

2009 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Lake Minnetonka

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Introduction:

The watercraft inspection program's goal is to reduce the spread of invasive species into and around the state. To accomplish this we complete at least 10,000 hours of watercraft inspections each year, work with citizen groups and educate the public at events such as the state fair.

In January of 2008 the MN DNR Invasive Species Unit created a grant program to allow citizen groups to increase the number of hours of inspection at their water accesses. This was done to increase watercraft inspections in the state, work with citizen groups and satisfy requests from citizen groups for more hours of inspections at their accesses.

The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District received a prevention grant from the MN DNR in May of 2009 for 833 hours of inspection time during the 2009 watercraft inspection season with an equal amount of inspection time to be matched by the LMCD. The LMCD also chose to cooperatively hire with the MN DNR for up to an additional 2,094 hours. The contract dates were May 22rd through September 7th of 2009. Sixteen watercraft inspectors were hired for the Lake Minnetonka crew to accomplish the 3,760 hours, which were focused on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays at four primary and five secondary accesses, on watercraft entering Lake Minnetonka, and emphasized zebra mussel education.

The inspection process consists of a six-question survey that ensures that boaters are aware of the issues surrounding invasive species and incorporates the inspector walking the boater around the watercraft to show them where they should be looking for invasive species. Survey questions focus on boater knowledge and behavior with information given on the impacts of invasive species and what can be done to prevent their spread.

The data in this report is based on all hours and inspections done at Lake Minnetonka in the 2009 season.

Inspection Results

Watercraft Inspectors worked 3,560 hours at nine Lake Minnetonka public water accesses. During this time 15,800 inspections were completed (table 1). Of the 3,560 hours, 3,229 were completed on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays between May 23rd and September 7th on the nine accesses identified by LMCD (table 2). The LMCD had requested that the watercraft inspectors work at the four primary accesses and four of the five secondary accesses during contract hours. During those 3,229 hours 14,868 of the 15,800 inspections were completed. Of the 15,800 inspections 13,494 or 85% were carried out on watercraft entering Lake Minnetonka (table 3).

Table 1. Lake Minnetonka summary of inspections in 2009.

Lake Name	Number of Boaters/Inspections	Enter/Exit/Unknown	Hours	Insp. per Hour
Minnetonka	15,800	13,494/1,987/319	3,560	4.44

Table 2. Inspections and hours at Lake Minnetonka peak and secondary accesses during Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.

Access Name	Number of Boaters/Inspections	Hours	Inspections per Hour
HENDRICKSON/N ARM PWA	1,919	475.75	4.03
SPRING PK PWA	2,116	476.5	4.44
GRAYS BAY CITY PWA	4,526	477	9.49
MAXWELL BAY	2,945	501.25	5.88
HALSTEAD'S BAY	916	265	3.46
WAYZATA BAY	670	272.5	2.46
CARSON'S BAY	955	307	3.11
ECHO BAY	88	145.75	.60
MOUND	733	308	2.38
Totals:	14,868	3,229	4.60

Table 3. Peak and Non Peak Entering Watercraft on Lake Minnetonka per Hour from 2001-2009.

Year	Entering Watercraft Inspected per Hour (both Peak and Non-Peak)	Hours of Inspection on Minnetonka (both Peak and Non-Peak)	Total Entering Watercraft Inspected (both Peak and Non-peak)
2001	2.04	1,003	1,342
2002	1.93	983	2,695
2003	1.97	1,871	4,920
2004	2.29	2,244	5,266
2005	3.56	2,412	7,693
2006	1.41	3,045	4,285
2007	4.67	2,105	9,835
2008	3.35	3,342	11,265
2009	3.79	3,560	13,494

Out of the 15,800 watercraft inspected at Lake Minnetonka two hundred and forty-four had

attached vegetation at the time of inspections. None of the watercraft were found to have zebra mussels. The number of watercraft exiting with vegetation attached was the highest, one hundred ninety-eight, and entering with vegetation was forty, there were also six watercraft with vegetation which were not identified as entering or exiting.

