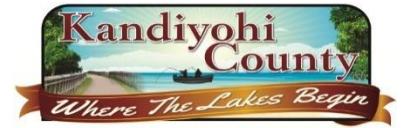


# 2022

## Kandiyohi County

### Aquatic Invasive Species Program Summary



Thanks to funding in 2022 from the State of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid program, Kandiyohi County continued watercraft inspections countywide. 4228.5 inspection hours were logged on nineteen public water accesses by Kandiyohi County watercraft inspectors performing 7255 inspections. The primary goal of the Watercraft Inspection Program is to inform and educate the public on the threats of ecologically harmful aquatic invasive plants and animals. Watercraft inspectors work at public water access sites educating the public by providing information to watercraft users and conduct a brief survey, while inspecting watercraft for invasive species. Watercraft inspection shifts were typically six to seven hours per shift between May 18<sup>th</sup> and September 14<sup>th</sup> with two shifts per day. In order to more closely match boater activity we continued having shorter shifts at the beginning and end of the day as well. Twenty one inspectors were able to be hired initially with two leaving early in the season. Of those inspectors there were two lead inspectors that were also utilized to provide assistance and guidance to others, spot check attendance, fill in shifts at the decontamination unit and do inspections as time allowed at other accesses which provided additional access coverage. With a limited number of inspectors and limited inspector availability, only the decontamination unit at Saulsbury Beach was used and the other one was left in storage. The decontamination unit at Green Lake Saulsbury Beach was staffed from June 2<sup>nd</sup> through August 18<sup>th</sup> with the DNR bringing their staff and own decontamination unit for some days prior to and after these dates. A total of nineteen lake accesses had inspection shifts scheduled with the majority of the shifts being where the decontamination unit was and the busier accesses based on previous year's inspection rate data. Unfortunately we also learned that Long Lake (Willmar) and Willmar/Foot Lake were confirmed to have zebra mussels this year. Equipment to monitor for Spiny Water Flea has also been purchased this year and is now available for people to borrow to monitor for this invasive species. So far there have been no requests for it.

### INSPECTED LAKES

- Green (Rush Brown , County Park Five, & Saulsbury)
- Andrew south access
- Big Kandiyohi (E &W)
- Diamond (East & West)
- Eagle
- Florida
- Games (NE & SE)
- George
- Long- Hawick
- Long - Willmar (N & S access)
- Nest (NE &W)
- Norway (South access)

