



## **Section 2:**

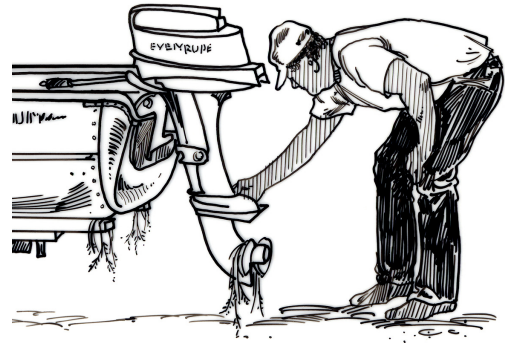
**What do watercraft  
inspections involve?**





# Getting Started

Recreational boating is a significant corridor for the spread of invasive species between water bodies in Wisconsin. This pathway is a concern because of the more than 600,000 registered boaters moving around Wisconsin's 15,081 lakes. Inspecting watercraft for invasive species offers a frontline defense at the lake landing to prevent further destruction of lake ecosystems. Watercraft inspections are designed to increase public awareness about invasive species and to assist boaters in taking preventive steps to avoid further spreading of critters.



Attending a Clean Boats, Clean Waters training provides you with all the tools you need to start a watercraft inspection program in your community. Developing an effective program requires patience, time, and an eye for organizing a working schedule. A group that consists of an inspection coordinator and a committee of several people is the best way to distribute the tasks equally and prevent volunteer burnout. When planning a watercraft program, consider the five Ws: Whom, What, When, Where, and Why.

## WHOM will you recruit for the watercraft inspection team?

Volunteers, both adults and youth, can be recruited through your lake association newsletter, local schools, 4-H, or Boy and Girl Scout groups. Many service organizations are looking for community involvement opportunities. We recommend at least two people at the landing. Ideally, an adult should work with a youth volunteer. Boaters are very cooperative when a young person is giving the message: "Clean Boats, Clean Waters, please."

## WHAT are the duties of a watercraft inspector?

Before you build a watercraft inspection team, decide what skills and tasks volunteers need for an effective interaction with the public at the boat landings. Generally, inspectors perform three duties: verbally share educational materials and information about aquatic invasive species and how they're spread, visually check boats and recreational equipment for any hitchhiking plants or animals, and demonstrate how

to clean recreational equipment and what prevention steps boaters need to take every time they leave the water.

Additional duties, such as recording data on the Watercraft Inspection Report Form (see Section 3), assist us in collecting information about the recreational use of the lake, traveling patterns of boaters, and whether the boaters are performing the prevention steps. Inspectors should also be ready to collect, accurately label, and store any suspect plant or animal that is attached to any recreational equipment.

Here are some specific skills to consider:

- **Congenial:** able to meet new people courteously at the landings.
- **Communicative:** effectively educate the public on invasive species.
- **Flexible:** be willing to work weekends and holiday hours.
- **Informed:** understand the harmful impacts of aquatic invasive species.
- **Physically able:** able to inspect watercraft and trailers for invasive species.



- **Accurate:** document verbal surveys, record, and submit any suspect invasive species specimens to local/regional DNR service station.
- **Computer knowledgeable:** able to submit watercraft inspection data to DNR Web site at <https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/swims>.

To identify the watercraft inspection team at the boat landing, all inspectors should have their own royal blue Clean Boats, Clean Waters T-shirt. Inspectors need to wear this T-shirt to signify that they are working for a specific program, “Clean Boats, Clean Waters,” and not harassing boaters at the landings. Two T-shirts are included in each of the resource kits and more may be purchased by visiting the Extension Lakes website. As an added bonus, Clean Boats, Clean Waters logo stickers are included in the resource kit to use when the weather is inclement and short-sleeve T-shirts just won’t work. Just peel off the protective backing on the logo, and place the sticker on

your sweatshirt or coat. No matter what the weather, boaters will be able to identify the watercraft inspection team at a glance.

