

Watercraft Inspector Handbook

2019 Edition



Wisconsin Lakes Partnership



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Acknowledgments:

The *Watercraft Inspector Handbook* is a guide for people who are passionate about “their” lake and who have a vision for future generations. The “Clean Boats, Clean Waters” program is sponsored and promoted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, UW-Extension, and Wisconsin Lakes.

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Welcome to the Clean Boats, Clean Waters Watercraft Inspection Program!

Aquatic invasive species have long been recognized as a serious threat to the United States. According to Cornell University, in 1999, introduced species of animals, plants, and microbes cost the U.S. economy at least \$138 billion a year. In Wisconsin alone, 2015 spending on invasive species totaled approximately \$8.4 million. These facts make folks a little nervous about the future of Wisconsin inland water bodies.

Wisconsin's 15,081 lakes are fortunate to have volunteers who monitor water clarity, water chemistry, aquatic plants, and invasive plants. Since 1986, these folks have functioned as the "eyes" of aquatic biologists. With the arrival of aquatic invasive species, now more than ever citizens are needed to help preserve and protect Wisconsin's water bodies. The "Clean Boats, Clean Waters" program is an opportunity for citizens to help stop the spread of invasive species across the state.

Through "Clean Boats, Clean Waters," inspectors are trained to organize and conduct a watercraft inspection and education program in their community. This program originated in northern Wisconsin as a middle school project. The "Milfoil Masters" program alerted adults and youth that citizen volunteers can make a difference in helping prevent the spread of invasive species.

To continue statewide volunteer efforts, the "Clean Boats, Clean Waters" Watercraft **Inspection Program** was created in the fall of 2003. The mission of this program is to promote water resource stewardship by actively involving individuals in preventing the spread of harmful aquatic invasive species. To accomplish this goal, the program sponsors statewide training workshops and has developed resource handbooks, tool kits, and educational information; a statewide coordinator now supports inspection efforts.

Wisconsin realizes that passionate citizens are the keys to reaching hundreds of recreationalists visiting the state. Inspectors who instruct boaters on how to perform watercraft inspections are helping to prevent new invasions and are helping to maintain Wisconsin's valuable water resource.

Thank you for taking the time to learn, act, and protect Wisconsin's waters from invasive species! The rewards of these efforts will be appreciated by many generations to come.



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