

Lobster Lake 2017 Watercraft Inspection Summary

Prepared by: Justin Swart – Douglas County LRM

Background

Douglas County recently completed its 7th season of conducting watercraft inspections. The inspection process involves the watercraft inspector visually and tactilely searching for aquatic invasive species or anything else that could potentially spread aquatic invasive species including water, mud, plants, or other debris. Watercraft inspectors also complete a survey for each incoming or outgoing watercraft while educating boaters about the issues surrounding aquatic invasive species. The focus of the survey is to gain insight into both boater knowledge of aquatic invasive species and boating behavior.

Customer service was again a point of emphasis for staff this season. All watercraft inspection staff participated in a workshop titled “*At Your Service: Working With Multicultural Customers*” led by University of Minnesota Extension staff. In the field, county inspectors worked to accommodate boaters by supplying cold water for transporting bait, removing loose floating vegetation at boat ramps, alerting boaters to safety concerns, providing garbage cans, handing out county recreational maps, and informing the public of local events.

Level I inspection hours require one inspector to be on site. Level II man hours indicates two staff people are on site along with one of the Douglas County portable decontamination units.

2015 Summary

In 2015, a total of 150 man hours were allocated to the Lobster Lake public water access. Of those hours, 10 man hours were Level I hours and 140 hours were Level II hours. A total of 183 inspections were conducted for an average of 1.22 inspections per hour. >0.9 inspections per hour constitutes a busy watercraft inspection access according to MN DNR standards.

2016 Summary

In 2016, Douglas County staff worked 140 Level I man hours and 170 Level II man hours at Lobster Lake, thereby meeting the allocated and grant hour goals. A total of 583 inspections were conducted for an average of 1.9 inspections per hour. This inspection per hour rate was the 6th highest in the county this season.

2017 Summary

In 2017, Douglas County allocated 50 Level I hours and 150 Level II hours to the Lobster Lake public water access. The Lobster Lake Association requested 65 Level II man hours through a cost-share grant application with Douglas County Land and Resource Management. This year, Douglas County staff worked 95 Level I man hours and 230 Level II hours at Lobster Lake, thereby meeting the allocated and grant hour goals. There were 218 inspections on entering watercraft, 234 inspections on exiting watercraft, and 2 courtesy inspections completed for a total of 454 inspections averaging 1.4 inspections per hour. This inspection per hour rate ranked #13 out of 29 sites in the county this season.

The most common type of watercraft encountered during the inspections were fishing boats (76%) and most incoming watercraft were transported by vehicles with Minnesota license

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plates (92%). There were 9 occurrences of plants being found on incoming watercraft during the inspection process which were removable by hand. No zebra mussels or other AIS were found during inspections.

Of the 454 inspections, 448 boat users correctly had their drain plugs out on arrival for a 98.6% compliance rate. For comparison, the 2017 Douglas County drain plug compliance rate was approximately 97.2% - 98.5%. Users arriving at the access with their drain plugs in their watercraft were asked to remove plugs and drain any water away from the access before launching.