The forty boaters who came to the access with attached vegetation (.3% of all entering watercraft) were inspected prior to entering the water and asked to remove any vegetation prior to putting their watercraft into Lake Minnetonka.

The following information has been provided as a summary of the inspections done at Lake Minnetonka in the 2009 season. Information we gather helps us understand risks involved, for example boaters coming from waters infested with zebra mussels are more likely to transport zebra mussels than those coming from non infested waterbodies.

The surveys done during the inspection process found that 432 boaters out of 15,800 (or 2.7%) inspections completed had come to Lake Minnetonka from a waterbody in Minnesota known to be infested with zebra mussels. The majority of the watercraft were coming from Mille Lacs Lake and the Mississippi River (table 4).

Table 4. Watercraft entering or exiting Lake Minnetonka that last used zebra mussel infested waters.

Last Waterbody	Number of Watercraft
Carlos Lake	11
Le Homme Dieu Lake	1
Mille Lacs Lake	126
Mississippi River	124
Prior Lake	59
Ossawinnamakee Lake	2
St. Croix River	91
St. Louis River	3
Superior	15
Total:	432

The surveys found that about 1.4% of the boaters who were inspected at Lake Minnetonka had come from another state. These boats likely represent another high-risk group (table 5).

Table 5. Watercraft from states other than MN who used Lake Minnetonka.

State	Number of Watercraft	ZM present in the state
AL	2	X
AZ	5	
CA	4	X
CO	6	X
FL	9	
IA	33	X
ID	3	X
IL	15	X
IN	5	X
KS	2	
MI	5	X
MO	3	X
MT	4	
NC	6	
ND	5	
NE	4	X
NY	4	X
OH	2	X
OK	1	X
OR	1	
PA	1	X
RI	1	
SC	1	
SD	10	X
TN	3	X
TX	6	
VA	4	X
WA	2	
WI	80	X

We use a decal with the current year on it to track if a boater has been inspected in the current year. Boaters who have been inspected in the current year are more likely to be educated about invasive species and how to prevent their spread. Below is the number of inspections broken down by whether they had a current year decal and would be a repeat, had a previous year’s decal and had talked to us in past years, or had never spoken to us before (table 6).

Table 6. Decal summary at Lake Minnetonka, comparison from 2004 to 2009

Year	Inspections	Incoming	Outgoing	Curr Yr Dec	Prev. Yr decal	no decal
2009	15,800	13,494	1,987	9,024(57%)	4,174(26%)	2,410(15%)
2008	13,573	11,265	2,056	7,163(53%)	3,434(25%)	2,348(17%)
2007	13,733	9,835	3,766	7,309(53%)	3,705(27%)	2,600 (19%)
2006	8,010	4,285	3,725	3,105(39%)	2,442(30%)	2,301 (29%)
2005	14,863	8,585	6,278	8,407(57%)	3,650(25%)	2,821(19%)
2004	12,079	5,266	6,813	5,881(49%)	3,721(31%)	2,942 (24%)

We have data for 15,800 boaters who were asked if they are familiar with invasive species, 353 (or 2.2%) of them were not familiar with invasive species. When asked if they were familiar with Eurasian water milfoil 360 out of 15,800 (or 2.3%) said they were not familiar. We also asked boaters if they were familiar with zebra mussels and the problems they cause and 526 out of 15,800 or (3.3%) of boaters said they were not familiar with zebra mussels. When asked if they were familiar with the laws regarding the transport of invasive species 456 (or 2.9%) said they were not familiar with these laws.

Discussion:

Our goal for the 2009 season was to ensure that a higher percentage of hours were completed during peak hours at peak accesses. We accomplished 3,229 (or 86%) of the requested 3,760 requested peak hours. The number of inspections done on entering watercraft remained very high at 85% and the rate of awareness about invasive species also remains high at 97.8%.

In reviewing the number of inspections per hour done at peak accesses I would recommend that Echo Bay be dropped from the rotation as we were doing .6 inspections per hour at that access.