

2012 Watercraft Inspection Report

Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District

Background

The Chisago Lakes Chain of Lakes watershed is one of the premier recreational destinations in the northeast metro area. The aquatic invasive plant Curlyleaf Pondweed is pervasive in all the of lakes. The aquatic invasive plant Eurasian Water Milfoil has been found in Green, Little Green and Ellen lakes since the 1980's. Since then, Eurasian Water Milfoil has been rapidly spreading throughout the remaining major lakes – North & South Center, North & South Lindstrom, and Chisago.

Curlyleaf Pondweed and Eurasian Water Milfoil substantially impair navigation. Curlyleaf Pondweed has a negative effect on water quality.

In the 2011 DNR Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Chisago/South Lindstrom Lake – surveys showed that, of the 818 inspections completed, 49 of those inspected (more than 6%) had previously been in a Minnesota waterbody known to be infested with Zebra mussels. The majority of these watercraft were coming from Mille Lacs Lake and the St. Croix River.

Movement of Aquatic Invasive Species by boats is the number one way these harmful species spread from lake to lake.

Zebra Mussels and Spiny Water Flea are not known to be found in the Chisago Lakes Chain of Lakes watershed. The watercraft inspection program is essential in our efforts to keep these invaders out of the watershed.

To implement the watercraft inspection program in 2012, Chisago County entered into a Joint Powers Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for authority to conduct boat launch inspections.

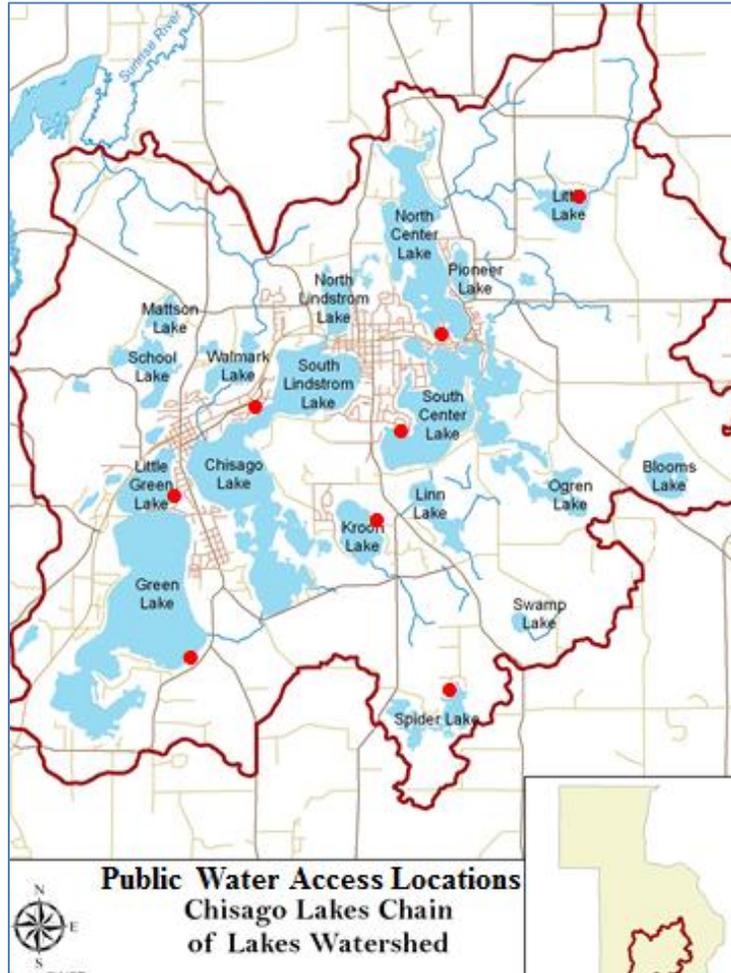
The primary objective of the watercraft inspection program is to inform and educate the public on the threats of ecologically harmful aquatic invasive species to the lakes in the Chisago Chain of Lakes. The watercraft inspector works at boat launches educating the public by providing information to watercraft users and conducting a brief survey while inspecting watercraft for aquatic invasive species.

