

2013 Lake Minnetonka Watercraft Inspection Program Summary Report

November 12, 2013



Prepared By:

**Greg Nybeck, Executive Director
Lake Minnetonka Conservation District
5341 Maywood Road (Suite 200)
Mound, MN 55364**

Partner Organizations:



INTRODUCTION

The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) coordinated a watercraft inspection program on Lake Minnetonka during the 2013 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 2013:

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 2,420 (228 of which for training and supervision) hours 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 \$32,673.53 (2,074.50 hours). An additional \$798.06 of MN DNR survey data entry expenses (collected by Volt) was also incurred.

Summary of LMCD Incoming 2013 Watercraft Inspections

	Carsons Bay	Cooks Bay	Halstead Bay	Wayzata Bay	Totals
Number of Inspections	1,368	1,127	850	696	4,041
Inspection Hours	508.75	499.50	483.25	518.25	2,009.75
Inspections Per Hour	2.69	2.27	1.76	1.34	2.01
Drain Plug in Upon Arrival	258	196	41	21	516
% of Drain Plug in Upon Arrival	18.86	17.39	4.82	3.02	12.77
Animals/Plants Found	35	73	30	49	187
% of Animals/Plants Found	2.56	6.48	3.53	7.04	4.63
Last Body of Water (Lake Mtka)	1,069	835	615	476	2,995
% of Last Body of Water (Lake Mtka)	78.14	74.09	72.35	68.39	74.11

Summary of LMCD Exiting 2013 Watercraft Inspections

	Carsons Bay	Cooks Bay	Halstead Bay	Wayzata Bay	Totals
Number of Inspections	698	368	484	392	1,942
Inspection Hours	508.75	499.50	483.25	518.25	2,009.75
Inspections Per Hour	1.37	0.74	1.00	0.76	0.97
Drain Plug In	3	3	0	2	8
% of Drain Plug In	0.43	0.82	0.00	0.51	0.41
Animals/Plants Present	116	121	32	160	429
% of Animals/Plants Found	16.62	32.88	6.61	40.82	22.09
Last Body of Water (Lake Mtka)	628	311	403	306	1,648
% of Last Body of Water (Lake Mtka)	89.97	84.51	83.26	78.06	84.86

MN DNR:

In 2013, 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 2013, as reported by the MN DNR, are as follows:

MN DNR Watercraft Inspection Hours

Public Access	Level 1	Level 2	Total Hours
Carsons Bay	125.50	6.00	131.50
Cooks Bay	159.75	5.75	165.50
Grays Bay	918.25	1,040.50	1,958.75
Halstead Drive	90.00	0.00	90.00
Lake Mtka Regional Park	123.25	15.25	138.50
Maxwell Bay	763.25	1,008.25	1,771.50
North Arm	757.50	1,086.25	1,843.75
Phelps Bay	0.00	0.00	0.00
Spring Park Bay	764.00	1,096.75	1,860.75
Wayzata Bay	129.75	0.00	129.75
Total Hours:	3,831.25	4,258.75	8,090.00

The MN DNR has also reported an additional 1,212.50 hours for travel time for Level 1 and 2 inspectors. A 2013 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 2013. First, the MCWD provided a contribution of \$21,600 or 50% of the project costs, whichever is less. Second, the MN DNR provided \$7,750 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.

SUMMARY

The inspection of incoming and exiting 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 2013 included:

1. Volt staffing levels (in particular early and late season openings);
2. A higher turnover rate of Volt watercraft inspectors; and
3. A large amount of time was spent in the entering of MN DNR survey information.

The inspection of incoming and outgoing watercraft should continue in 2014 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, changes that should be considered include:
 - The hiring of the watercraft inspectors and supervisor as seasonal employees of the LMCD.
 - The purchase of tablets to compile the MN DNR survey data electronically.
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 effort was to prevent the introduction of zebra mussels. This would not prevent the LMCD from contributing grant funding to this public sector agency.