### WHEN is the best time to inspect at the boat landing?

When recruiting volunteers, be specific about the amount of time you want them to work. For example, a volunteer is more likely to agree to a three-hour shift once or twice a month rather than an open invitation to volunteer all summer on the weekends and holidays. Volunteers will more readily step up if they know the expectations and how much time is realistically needed.

To get the most “bang for your buck,” become acquainted with the activity on your lake and when the lake is the busiest. Are the weekends a flurry of activity from Friday night at 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. Sunday? Or is Saturday morning from 6 a.m. until 10 a.m. the active time at the landings? Usually, holiday weekends during the summer are the busiest times at the landings. Anglers



Photo provided by Stephanie Boismenu



are usually up and on the lake by dawn and always out on opening day of fishing season. Recreational boaters usually use the lake in the afternoon, and sunny, warm days draw lots of people to the lake! Do not forget about fishing tournaments and special lake events that draw many boats at the landings. Remember, the boat landing is the first place an aquatic invasive species takes hold.

### **WHERE will the watercraft inspection process take place?**

It is a good idea to find out who owns the boat landing before you begin to schedule work shifts for your inspectors. The landing may be owned and maintained by one of several entities: the federal government, state, township, lake association, or a private individual. To check ownership, you might need to contact several organizations, such as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, county zoning offices, town halls, or local businesses. Knowing ownership will be helpful if you are thinking about installing signage, waste disposal containers, or boat washing facilities (see Section 4).

If you have limited inspection resources and many public and private landings, determine which landings receive the most boat traffic. Think about which landing is most likely to be the first place a hitchhiking invasive will appear.

### **WHY is this inspection program necessary?**

Be prepared to answer this question. Often lake owners are frustrated with the public trust doctrine that mandates public use of all waters in Wisconsin. Lake owners feel it is unfair that they bare the brunt of the cost of managing an aquatic invasive species. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is allocating some money toward the management of invasive species, but not nearly enough for 15, 081 lakes. Therefore, any proactive steps in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species are more cost-effective than waiting for them to arrive.

Preventing aquatic invasive species is a better management option than the expensive alternative. For example, treating Eurasian water-milfoil infestations with chemicals on average costs around \$300 to \$500 per acre. Eurasian water-milfoil can grow two inches per day and can fragment into hundreds of new plants within hours, so it would not take long for Eurasian water-milfoil to cover hundreds of acres. If this fact does not impress you, contact members of a lake organization struggling with an invasive species. They would be happy to discuss the tremendous impact that one invasive species caused in their community. Remember, prevention is worth a pound of cure.



## Online Resources

There are tons of useful online resources available to aid you in your aquatic invasive species (AIS) outreach efforts! Many of these resources are available on either the UW-Extension Lakes website or the WI Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website.

UW-Extension Lakes: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes>

DNR Invasive Species: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives>

### AIS Publications

Many AIS-specific resource materials (such as brochures, stickers, etc.) are available to assist you in your outreach efforts. A list of the publications currently available can be found at [https://widnr.widen.net/view/pdf/a2bvcnrfo3/AIS\\_ProductSheet.pdf](https://widnr.widen.net/view/pdf/a2bvcnrfo3/AIS_ProductSheet.pdf).

These free publications can be ordered by e-mailing [DNRAISinfo@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRAISinfo@wisconsin.gov).

### AIS Contacts

We have numerous AIS staff available to assist you – with general questions, trainings, grant applications, and more! You can search our online database of AIS contacts by their location in the state or by their role/specialty.

AIS Contact List: <https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/lakes/invasives/topics.aspx>

### AIS Distribution Information

Find out what lakes and rivers have AIS in your area! You can view lists of AIS waters by county, region, or Great Lakes basin, or see a statewide list.

View Distribution Info by Waterbody: <https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/lakes/invasives/AISByWaterbody.aspx>

You can also search by species, selecting a specific aquatic invasive and viewing all of the waterbodies in which it is present.

