



Prior Lake Spring Lake Watershed District Watercraft Inspection Report

SUMMER 2020

Submitted by: Stephanie Johnson, President

Project Description: Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Level 1 Inspection Program

Project Duration: Fishing Opener through September 2020.

Summary

- It was a successful season!
- We covered 3 PLSLWD boat landings: Spring Lake, Upper Prior Lake and Lower Prior Lake.
- We worked Friday, Saturday and Sunday 6:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., with the following exceptions:
 - Fridays through 8/28 6 a.m.-4 p.m.
 - Saturdays through 9/5 6 a.m.-4 p.m. THEN Saturdays until 9/26 6 a.m.-noon
 - Sundays through 9/6 6 a.m.-4 p.m.
 - Holidays (July 4 and Labor Day) 6 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Waterguards inspectors worked 899.75 hours at PLSLWD.
- We worked the following total hours at each lake:
 - Upper Prior- 200 hours
 - Lower Prior- 200.25 hours
 - Spring Lake- 499.5 hours
- We educated boaters and completed 5,015 inspections from May-September. We completed 3,537 entering inspections, 1,475 exiting inspections and 3 courtesy inspections.
- We completed approximately 5.6 inspections/hour on average.
- We inspected approximately 83 Canoe/Kayak/Or Similar, 1789 Fishing Boat, 65 Jon Boat, 303 Personal Watercraft, 414 Pontoon, 2083 Runabout or Ski Boat with no Ballasts, 8 Sailboat, 163 Wakeboard Boat with Ballasts, and 18 Boat Lift/Dock/Or Similar.

What Worked?

- We found aquatic plants (54 times entering/228 times exiting), mud (7 times entering/14 times exiting), and zebra mussels (0 times entering/2 times exiting). Two watercraft entering the lake, and found with zebra mussels, quickly left the landing before inspectors could enter data into the survey. In addition, we found 82 drain plugs in upon arrival at the landing.
- We served as a consistent reminder to boaters who already knew about aquatic invasive species.
- Our scheduling system was effective. The system allowed inspectors to drop and switch shifts electronically (after management approval).

- The DNR provided good training to inspectors. Our inspectors completed training online this year due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Inspector vests and lanyards worked very well for visibility and authority.

What challenges did we have?

Garbage was consistently a problem at all three landings, but especially at Lower Prior.

It was difficult to get information on when and where fishing tournaments were being held. Often, we wouldn't hear about them at all or would hear last-minute. Was this due to COVID-19?

This season brought more people to boating than ever. We encountered many people new to boating and many occasional boaters. New and occasional boaters are not as familiar with AIS laws and procedures.

The weather this season was very hot and humid for most of July and August. This was tough on our inspectors.

Lower Prior was extremely busy most of the season. During the busiest times, it would have been beneficial to have two inspectors working at Lower Prior. It was just too difficult to inspect both entering and exiting boats. We encountered many very angry boaters at this landing.

What Other Improvements could be made for next season?

Training

Set aside hours for on-the-job training/mentorship of new inspectors.

Landings

Inspectors often shoveled weeds and picked up trash at the landing sites.

Other

It would be nice to have more of a police presence at the landings. Simple drive-throughs would be welcomed, especially at Lower Prior.

6:00am start time in September was too early. It was still dark until after 6:30am. Suggested September schedule for next year is 7-1 on Saturdays.

Employee Information

WaterGuards had 5 employees total, all part-time.