There are nine lakes with public accesses within the Chisago Lakes Chain of Lakes watershed:

*Chisago
Green
Kroon*

*Little
Little Green
North Center*

*South Center
Spider
South Lindstrom*



North and South Center Lakes each have separate boat launching areas and the lakes are connected by a channel. Chisago and South Lindstrom Lakes share a mutual boat launch and are connected by a channel. Green and Little Green Lakes have separate boat launches but are also connected by a channel.

Watercraft inspections were conducted between June 9 and October 6, 2012. Inspections were rotated among the lakes with public accesses with priority given to accesses with higher boat traffic.

Summary

- 610 watercraft were inspected. 432 while entering boat launches. 178 while exiting boat launches.
- 32 watercraft inspected were required to remove the bilge drainage plug prior to launching watercraft.
- Many of these boaters stated that they were unaware of the requirement while others claimed that removing the plug caused undue hardship as they would forget to replace it prior to launch.
- No watercraft entered waterways in the district with AIS or significant vegetation of any kind.
- 37 watercraft exited the waters with non-AIS vegetation while 11 exited with suspected Eurasian Water Milfoil. Vegetation was required to be removed prior to leaving the boat launch.
- No animal AIS were observed. Animal AIS include Zebra Mussels and Spiny Water Flea.
- All boats were cleaned of vegetation and the bilge plugs were removed prior to leaving boat launches.
- Many boaters consistently use the same boat launch each time they use a boat.
 - Previous Lake
 - 50% of boaters used the same boat launch.
 - 13% of boaters used a different boat launch within the Chisago Lakes watershed.
 - 18% of boaters used a boat launch outside the Chisago Lakes watershed.
 - Next Lake
 - 47% of boaters plan to launch their boat at the same boat launch.
 - 9% of boaters plan to launch their boat at a different boat launch within the Chisago Lakes watershed.
 - 6% of boaters plan to launch their boats at a boat launch outside the Chisago Lakes watershed.

Common Misconceptions

- Birds and other wildlife transport more AIS than boats.
- Zebra mussels are actually good for our lakes and rivers as they clear the water.
- Watercraft inspections are a violation of a citizen's privacy.
- Only the Department of Natural Resources has the authority to inspect boats.
- Nothing can be done to stop AIS, we will have to learn to live with them.

These misconceptions and others were addressed during the watercraft inspections but there is a great need for further public education if we are to effectively protect our water ways.

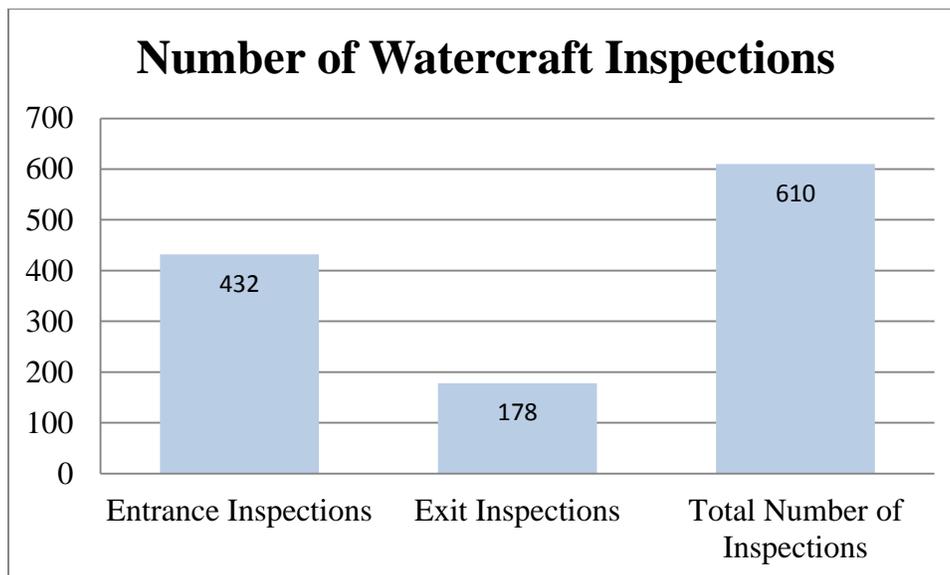
Recommendations

- Continue to implement the watercraft inspection program in the Lake Improvement District.
- Expand the watercraft inspection program to include all lakes with public accesses in Chisago County.
- Partner with other cities and adjacent counties, such as Forest Lake and the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District.
- Solicit and train volunteers to assist in watercraft inspections and education.
- Continue to work closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and encourage them to continue inspections in Chisago County.