View Distribution Info by Species: <https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/lakes/invasives/BySpecies.aspx>

### AIS Control Grants

Grant funding is available for AIS projects conducted on any waters of the state. They can be used for education, prevention, planning, early detection, rapid response, and established invasives control projects. Check out the DNR's AIS Grants webpage for more information and details on eligibility, the application process, and more.

AIS Grants: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/SurfaceWater.html>

### CBCW Supplies & More!

For all things CBCW, visit the UWEX-Lakes CBCW website. You can check out the CBCW supplies and ordering info, view the current workshop schedule, download the CBCW Handbook, and more.

Go to UW-Extension Lakes: <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes> and click the CBCW logo.





# Liability

Watercraft inspections are Wisconsin's main aquatic invasive species containment and prevention tool! More and more lake communities are organizing watercraft inspection teams for youth and adults interested in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. Inspection teams that perform watercraft inspections at boat landings can often find themselves in the midst of heavy boat launching activity.

So, can there be liability risks associated with sponsoring a watercraft inspections program?

The answer is yes. The purpose of this information is to summarize some of the basic issues that lake associations, lake districts, and individuals should keep in mind when deciding to sponsor a watercraft inspection program. This information addresses the issues associated with accident liability. When hiring employees, lake groups need to adhere to Department of Workforce Development rules and regulations. *The following is not meant to be a substitute for legal advice; organizations should seek assistance from an attorney for answers to specific questions.*

## Liability Risks for Organization and Individuals

A number of parties may be held responsible for an accident occurring on the boat landing. The **individual** who may be most directly connected to the incident may be held responsible as well as the **lake association, lake district, and any other entity** that may be hosting the event.

### Liability Risks of Organizations:

- **Nonprofit corporations organized under chapter 181** may be held liable if an accident occurs. However, incorporation insulates the individual members' assets from liability in the event of a lawsuit. Only the assets of the corporation, not those of individual members, will become available to satisfy a court judgment.
- **Nonprofit associations not organized under chapter 181** may also take advantage of a law passed in 1997 that insulates the assets of individual members from being used to satisfy a judgment against the association (Chapter 184, Wis. Stats.). According to the law, a nonprofit association is an entity with three or more members that mutually agree to pursue a nonprofit purpose. A "member" under the law is an individual who may take part in the selection of persons to manage the operation of the association. According to state law, in the case of an unincorporated association with three or more "members," only the assets of the association will be used to satisfy a judgment.
- **Public inland lake and rehabilitation districts** organized under chapter 33 of the state statutes may also be subject to a lawsuit. A judgment against a lake district cannot exceed \$50,000 (\$ 893.80 Wis. Stats.), but any judgment against a lake district must be added to the next tax levy.
- **Workers' compensation** laws come into play when an employee of a lake association or a lake district commissioner is injured while performing the duties of his or her position. If a lake association has three



## Section 2: What do watercraft inspections involve?

or more paid employees and pays in any one-calendar quarter compensation in excess of \$500.00, the association or employer may be required to pay the medical bills incurred for an injury that occurred while the person was on the job (Chapter 102, Wis. Stats.). If the association relies on volunteers, these laws may be avoided. A lake management district may be held responsible for a job-related injury of an elected commissioner regardless of whether or not compensation is received.

indemnify directors or officers in most cases (§181.0872 Wis. Stats.)

- **Individuals who provide services to nonprofit corporations organized under chapter 181 for free, in other words volunteers, cannot be sued in most cases.** However, volunteers who operate a motor vehicle or other vehicle that requires a license or operator's permit may be held personally liable should an accident occur (§181.0670 Wis. Stats.)
- **Federal law also protects volunteers of nonprofit corporations, associations, and governmental entities from liability provided no compensation, aside from reimbursement for expenses, is received.**—This law, however, does not protect individuals who are operating a motorized vehicle or vessel that requires an operator's license or permit (42 U.S.C. § 14501, Volunteers Protection Act of 1997).