### Infested Lakes

#### Diamond Lake

Zebra mussels

#### Eagle Lake

Zebra mussels

#### Elkhorn Lake

Zebra mussels

Eurasian watermilfoil

#### Henderson Lake

Eurasian watermilfoil

Zebra mussels

#### Long Lake (Willmar)

Zebra mussels

#### Games Lake

Zebra mussels

Eurasian watermilfoil

#### Green Lake

Zebra mussels

Eurasian watermilfoil

#### Lake Florida

Zebra mussels

Eurasian watermilfoil

#### George Lake

Zebra mussels

#### Willmar/Foot Lakes

Zebra mussels

#### Lake Andrew

Zebra mussels

Eurasian watermilfoil

#### Lake Calhoun

Zebra mussels

Eurasian watermilfoil

#### Norway Lake

Zebra mussels

Eurasian watermilfoil

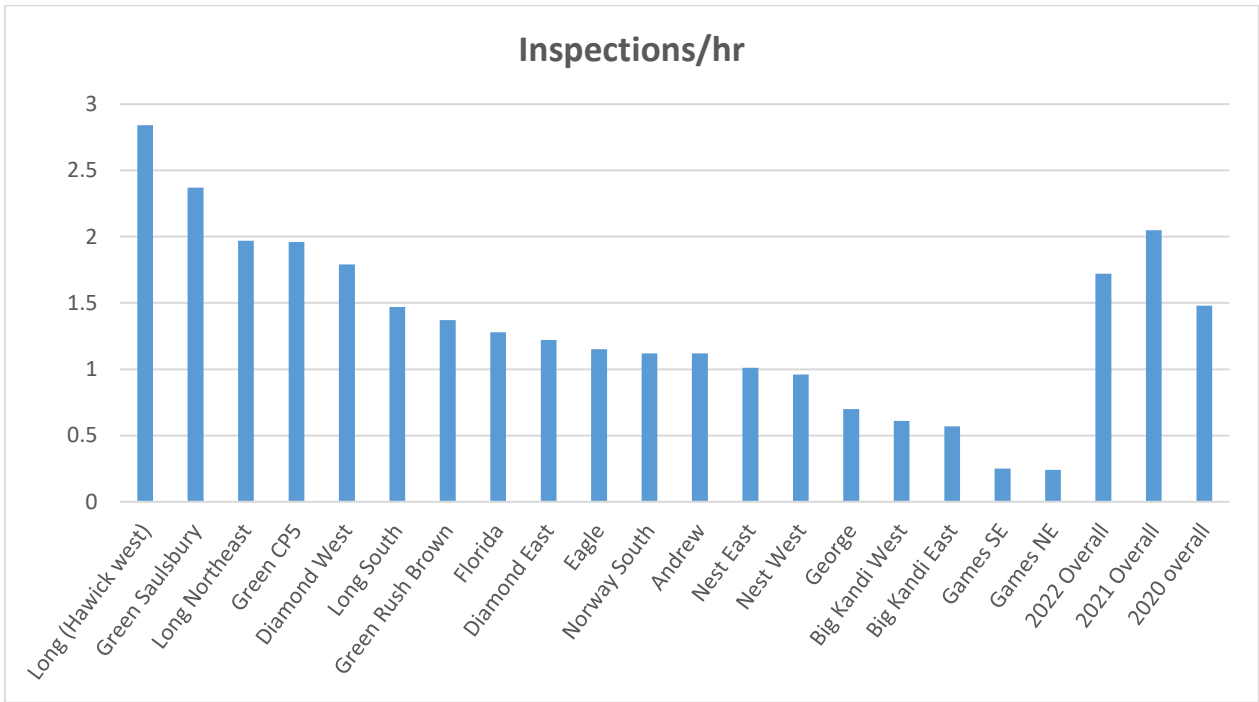
#### Nest Lake

Zebra mussels

## Inspections for 2022 Watercraft Inspection Season

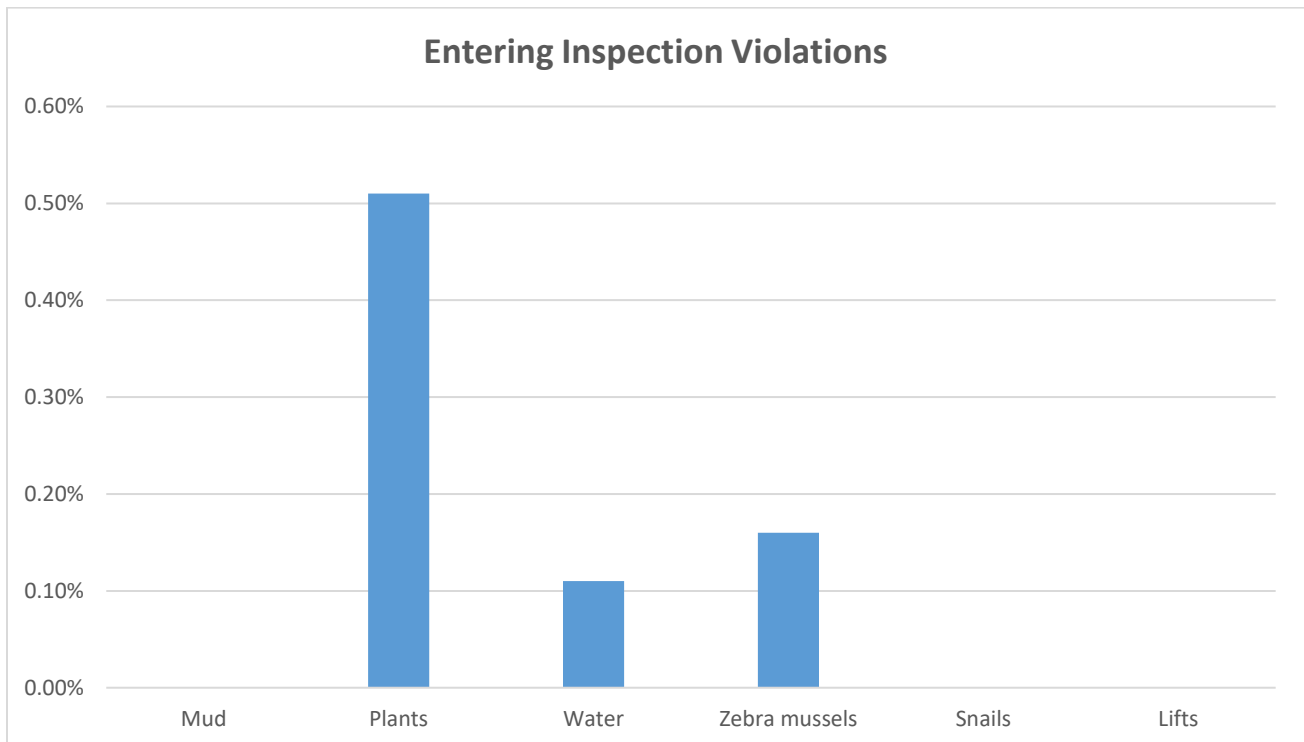
Inspections per hour					
Access	2022 Hours of Inspections	2022 Number of inspections	2022 Inspection rate per hour	2021 Inspection rate per hour	2020 inspection rate per hour
Green Saulsbury	1486.75	3516	2.37	2.42	1.4
Green Rush Brown	16.75	23	1.37	2.97	2.56
Green CP5	320.25	627	1.96	2.03	1.56
Diamond West	632.5	1131	1.79	2.04	2.46
Diamond East	51.5	63	1.22	1.00	1.15
Big Kandi East	128.25	73	0.57	2.01	3.86
Eagle	508	586	1.15	1.62	1.65
Florida	216	277	1.28	1.29	1.35
Long (Hawick west)	81	230	2.84	2.28	1.04
Nest East	144.5	146	1.01	0.93	0.77
Big Kandi West	223.25	135	0.61	1.50	2.44
Norway South	171	192	1.12	1.06	1.2