2012 Yearly Totals

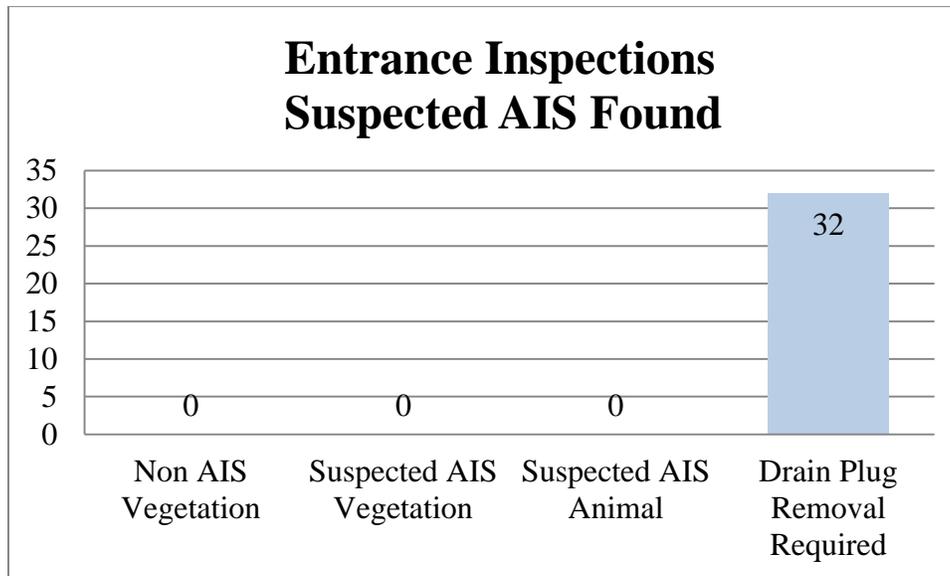
Number of Watercraft Inspections

Lake Access Name	Entrance Inspections	Exit Inspections	Total Number Inspections
Chisago South Lindstrom	74	33	107
Green	56	22	78
Kroon	31	20	51
Little	61	23	84
Little Green	16	12	28
North Center	88	30	118
South Center	95	33	128
Spider	11	5	16
Total	432	178	610



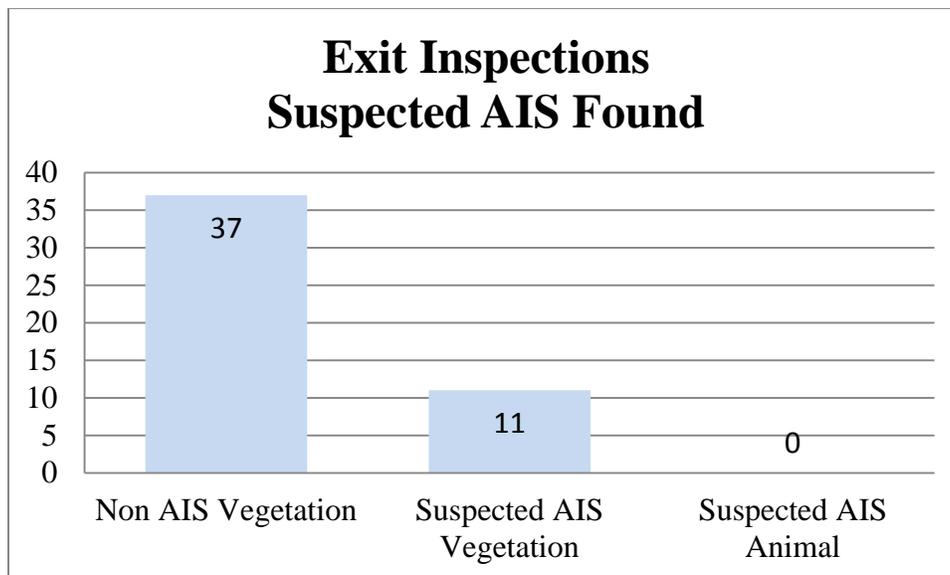
Entrance Inspections – Suspected AIS Found