### Liability Risks for Individuals:

- **If lake district officers, board members, or employees are held personally responsible for an injury while acting within the scope of their duties as officers, board members, and employees, the lake district must pay the cost of any judgment rendered against them (§§ 895.46 Wis. Stats.).**—Incorporated lake associations must

## Insurance

All insurance policies are different. The following points are intended to cover the most basic issues:

- Lake districts and incorporated and unincorporated associations can purchase insurance to protect against the risk of personal injury. Workers' compensation insurance is available to lake groups and is in most cases required.
- Homeowner and automobile policies typically protect the owner of the policy against accidents that occur when the individual is acting as a volunteer. Coverage, however, is often not provided when the individual is an employee or employer or when an admission or rental fee is charged. Any volunteer who is operating a boat should be required to have homeowner's, automobile, or boat insurance. The policy should be checked to make sure volunteer work is covered.

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For additional discussion on liability issues for lake organizations, see *People of the Lakes*, Chapter 7: [https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/organizations/Lake%20Districts/Lake\\_Org\\_Guide2018.pdf](https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/organizations/Lake%20Districts/Lake_Org_Guide2018.pdf).





# Materials to Have When Working at a Boat Landing

Not all your materials need to be taken to the boat landings. It's better to sort through the materials and decide what educational information is best suited for your area.

The Clean Boats, Clean Waters program provides a tote bag in which to store all the educational materials in the resource kit.

We recommend at least one resource kit for every landing you are monitoring. By using multiple resource kits, each inspection team can have all the materials they need at hand.

A key brochure to distribute to all boaters is Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers (WT-801). This brochure not only has pictures of the different aquatic invasive species, but also describes the prevention steps that boaters need to take every time they leave the water. In addition, the brochure describes Wisconsin's illegal-to-launch law and the penalties that can occur if an invasive species is not removed before the boat is launched. This brochure is a good reminder to all boaters, whether or not they have talked with a watercraft inspector.

When talking with anglers or when questions regarding Wisconsin's live bait laws come up, the Fishing with Bait brochure and the Minnow Use Reminder sticker are excellent to have on hand. These two publications clearly outline Wisconsin's rules on the use of live bait and are excellent resources to share with folks who are confused by the detailed regulations.

Select other materials to take to the boat launch based on which aquatic invasive is most threatening in your area. Perhaps Eurasian water-milfoil is really a pressing issue for your lake; then it makes sense to give boaters an EWM/NWM identification card in addition to the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers brochure. Resist the temptation

to give the boater one of every card in the resource kit because boaters will often discard them. It's best to start by handing out a little bit of information and have additional brochures available if the boaters want to learn more about a particular invasive species.

Boat landings can be very busy during the summer, and you may need more materials before the end of boating season. It's easy to order more of these free publications! The Aquatic Invasive Species Publication List and instructions on how to order more materials are available online. Refer to your AIS Online Resources handout or visit the CBCW Resources webpage on the CBCW website.

Additional boat launch items to consider:

- Clipboard and pencil
- Copy of the boat landing script (see Section 2)
- Watercraft Inspection Report Form and Watercraft Inspection Prompts Handout (see Section 3)
- Listing of lakes with AIS presence in your area
- Wisconsin map
- Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers brochures and stickers
- WI Anglers: Minnow Use Reminder stickers
- Fishing with Bait brochures
- Other selected (free!) AIS publications
- Cell phone and local contact phone numbers for emergencies
- Plastic bags, permanent marker, and cooler to collect and store any suspect specimens



# Watercraft Inspection Tips

Use the following DO and DON'T lists to prepare your boat landing message.

## The DO List

- ✓ Wear the Clean Boats, Clean Waters T-shirt to promote the message. This message gives credibility to the program and to the efforts that inspectors are making across the state.
- ✓ Always introduce yourself and mention the organization you are working for and why you are at the landing.
- ✓ Try to approach boat owners before they are on the ramp.
- ✓ Always ask if the boater would mind answering a few questions.
- ✓ Be polite and courteous to all boaters you encounter.
- ✓ Listen to a boater's concerns. Remember that you are encouraging boaters to take an interest in invasive species.
- ✓ Make sure boaters know that they can make a difference!