Long Northeast	36	71	1.97	2.5	0.41
Long South	12.25	18	1.47	3.83	2.2
Nest West	86.75	83	0.96	1.28	0.33
Games SE	8	2	0.25	0.16	0.69
George	33	23	0.70	1.00	0.90
Andrew	47.5	53	1.12	0.82	0.88
Games NE	25.25	6	0.24	1.38	0.74
2022 Overall	4228.5	7255	<b>1.72/hr</b>		
2021 Overall	4452.3	9107		<b>2.05/hr</b>	
2020 overall	6807.75	10048			<b>1.48/hr</b>

Overall the inspection rate per hour was lower than last year. The inspection staff said they thought there were fewer boaters this year. The DNR also noted lower boater activity this year as well. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the inspection staff I will plan to keep most shifts to the busiest accesses with limited shifts available as necessary at the remaining ones to continue to keep the clean, drain, dry message as well as where our decontamination station is located in front of as many boaters as possible and will continue to use the shorter morning and evening shifts to match boater activity more closely. In order to improve the overall inspection rate I will also try to utilize the two lead inspectors to provide some inspections where it is the busiest next year if there are no other inspectors already working at those locations. I also plan to increase inspection hours at the Long (Hawick west) location in 2023 in hopes we can continue to prevent this lake from becoming infested with invasive species and because it has been a location with a higher inspection rate.

