

# 2015 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 2015 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**

Eight of the 11 designated public accesses on Lake Minnetonka were covered as part of this program. The remaining three designated public accesses were not covered for the following reasons: 1) City of Minnetrista- Phelps Bay (there are only 4 designated car/trailer spaces), 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), and 3) City of Mound- Cooks Bay (MN DNR inspectors only).

The following eight designated public accesses were covered in 2015:

1. City of Deephaven (Carsons Bay);
2. City of Minnetonka (Grays Bay);
3. City of Minnetrista (Halstead Bay);
4. City of Wayzata (Wayzata Bay);
5. Hennepin County (North Arm);
6. Hennepin County (Spring Park Bay);
7. MN DNR (Maxwell Bay); and
8. 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 initially contracted with the TRPD for 2,176 hours of MN DNR trained Level 1 watercraft inspections at four public accesses from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Additionally, the LMCD contracted with the TRPD for training of these inspectors, supervision for these inspectors, uniforms, communication equipment, and mileage between inspection sites. The total contract between the LMCD and TRPD was not to exceed \$39,000. The public accesses initially targeted included Carsons, Halstead, Cooks, and Wayzata Bays (Cities of Deephaven, Minnetrista, Mound, and Wayzata, respectively). The schedule for inspection times included: 1) Fridays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and 2) Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Prior to watercraft inspections commencing on Memorial Day weekend, it was brought to the LMCD's attention that inspections conducted at the Cooks Bay public access in 2015 were to only be done by the MN DNR. In response to this public access not being staffed by LMCD watercraft inspectors in 2015, the proposed schedule was amended to reallocate these planned inspection hours (520) to the remaining three public accesses on primarily Wednesdays and Thursdays (from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.) in 2015. The TRPD successfully staffed the amended schedule on short notice, which the LMCD appreciated.

**MN DNR:**

In 2015, 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. A 2015 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Lake Minnetonka is anticipated from the MN DNR in the near future.

**TRPD:**

In addition to providing the watercraft inspectors to the LMCD, 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 continued to worked well (similar to past years).

**FUNDING SOURCES**

There were three primary funding sources for this program in 2015. First, the MCWD provided a contribution of \$19,500 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 professional and in-kind contributions provided by the TRPD.

## INSPECTION RESULTS

### Total Inspections (LMCD and MN DNR)

	Carsons Bay	Cooks Bay	Halstead Bay	Wayzata Bay	Totals
Total Inspections	2,689	364	2,263	1,199	6,515
Inspection Hours (TRPD)	775.00	0.00	775.75	729.50	2,280.25
Inspection Hours (MN DNR)	92.00	147.75	95.25	105.25	440.25
Inspections Per Hour	3.10	2.46	2.60	1.44	2.39

### Inbound Watercraft Inspections (LMCD and MN DNR)

	Carsons Bay	Cooks Bay	Halstead Bay	Wayzata Bay	Totals	Mtka. All
Inbound Inspections	1,790	233	1,398	761	4,182	20,297
Drain Plug In On Arrival	101	18	118	36	273	1,179
Violation Rate	5.64%	7.73%	8.44%	4.73%	6.53%	5.81%
Plants/Animals Found on Arrival	74	14	45	21	154	712
Violation Rate	4.13%	6.01%	3.22%	2.76%	3.68%	3.51%
Decon. Required (Denied Launch)	3	0	2	0	5	19
Sent Away to Drain Water	1	0	3	0	4	13
Denial Rate	0.22%	0.00%	0.36%	0.00%	0.22%	0.16%
Last on Mtka.	1,282	135	994	543	2,954	13,121
Same Lake Rate	71.62%	57.94%	71.10%	71.35%	70.64%	64.65%

## Outbound Watercraft Inspections (LMCD and MN DNR)

	<b>Carsons Bay</b>	<b>Cooks Bay</b>	<b>Halstead Bay</b>	<b>Wayzata Bay</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Mtka. All</b>
Outbound Inspections	899	131	865	438	2,333	13,444
Drain Plug In On Exit	6	2	12	3	23	248
Did Not Remove (when requested)	2	0	0	2	4	24
Plants/Animals Found on Exit	290	34	223	166	713	3,723
Zebra Mussel Decon.	2	3	2	2	9	14
Next on Mtka.	673	93	611	314	1,691	9,192
Same Lake Rate	74.86%	70.99%	70.64%	71.69%	72.48%	68.37%
On Lake Less than 24 Hours Rate	836	122	823	414	2,195	12,572
	92.99%	93.13%	95.14%	94.52%	94.08%	93.51%

### 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. The change in contracting with the TRPD for watercraft inspectors was very positive. In particular:

1. The TRPD provided coverage for slightly over 100% of contracted watercraft inspection hours (including early and late season challenges with scheduling);
2. The quality of the watercraft inspectors and inspections conducted appears to have greatly improved;
3. Supervision, including scheduling and on-site supervision, greatly improved; and
4. The TRPD reacted well to the last minute staffing schedule changes in May (including the road construction that took place for the majority of the summer on Eastman Lane near the Wayzata Bay public access).