.

The DNR will begin accepting service provider applications and application fee payments after Feb. 1. The service provider application will be online, so service providers must visit the Web page (www.dnr.state.mn.us/lsp/index.html) to apply for the permit. Upon receipt of an application, a \$50 application fee and verification of training, a permit will be issued by DNR. The service provider

permit, which will be valid for three years, must be in possession while providing any services. Service providers that previously attended in person training in 2011 are not required to attend again, but are required to pass an exam. Application and training dates and locations will be listed on the service provider Web page.

Minnesota Waters believes an engaged citizenry will effectively protect and restore Minnesota's irreplaceable natural assets -- clean and healthy lakes and streams -- for current and future generations. The non-profit organization provides issue advocacy, training, connections, and support to empower citizens and citizen-led groups to be active, effective advocates for Minnesota's unique waterscape. For more information on the Lake Service Provider trainings, visit www.minnesotawaters.org or call 320-257-6630.

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Note to Editors: The training locations are listed on <http://www.minnesotawaters.org/content/lsp-training-session-locations-and-dates>