

# 2011 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake

Author: Maureen Ziskovsky

Watercraft Inspection Program Assistant

Invasive Species Unit, Ecological and Water Resources, MN DNR

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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 as a way 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 Chisago/South Lindstrom Lakes received a prevention grant from the MN DNR in April of 2011 for 500 hours of inspection time during the 2011 watercraft inspection season. The contract dates were May 6<sup>th</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup> of 2011. Two watercraft inspectors were hired in the Chisago county area to fulfill these hours.

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 will be based on all hours and inspections done at Chisago/South Lindstrom Lakes in the 2011 season.

## Inspection Results:

Watercraft Inspectors worked 285.5 hours (230.25 hours of access time and 55.25 hours of drive time) at the Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake access. During this time 818 inspections were completed (table 1).

**Table 1. Chisago/South Lindstrom Lakes summary of inspections in 2011.**

Access Name	Number of Boaters/Inspections	Enter/Exit/Unknown	Hours	Insp. per Hour
Chisago/South Lindstrom	818	333/480/5	230.25	3.55

Out of the eight hundred and eighteen watercraft inspected at the Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake twenty-three watercraft were found to have attached vegetation. Of those watercraft one was inspected prior to entering the water. The watercraft user was asked to remove the vegetation before launching. Twenty-one were inspected after exiting the water. An additional watercraft was found to have attached vegetation but it is unknown if the watercraft was exiting or entering

the water. All watercraft users are asked to inspect and clean their watercraft during the inspection process.

The following information has been provided as a summary of the inspections done at the lakes included in this contract in the 2011 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 49 boaters out of 818 inspections completed, or more than 5.99%, had come to the lakes included in this contract 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 St. Croix River (table 2).

**Table 2. Watercraft entering or exiting Chisago/South Lindstrom Lakes that last used zebra mussel infested waters.**

Last Waterbody	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft
Gull Lake	Enter	1
Mille Lacs Lake	Enter	9
Mille Lacs Lake	Exit	11
Mississippi River	Enter	1
Mississippi River	Exit	7
St. Croix River	Enter	7
St. Croix River	Exit	13

The surveys found that about 2.93% of the boaters who were inspected either entering or exiting the lakes included in this contract had come from another state. These boats likely represent another high-risk group (table 3).

**Table 3. Watercraft from states other than MN who used Chisago/South Lindstrom Lakes.**

State	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft	ZM Present in State
CA	Enter	2	X
CO	Enter	1	X
FL	Enter	1	
FL	Unknown	1	
IA	Exit	1	X
WI	Enter	7	X
WI	Exit	10	X
WI	Unknown	1	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 4).

**Table 4. Decal summary at Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake, comparison from 2007 to 2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Inspections</b>	<b>Entering</b>	<b>Exiting</b>	<b>Curr Yr Dec</b>	<b>Prev. Yr decal</b>	<b>No decal</b>
<b>2007</b>	120	11	109	22	34	64
<b>2008</b>	39	17	21	6	14	19
<b>2009</b>	542	231	297	100	195	247
<b>2010</b>	240	132	108	92	92	56
<b>2011</b>	818	333	480	208	287	320

We have data for 818 boaters who were asked if they are familiar with invasive species, 19 (or 2.32%) of them were not familiar with invasive species. These numbers illustrate that most of the boaters who are using Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake are aware of the problems associated with invasive species.

Due to the new drain plug law that was enacted on July 1<sup>st</sup> of 2010 the Watercraft Inspection survey now includes data showing if the watercraft inspector observed that the drain plug was out when arriving at the access and was removed before leaving the access. Out of the 333 boaters who were entering the water 37 did not have their drain plug out while arriving. These watercraft users were asked to drain all water away from the access. Out of the 480 exiting boaters 11 had water in their watercraft at the time of inspections, these watercraft users were reminded to remove their drain plugs and drain all water from their watercraft before transporting. We also asked entering boaters how long their watercraft were out of the water prior to the inspection and exiting boaters how long their watercraft had been in the water. The amount of time watercraft are in or out of the water impacts the risk of transporting invasive species. Watercraft inspection surveys show that 237 watercraft were out of the water at least 3 days before coming to Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake and 454 were in the water less than one day, both of which lower risk.

**Discussion:**

Our goal in the 2011 season was to accomplish 600 hours (500 grated hours and 100 base hours funded by the DNR) of watercraft inspection at Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake. Unfortunately we were only able to accomplish 285.5 of those hours. Three obstacles to completing our goal hours in the 2011 watercraft inspection season were the government shutdown, the loss of an inspector early in the season, and being the unable to rehire in the Chisago County area until August. Chisago County will only be invoiced for hours above and beyond the DNR's base hours.

Out of the 818 inspections done at the lakes 610 (or 74.57%) had not been inspected prior to 2011 and were an important audience for us to contact.