

2010 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Gull Lake
 Watercraft Inspection Program
 Invasive Species Unit, Ecological and Water Resources, MN DNR
 11/12/10

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 Gull Lake association received a prevention grant from the MN DNR in May of 2010 for 168 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 8th through September 6th of 2010. Twenty watercraft inspectors were hired in the Brainerd Lakes area and some were assigned to work at Gull Lake accesses to accomplish the 336 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 Gull Lake in the 2010 season.

Inspection Results

Watercraft Inspectors worked a total of 1,399.50 hours (1,210.25 hours of access time and 189.25 hours of drive time) at the Gull Lake accesses. During this time 3,683 inspections were completed (table 1).

Table 1. Gull Lake summary of inspections in 2010.

Access Name	Number of Boaters/Inspections	Enter/Exit/Unknown	Hours	Insp. per Hour
Narrows	1,428	806/612/10	415.75	3.43
East	1,082	710/365/7	350	3.09
Gov. Point	1,173	791/369/13	444.5	2.63

Out of the 3,683 watercraft inspected at Gull Lake eighty-nine were found to have attached vegetation. Eleven of the watercraft were inspected prior to entering the water and were asked to remove any vegetation before entering the lake. Seventy-eight were inspected after exiting the water and were asked to remove any vegetation. No other plants or animals were found.

The following information has been provided as a summary of the inspections done at Gull 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 2,338 out of 3,683 inspections completed had come to Gull Lake from a waterbody in Minnesota known to be infested with zebra mussels. However only 191 of the 2,338 boaters stated that they had come from a zebra mussel infested waterbody other than Gull Lake. The majority of the 191 watercraft were coming from the Mille Lacs Lake (table 2).

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

Last Waterbody	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft
Carlos Lake	Enter	1
Carlos Lake	Exit	1
Darling Lake	Enter	1
Geneva Lake	Enter	2
Gull Lake	Enter	1268
Gull Lake	Exit	870
Gull Lake	Unknown	9
Mille Lacs Lake	Enter	73
Mille Lacs Lake	Exit	36
Minnetonka	Enter	3
Minnetonka	Exit	5
Mississippi River	Enter	28
Mississippi River	Exit	20
Ossawinnamakee Lake	Enter	2
Prior Lake	Enter	1
Prior Lake	Exit	2
St. Croix River	Enter	3
St. Croix River	Exit	5
Superior	Enter	5
Superior	Exit	3

The surveys found that about 3.9% of the boaters who were inspected either entering or exiting

Gull 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 Gull Lake.

State	Enter/Exit	Number of Watercraft	ZM Present in State
AL	Enter	1	X
AZ	Exit	1	
CA	Enter	1	X
CA	Exit	1	X
CO	Enter	2	X
FL	Enter	5	
FL	Exit	4	
IA	Enter	24	X
IA	Exit	22	X
ID	Exit	1	
IL	Enter	10	X
IL	Exit	10	X
IN	Enter	2	X
IN	Exit	1	X
KS	Exit	1	X
MI	Enter	2	X
MI	Exit	2	X
MO	Enter	1	X
MO	Exit	4	X
MT	Exit	2	
NC	Enter	1	
ND	Enter	8	
ND	Exit	4	
NE	Enter	2	X
NE	Exit	4	X
OH	Enter	1	X
OK	Exit	1	X
PA	Enter	1	X
PA	Exit	1	X
SD	Enter	7	
SD	Exit	2	
WI	Enter	10	X
WI	Exit	6	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 Gull Lake, comparison from 2006 to 2010

Year	Inspections	Entering	Exiting	Cur. Yr Dec	Prev. Yr decal	No decal
2006	1092	623	459	468	139	482
2007	654	371	274	84	183	381
2008	913	540	349	227	248	437
2009	3,267	2,037	1,199	1,058	831	1,378
2010	3,683	2,307	1,374	1,326	1,110	1,221

We have data for 3,683 boaters who were asked if they are familiar with invasive species, 138 or 3.7% of them were not familiar with invasive species. When asked if they were familiar with Eurasian water milfoil 161 out of 3,683 or 4.9% said they were not familiar. We also asked boaters if they were familiar with zebra mussels and the problems they cause and 189 out of 3,689 or 5.1% of boaters said they were not familiar with zebra mussels. These numbers illustrate that while many of the boaters who come to Gull Lake are aware of invasive species there is a still a group who is not aware of the problems caused by invasive species.

Discussion:

Our goal during the 2010 season was to accomplish 336 hours of inspection time at Gull Lake; we accomplished our goal by completing 1,399.5 hours with 1236 of those hours falling within the contract dates.

The number of inspection hours at Gull Lake increased from the 2009 season from 1,053.75 hours in 2009 to 1,399.5 hours in 2010. The inspection per hour decreased from 4.1 in 2009 to 2.87 in 2010. Out of the 3,683 inspections done at Gull Lake in 2010, 1,221 or 33% had not been inspected prior to 2010 and were an important audience for us to contact.

In October, 2010, zebra mussels were discovered in Gull Lake. Due to the zebra mussel infestation, the Watercraft Inspection Program will be re-evaluating how the DNR will approach inspections for 2011 including the number of hours and how they are distributed.