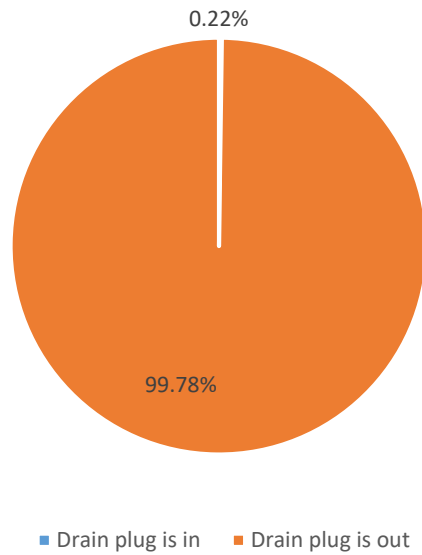


### What did inspectors find?

Violations remain rare amongst entering watercraft. A total of 35 violations were found on inspection of entering watercraft by Kandiyohti County inspection staff in 2022. It is likely to find water, weeds, mud, etc. on exiting watercraft so the number of violations found on entering watercraft is used to show how often invasive species may have been transported potentially to another lake causing a new infestation. Of the 7,255 inspections a total of 4,523 were entering watercraft. Of those entering watercraft, 23 (0.51%) boats arrived with plants, 5 (0.11%) with water, 7 (.16%) with zebra mussels, and 0 were lifts. Of the entering watercraft 10 (0.22%) arrived at the access with the drain plug in. There was something found on an exiting watercraft 193 times by inspectors ensuring the law is followed and invasive species are not spread.



### Drain Plug Violations on Entering Watercraft



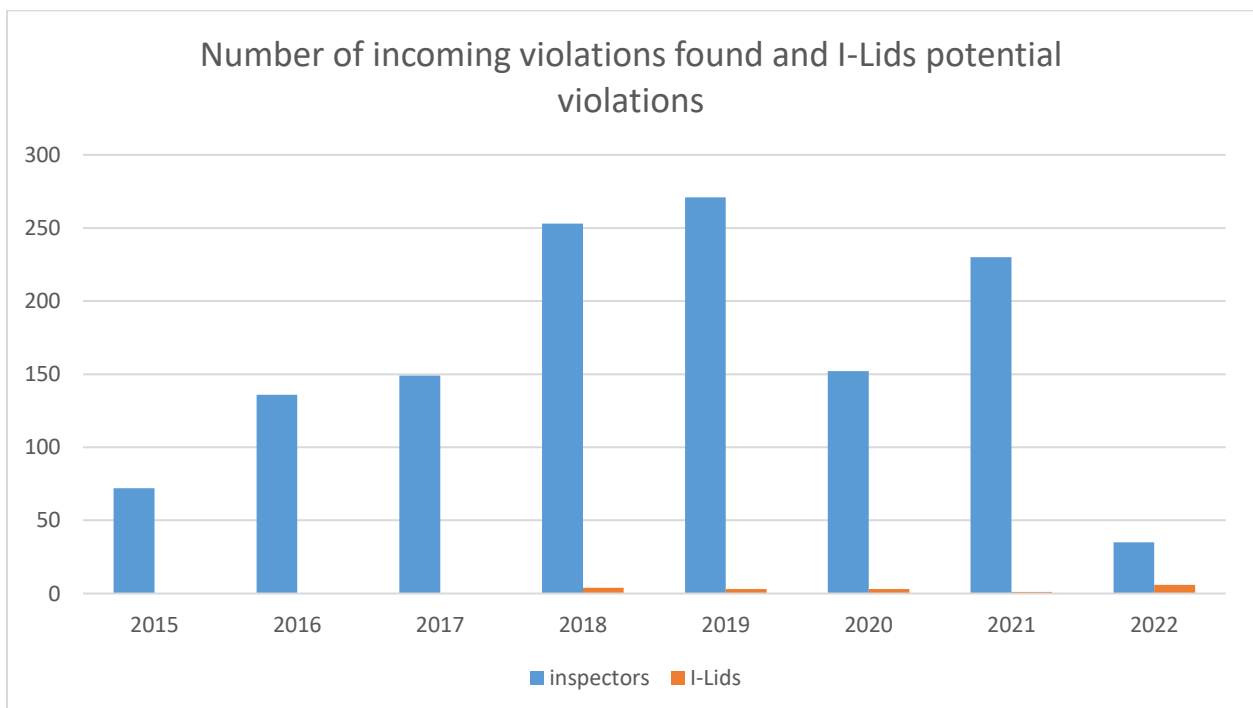
### How many decontaminations were done?

