

2010 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 Group of Lakes Improvement District (PGOLID) received a prevention grant from the MN DNR in May of 2010 for 280 hours of inspection time during the 2010 watercraft inspection season with an equal amount of inspection time to be matched by the MN DNR. The contract dates were May 15th through September 6th of 2010. Five watercraft inspectors were hired in Ottertail County and some of them were assigned to work at Pelican Lake to accomplish the 560 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 2010 season.

Inspection Results

Watercraft Inspectors worked a total of 962.5 hours (745.75 hours of access time and 216.75 hours of drive time) at the Pelican Lake accesses, of these hours, 830.75 were completed within the contract dates, (May 15th through September 6th of 2010). During this time 1,483 inspections were completed (table 1).

Table 1. Pelican Lake summary of inspections in 2010.

Access Name	Number of Boaters/Inspections	Enter/Exit/Unknown	Hours	Insp. per Hour
Pelican East	571	379/183/9	417	1.36
Pelican West	912	708/195/9	328.75	2.77

Out of the 1,483 watercraft inspected at Pelican Lake, three were found to have attached vegetation. One of the watercraft was inspected prior to entering the water and the user was

asked to remove the vegetation before entering the water; two 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 September 12th. 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 2010 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 557 out of 1,483 inspections completed had come to Lake Pelican from a waterbody in Minnesota known to be infested with zebra mussels. However only 4 of the 557 boaters stated that they had come from a zebra mussel infested waterbody that is not one of the lakes included in this grant (table 2).

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

Last Waterbody	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft
Carlos Lake	Enter	1
Darling Lake	Enter	2
Pelican Lake	Enter	392
Pelican Lake	Exit	158
Pelican Lake	Unknown	3
Prior Lake	Enter	1

The surveys found that about 48% 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	State	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft	ZM Present in State
AZ	Enter	1		MS	Enter	1	X
AZ	Exit	1		MS	Exit	1	X
CA	Enter	1	X	MT	Enter	3	
CA	Enter	1	X	MT	Exit	1	
CO	Enter	3	X	ND	Enter	503	
CO	Exit	2	X	ND	Exit	162	
FL	Exit	1		ND	Unknown	0	
IA	Exit	1	X	NE	Enter	1	X
IL	Enter	3	X	SD	Enter	4	
IL	Exit	3	X	TX	Enter	3	X
KY	Enter	1	X	WI	Enter	7	X
MA	Enter	1	X	WI	Exit	4	X
MA	Exit	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 Pelican Lake, decal comparison for 2008 through 2010

Year	Inspections	Incoming	Outgoing	Curr Yr Dec	Prev. Yr decal	No decal
2008	671	418	237	136	145	370
2009	1,636	1,056	563	486	362	788
2010	1,483	1,087	378	608	343	519

We have data for 1,483 boaters who were asked if they are familiar with invasive species, 366 (or 24.6%) of them were not familiar with invasive species. When asked if they were familiar with Eurasian water milfoil 404 out of 1,483 (or 27.2%) said they were not familiar. We also asked boaters if they were familiar with zebra mussels and the problems they cause and 391 out of 1,483 (or 26.3%) of boaters said they were not familiar with zebra mussels.

Discussion:

Our goal during the 2010 season was to complete at least 560 hours of inspection time at Pelican Lake; we accomplished 962.50. During those hours we completed 1,483 inspections, of those 519 or 34.9% 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 continue to have a strong presence on Pelican Lake in 2011 to educate watercraft users about this new infestation.