Lake Access Name	Non-AIS Vegetation	Suspected AIS Vegetation	Suspected AIS Animal	Drain Plug Removal Required
Chisago South Lindstrom	0	0	0	4
Green	0	0	0	6
Kroon	0	0	0	6
Little	0	0	0	3
Little Green	0	0	0	
North Center	0	0	0	8
South Center	0	0	0	5
Spider	0	0	0	
Total	0	0	0	32



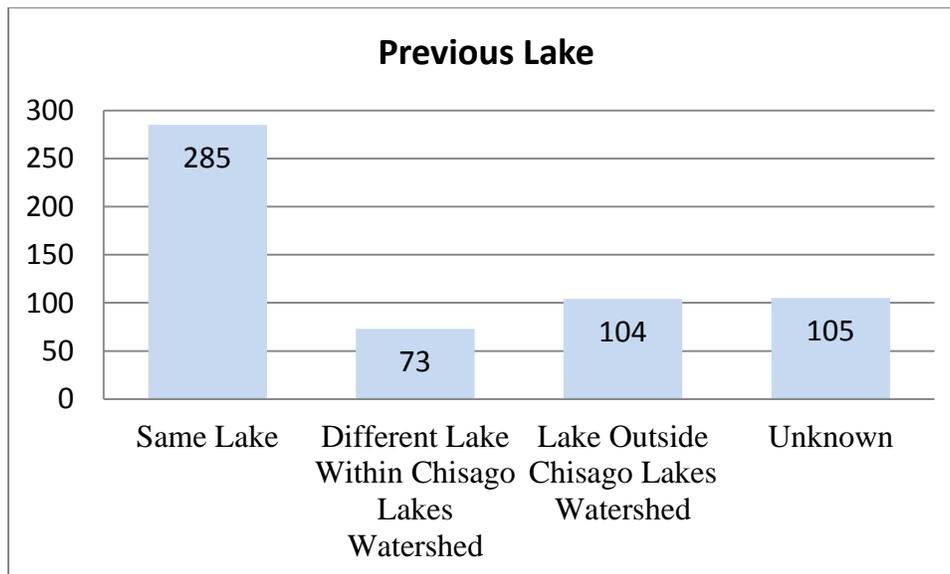
Exit Inspections – Suspected AIS Found

Lake Access Name	Non-AIS Vegetation	Suspected AIS Vegetation	Suspected AIS Animal
Chisago South Lindstrom	8	0	0
Green	6	1	0
Kroon	7	0	0
Little	1	0	0
Little Green	3	2	0
North Center	10	1	0
South Center	1	7	0
Spider	1	0	0
Total	37	11	0



Previous Lake

Lake Access Name	Same Lake	Different lake within Chisago Lakes Watershed	Lake outside Chisago Lakes Watershed	Unknown
Chisago South Lindstrom	62	7	12	20
Green Little Green	53	14	22	12
Kroon	9	7	15	19
Little	45	8	11	19
North Center	47	23	20	19
South Center	68	13	23	16
Spider	1	1	1	0
Total	285	73	104	105
	50%	13%	18%	19%



Next Lake

Lake Access Name	Same Lake	Different lake within Chisago Lakes Watershed	Lake outside Chisago Lakes Watershed	Unknown
Chisago South Lindstrom	56	6	4	35
Green Little Green	56	8	11	27
Kroon	8	7	1	34
Little	50	0	0	33
North Center	42	23	5	39
South Center	57	5	14	48
Spider	0	0	0	3
Total	269	49	35	219
	47%	9%	6%	38%

