

2009 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Pelican Lake

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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 Pelican Lake association received a prevention grant from the MN DNR in May of 2009 for 370 hours of inspection time during the 2009 watercraft inspection season with an equal amount of inspection time to be matched by the MN DNR. The contract dates were May 8th through September 7th of 2009. Two watercraft inspectors were hired in Ottertail County accomplish the 740 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 Pelican Lake in the 2009 season.

Inspection Results

Watercraft Inspectors worked 993 hours (686.75 hours of access time and 306.25 hours of drive time) at the Pelican Lake accesses, of these hours 890.5 were completed within the contract dates. During this time 1,636 inspections were completed (table 1).

Table 1. Pelican Lake summary of inspections in 2009.

Access Name	Number of Boaters/Inspections	Enter/Exit/Unknown	Hours	Insp. per Hour
Pelican	1,636	1056/563/10	686.75	2.38

Out of the 1,636 watercraft inspected at Pelican Lake eighteen were found to have attached vegetation. Five of the watercraft was inspected prior to entering the water and were asked to remove the vegetation before entering the water; thirteen were inspected after exiting the water and would also have been asked to inspect and clean their watercraft. One watercraft inspected while exiting the lake was found to have zebra mussels attached on October 3rd. The watercraft user was asked to remove the mussel and dispose of it in the trash prior to leaving the access.

The following information has been provided as a summary of the inspections done at Pelican Lake 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 seven boaters out of 1,636 inspections completed had come to Pelican Lake from a waterbody in Minnesota known to be infested with zebra mussels (table 2).

Table 2. Watercraft entering or exiting Pelican Lake that last used zebra mussel infested waters.

Last Waterbody	Number of Watercraft	Enter/Exit
Mille Lacs Lake	1	Enter
Mississippi River	2	Enter
Returned to Pelican Lake	603	Enter
St. Croix River	2	Enter
Carlos Lake	1	Exit
Mille Lacs Lake	1	Exit
Returned to Pelican Lake	492	Exit
Returned to Pelican Lake	10	Unknown

The surveys found that about 50% of the boaters who were inspected either entering or exiting Pelican Lake 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 Pelican Lake.

State	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft	ZM present in state
AL	Enter	1	
AZ	Enter	3	X
CA	Enter	1	X
CO	Enter	5	X
FL	Enter	2	
IA	Enter	5	X
IL	Enter	7	X
IN	Enter	2	X
KS	Enter	1	X
KY	Enter	1	X
Manitoba	Enter	3	
MI	Enter	1	X
MT	Enter	5	
ND	Enter	509	
NE	Enter	1	X
SD	Enter	3	
TX	Enter	1	X

State	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft	ZM present in state
Unknown	Enter	2	
VA	Enter	1	X
WI	Enter	9	X
WY	Enter	1	
AZ	Exit	1	X
CO	Exit	1	X
FL	Exit	1	
IA	Exit	3	X
IL	Exit	1	X
IN	Exit	2	X
MI	Exit	1	X
MO	Exit	2	X
ND	Exit	237	
SD	Exit	3	
TX	Exit	1	X
WI	Exit	4	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 Pelican Lake, decal comparison for 2008 and 2009

<u>Year</u>	<u>Inspections</u>	<u>Incoming</u>	<u>Outgoing</u>	<u>Curr Yr Dec</u>	<u>Prev. Yr decal</u>	<u>No decal</u>
2008	671	418	237	136	145	370
2009	1,636	1056	563	486	362	788

We have data for 1,636 boaters who were asked if they are familiar with invasive species, 66 (or 4%) of them were not familiar with invasive species. When asked if they were familiar with Eurasian water milfoil 76 out of 1,636 (or 4.6%) said they were not familiar. We also asked boaters if they were familiar with zebra mussels and the problems they cause and 70 out of 1,636 (or 4.2%) of boaters said they were not familiar with zebra mussels.

Discussion:

Our goal during the 2009 season was to complete at least 740 hours of inspection time at Pelican Lake; we accomplished 993. During those hours we completed 1,636 inspections, of those 788 or 48.2% of the watercraft users had not been inspected before. This audience represents a very important group for the watercraft inspection program, as they have not been educated about invasive species.

Unfortunately zebra mussels were discovered in Pelican Lake during the 2009 season. At that time inspections were increased in an effort to educate the public about the new infestation. The Watercraft Inspection Program plans to have a strong presence on Pelican Lake in 2010 to educate watercraft users about this new infestation.