Number of decontaminations	
2022 decontaminations	99
2021 decontaminations	160
2020 decontaminations	183
2019 decontaminations	140
2018 decontaminations	243

In 2022 decontaminations were far fewer from previous years. Inspectors continued to offer decontaminations to boaters even when not required but a cool, wet, and windy spring and very hot weather in the summer as well as lower boater numbers limited the number of decontaminations when it was available. Limited staff at the beginning and end of the season also resulted in the decontamination unit only being available for only 11 weeks. It is also thought that complacency among boaters may be impacting the number of decontaminations as well. Only one decontamination unit was utilized in 2022 again rather than two due to not enough staff availability to run both units. For 2023 inspectors will continue to be instructed to offer decontamination to as many boaters as possible and direct boaters from other accesses to the location of the decontamination unit. I will also continue to provide inspectors scenarios of when decontamination is recommended but not required to try to increase the decontamination numbers. The second decontamination unit is planned to be sold since we have not been able to make use of it much and will focus on the one at Saulsbury Beach and plan to offer some incentives to boaters to increase the number of decontaminations in 2023. For comparison, the DNR completed 25 decontaminations in Kandiyohi County in 2022 with the majority of those coming after we put our decontamination unit away for the year.

## Sentry Units

Kandiyohi County also uses sentry units to provide additional surveillance of boaters as well as education and outreach to supplement inspection staff efforts. At ten lake accesses in the county there is a camera positioned to record launches and loading of water related equipment that also has a sign on it and plays an audio message to remind boaters to clean, drain and dry before leaving the access or before launching. Three of these were purchased with the State AIS funds the County receives annually and seven were purchased through the AIS local grants program with half of the purchase price being paid by the lake associations and the other half paid for with AIS program funds. The five newest sentry units have a condition in the grant language for half of the ongoing operational costs to be paid by the lake association. For 2022 the lake associations that have these sentry units at their access agreed to pay half of the operational expenses for seven of the ten of them leading to cost savings on this budget item that can be used elsewhere in the budget. All ten units have been in operation for each of the last seven years. For 2023 the three sentry units that do not have half of the operational expenses paid for by a lake association will not be put in service and the funds will be utilized elsewhere in the budget. This includes one that had a condition in grant language for the lake association to pay half of the operational expenses. A combination of wanting to spend funds elsewhere and not seeing a good value for the sentry units are likely reasons some lake associations are choosing to not pay half of the operational expenses. I am working with our maintenance department on creating an alternative to the sentry units that still plays audio but has no video capture and hope to have a design and estimate soon.



The AIS Taskforce will again be asked if the lake associations with these sentry units at their accesses should be requested to pay half of the operational expenses for 2023 similar to what was done for 2021 and 2022. Previous years reports from each unit are provided to the lake associations for their consideration.

## Aquatic Invasive Species Marketing and Outreach Summary

In 2022 the outreach focus remained targeted to a local audience rather than having broad regional outreach that only reached a small segment of the population to make better use of the limited amount of funds.