## The DON'T List

- ✗ Don't begin asking questions immediately upon approaching boaters, because as they might be confused about who you are and why they should give you their time.
- ✗ Avoid delaying boaters too much or causing a backup.
- ✗ Never preach to a boater; your mission is to educate, not alienate.
- ✗ Do not emphasize the idea that fines are involved, because this approach can make people hostile or defensive.
- ✗ If the boater is reluctant to cooperate, hand out educational material and record whatever information you can.

An effective watercraft inspection team is prepared to raise boater awareness and to encourage and demonstrate the necessary steps to avoid spreading invasive species. On very rare occasions, you may be uncomfortable about a situation or person. Always back away from a potentially dangerous or violent situation. Never encourage confrontation, no matter how strongly you might feel about the subject. **Remember, you are not enforcers of rules and should never jeopardize your own safety.** If you are suspicious of someone (for example, a loiterer or someone who is not intending to go boating), do not hesitate to leave the launch site. You are better to be safe than sorry. If you feel that a boat launch site is unsafe in any way, please notify the organization you are working for.



## Boat Landing Message

Getting out and speaking to the public can be intimidating. New inspectors can feel a little anxious and nervous. This prepared script will help inspectors practice and role-play before their first boater shows up at the landing. Practicing with other folks will give them the confidence it takes to greet a boater. If new inspectors really want to watch a “pro,” they just need to ask a few kids to get involved. Are kids intimidated? No way!

This prepared script is only one example of the many methods of addressing boaters at the landings and performing watercraft inspections. Each inspector should develop his or her own style and learn how to adapt in a variety of boat landing experiences. Try to approach boaters before they are on the ramp, and use the Watercraft Inspection Report form to record the information about the boater (see Section 3). At times you may have only 30 seconds to talk to the boater; other times, long lines at the landings may provide you with lots of time to talk. Remember, if the boater is not interested, just hand out educational material and record whatever information you can.

No matter what style you use to approach boaters, any watercraft inspection process should include these points:

1. Tell them who you are, whom you represent, and why you are there.
2. Ask if they have a short time to answer some questions.
3. Use the Watercraft Inspection Report form to assist you in your conversation and record boater responses.
4. Ask if they are familiar with the AIS prevention steps that are required by law, such as draining all water from boats, livewells, and equipment before leaving the landing. Briefly explain why these steps are important, using the Prompts to assist you. Be sure to share your local concerns and highlight what species are found in (or nearby) your area.
5. Ask if they will join you in an inspection of their boat and equipment.
6. Talk while inspecting, and point out watercraft checkpoints. If they do not want to assist you in the inspection, continue to talk about invasive species as you inspect.
7. Give your final message, the prevention steps:
  - ◆ Inspect your boat, trailer and equipment and
  - ◆ Remove any attached aquatic plants, animals, and mud.
  - ◆ Drain all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment (including live wells and containers holding your catch).
  - ◆ Never move live fish away from a waterbody.
8. Offer them the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers brochure and sticker, along with any other educational materials pertinent to their questions or your lake.
9. Thank them for their time and cooperation!



## Sample Script

*As the boat approaches, write down the time of the boat inspection and if the boat is entering or leaving the water.*

### Introduce yourself:

Good Morning / Afternoon. I am from \_\_\_\_\_. We are working with state agencies and local groups to talk with boaters about invasive species and help them check their boats for Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) and zebra mussels (ZM). We are trying to keep EWM/ZM and other harmful invasives from spreading from lake to lake. I have a few quick questions I would like to ask you, and then I would like to walk around your watercraft with you and point out a few places where these species can attach to boats and trailers.

### Ask the questions and record on the Watercraft Inspection Report Form:

1. Have you been contacted by a watercraft inspector this season?
2. Are you willing to answer a few questions?
3. Was boat used during the past 5 days on a different waterbody?

(If the answer is yes) Where?

Use conversational approach to discuss the AIS prevention steps listed on the form with the boater, asking the follow-up questions to engage the boater. Use the educational prompts on the Prompts handout as needed to explain the importance of each step and discuss local AIS concerns.