### 1. Lakeland Broadcasting (106.5 the train, 96.3 KWLM)

May 18th-September 14th. 3 ads per day/7 days a week

A radio ad was produced by Lakeland Broadcasting to highlight the need for and location of the decontamination unit in Kandiyohi County. Since only one decontamination unit was used and didn't move around there was no need to update the script as often since only the hours and days available changed. Also rather than have all three ads focus on where the decontamination unit is located, a pair of educational ads focusing on the effects of zebra mussels and starry stonewort in lakes were rotated in the third slot at 50% of the time to raise awareness of the effects of aquatic invasive species.

### 2. All-Over-Media



The Kandiyohi AIS program aggressively marketed the decontamination program and relied upon local leadership to highlight the unit. Harley Davenport, Kandiyohi resident and leader with Little Crow Anglers, served as the face of the program. Community Based Social Marketing focused research indicates that including a leader in program outreach increases the trustworthiness of the messaging. The AIS program used All-Over-Media again to communicate about the

decontamination program. For 2022 no changes were made to the advertising but I was informed that the ice box wraps were not able to be done. We were offered one sheet posters at some locations as an alternative so were able to add some visibility back that we missed without the ice box wraps. Without the ice box option the advertising was not as visible as in the past. We were also unable to get any advertising a Barney's in Willmar or Mel's Sports Shop in Spicer which are both valuable locations since they also sell bait.

SITE NAME	BRAND	CITY	Pump Top	Ice Box	One Sheet
K & J Quick Stop	Tesoro	Kandiyohi	X		X
Skindeliens Bp Amoco Mini-Mart	BP/Amoco	New London	X		
Spicer Super Stop Inc	BP/Amoco	Spicer	X		X
Walts In-Out Oil Change	Independent	Willmar	X		
Prinsburg Farmers Coop	Cenex	Raymond	X		X
Sunray's Coffee Pot Café	Shell	Willmar	X		
Pit Stop Convenience Store	Na	Pennock	X		

### 3. Giveaways and Outreach Materials

As part of the 2022 programming, the AIS program makes available educational and outreach materials for lake associations, education outfitters, bait shops, county parks, public water access sites, and community events, such as the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center



Earth Day event. Specimens of invasive species samples and educational displays can be borrowed and used to bolster a group's AIS outreach endeavors although no requests for these were made in 2022. The amount of promotional items purchased was reduced from previous years but boat towels which remain popular with boaters were still purchased and given away. These towels have the decontamination hotline printed on them so boaters can call to find out the location of our decontamination unit and promote the clean, drain, dry message. AIS identification cards for Starry Stonewort and Eurasian Watermilfoil purchased in 2021 were handed out in 2022 again as well. Typically items are distributed at the PWELC earth day event, local fishing group meetings, lake association meetings, and to boaters at the public water access sites.

### 4. Granting Program

Annually, the Kandiyohi AIS program provides 1:1 grants to community groups that are working towards AIS prevention and management. In 2022 eleven requests with a total proposed spending of \$229,840 were approved with \$86,670 requested from AIS grant funds. Since the requests were much higher than what was budgeted only a portion of these could be approved. With the AIS Task forces assistance, the total granted amount approved was \$53,977.40. These funds supported school-age educational programming, treatment of curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil, and lake surveys.

### 5. Independent Educator

We are also still working with Randy Fredrickson, a former local teacher, to educate 7<sup>th</sup> grade students on aquatic invasive species. The program is curriculum based to fit within the current class programming. In 2022 neither the New London/Spicer nor Willmar High Schools would allow Mr. Fredrickson to present to their classes. A combination of having new teachers and needing to catch students up from the pandemic are the primary reasons this curriculum was not able to be delivered to the students. We are planning on contracting again with Mr. Fredrickson for 2023 with hopes that he will be able to deliver the curriculum to both schools again although Mr. Fredrickson has expressed a desire to move on to other things and has begun a search for someone to take over the program.

### 6. WRAC Community Service Announcements

In 2022 community service announcements were again placed on the Willmar Community Access channel to inform the public of the hours and location of the decontamination unit. Since this was free to do the value of this was good but it is not known how many boaters this reached or what the impact was.

## 7. Tools at the access

For 2022 two aquatic weed removal stations were built and placed at the Diamond west and Green Lake County Park 5 accesses. These consist of a post with a sign and an aqua weed stick attached with thirty feet of cable so boaters can remove any weeds or aquatic species from their watercraft. The sign also has a QR code that boaters can use their phone to scan with the camera and be taken directly to the Kandiyohi County AIS webpage where there are a basic set of instructions on how to inspect and clean their watercraft and the decontamination hours and location are posted. I heard from several people that these were used frequently and more would be welcomed at additional accesses. Five more of these are planned to be constructed and installed at lake accesses in 2023. Since these were built with help from the Highway Department the cost per unit was only about \$111.



## What didn't work?

1. Sentry Units. The sentry units found six potential violations in 2022 but still remains much lower compared to the inspectors. The cost per violation found remains much higher than the inspectors as a result. This is important since each contact with a boater due to a found violation is a valuable time for education with the boater. While the cameras do play an audio message, most people likely tune it out meaning the only time boaters really hear the clean, drain, dry message is when they are contacted after a potential violation is found and forwarded to law enforcement for follow up. Typically these few cases only result in education for the boaters since in MN camera footage cannot be used to issue a citation unless the condition is still present when law enforcement investigates. With half of the annual operational expenses paid for by lake associations for 7 of the 10 sentry units it was possible to shift some of the funds to other areas of the budget and make better use of the funds. Running only 7 of these in 2023 will continue to allow us to make better use of the State AIS grant funds.
2. Inefficient advertising. We have utilized the same advertising the last few years and are seeing a lower number of decontaminations that we do. Other options are being considered for future years since it is difficult to gauge the impact of the current advertising. Geo fencing is planned to be added in 2023 for advertising the hours and location of the decontamination unit but plans are to keep some radio ads as well. I also hope that we are able to have ice box wraps in 2023 as well since they are very visible to the public.
3. Education. Ice box wraps were not available in 2022 but I am hoping these are able to be done in 2023 again although it isn't likely that we will be able to utilize the Barney's location since they would not allow us to do pump toppers in 2022 even though we had both an ice box wrap and pump toppers at that location in previous years. If needed we will fill in with the one sheet poster options at select locations again. In school student education also was not able to be

done but we are hoping that the schools will allow this again in 2023 and that Mr. Fredrickson is able to find someone to take over the program for future years.

### What can be improved?

1. Use of the decontamination unit. There was a decrease in decontaminations done from the previous year likely due to a less experienced staff, uncooperative weather, and boaters that have become complacent. A continued focus on offering decontaminations to as many boaters as possible and addition of incentives to get a decontamination hopefully will help to increase the number of decontaminations by getting more reluctant or complacent boaters to take advantage of this service. Reminding inspectors of when to recommend decontamination to boaters will also be done again to try to increase the numbers. Temporary signage at the decontamination units will also be utilized when possible to increase the awareness of them to boaters.
2. More efficient advertising. Geo fencing advertising will be added to the radio advertising we do and the amount of radio advertising will be reduced. If the budget allows a billboard may also be considered again but would need to be kept very basic to allow drivers to retain the information as they drive.
3. Inspection rate per hour. 2022 saw a decrease in the inspection rate per hour from the previous year. For 2023 I plan to keep a higher number of inspection shifts during peak boating hours or during evening and weekends. Maintaining the focus on the busiest accesses and increasing the amount of shorter shifts where possible to match boater activity should help to at least keep the rate of inspections per hour as high as possible to maximize the effectiveness of the staff. Inspection shifts again will not start earlier than 7am all season again since the data shows less inspections and very few decontaminations occur prior to 7. I do feel there is a limit to how high the inspection rate overall can get though since some lakes do not see the volume of boaters other do but are still important to staff with inspectors.