Wisconsin law requires boaters to take the following steps when leaving a boat landing:

Steps 1 & 2: Inspect boat, trailers, and equipment and **remove** any attached plants/animals.

Have you heard of this before? (see prompt)

Step 3: Drain all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment.

Do you have any questions? (see prompt)

If angler, state the following steps:

Step 4: Drain water from livewells and containers holding your catch.

This is a relatively new law. Were you aware that this is required? (see prompt)

Do you use live bait? (If YES, share message below.)

Bait Message: If live bait comes in contact with lake/river water, it can only be used on that same waterbody or discarded in trash. (bait=minnows/leeches/worms)

Do you have any questions on this law as it can be a little confusing? (If yes, see prompt and offer bait sticker/brochure.)



### Perform a watercraft check:

If you would walk around your boat with me, I can show you some areas to look for invasive hitchhikers.

*Make sure you talk aloud as you inspect; it helps reinforce the Clean, Boats, Clean Waters behavior. Talk to boaters about inspecting and cleaning their watercraft and about draining the water from their boat—such as the bilge, bait buckets and live wells—before they leave the access.*

Vegetation can be found on motor boats, the motor/prop, anchors, bunks, rollers, the trailer axle, lights/wiring; for jet skis, it can be found in the intake grate and propeller; and for sailboats, it can be found in the centerboards. Check your anchor and anchor line to see if any plants are clinging to it. Since water is another way invasives are spread, livewells, motors, and equipment need to be drained.

Some aquatic invasives, such as zebra mussels, are also found on the motor/prop, on the sides and bottom of boat below the waterline, on the anchor, and clinging to vegetation. Always inspect the hull and sides of your boat for aquatic invasives; if it feels gritty or sandy, it may be that new zebra mussels are attached. An extra precaution that you can take to eliminate other aquatic invasives is to wash your boat with warm tap water or take your boat through a car wash or dry your boat and equipment in the sun for five days before entering another lake.

### Leave boaters with a final message: “Clean Boats = Clean Waters”

Please make it a habit to:

- ◆ **Inspect** your boat, trailer and equipment and
- ◆ **Remove** any attached aquatic plants, animals, and mud.
- ◆ **Drain** all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment (including live wells and containers holding your catch).
- ◆ **Never** move live fish away from a waterbody.

*Offer boaters the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers brochure and sticker, which can be placed on the side of the trailer winch post or hitch. Tell them that this sticker can serve as a reminder of the AIS prevention steps. Offer anglers the Wisconsin Anglers: Minnow Use Reminder sticker and Fishing with Bait brochure. Tell them that those two items describe Wisconsin’s bait laws clearly, in case they have any questions.*

### Thank the boaters for their time and cooperation!

*After you’ve contact the boater, record the number of people who heard your prevention message and indicate how confident you feel about the boater’s understanding of the AIS prevention steps. This completes the Watercraft Inspection Report Form!*





## Potential Scenarios/Questions from Boaters

**“Why are you out here wasting resources when the plant is going to come anyway?”**

*Even the most educated will ask this question. Just be prepared mentally for such viewpoints and think about why you are out here and what you will say in reply. Expect the unexpected. Here are some suggested responses:*

Even if we cannot keep the plants out completely, we can prevent a lot of widespread damage. Prevention also gives us time to adopt new control methods as they are developed in the future. The longer we keep invasives out of a lake, the longer we put off the enormous costs of management and property devaluation.

**“Aren’t all plants bad anyway?”**

*It is important to clear up this misconception! This is what you can say:*

Native plants are essential lifelines for an aquatic ecosystem, providing the basis for all life within. The problem lies with non-native, invasive plants that have no natural inhibitors and, therefore, outcompete native plants, lowering the water body’s aquatic diversity.

**“I don’t have time for this... I know all about it already!”**

*This remark is fairly common. If the boaters do not wish to help you with the survey, you must respect their rights and let them be. In such a situation, the suggested action would be to offer them a brochure and wish them a nice day.*

**“Why did it take Wisconsin so long to do something, when milfoil has been a national problem for over a decade?”**

*There is no good answer to this question because it’s a very good point. Here is how you can respond:*

Traditionally, environmental problems become established before we do anything about them. In this case, we have learned from other states, and are trying to take action well before these plants spread to many of our sensitive environments. Instead of focusing on what could have been done, we should focus energies on the present and future.

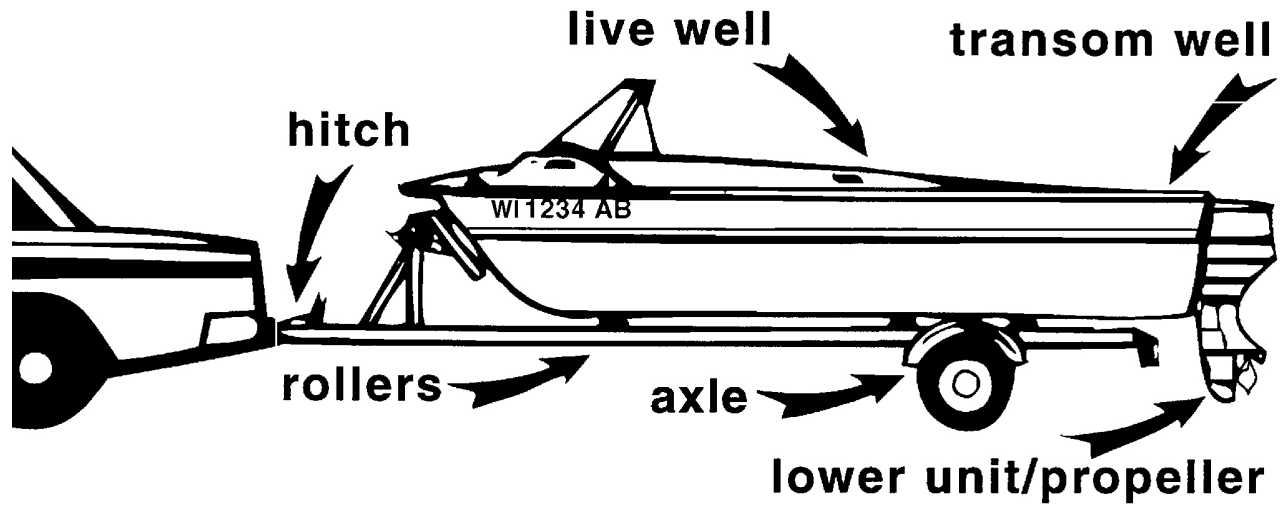
**“Why do I have to take these prevention steps when I only use my boat in one lake?”**

*This question gives you the opportunity to talk about the value of changing our behaviors and why it is important.*

That’s a great question! Although you always visit the same lake, it is still useful for you to take these prevention steps every time you boat. Repeating these steps helps the actions become a regular part of your boating behavior, so that if you do ever decide to take your boat to another lake, you will remember to take the prevention steps. Prevention is the key to stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species.



# Watercraft Check Points



## Trailer:

- ☐ Axle
- ☐ Bunks
- ☐ Frame
- ☐ License Plate
- ☐ Lights/wiring
- ☐ Rollers
- ☐ Spare Tire
- ☐ Wheels
- ☐ Winch Rope

## Boat:

- ☐ Floor
- ☐ Hull
- ☐ Livewell
- ☐ Transom Well

## Motor:

- ☐ Intake Pipe
- ☐ Prop
- ☐ Lower Unit

## Boat Accessories:

- ☐ Anchor
- ☐ Bow Line
- ☐ Ladder
- ☐ Tow Rope
- ☐ Transducer

## Other Accessories:

- ☐ Bait Bucket
- ☐ Fishing Line
- ☐ Landing Net
- ☐ Tackle



## How to Handle Violations

With thousands of boaters traveling throughout the state and with many of those boaters jumping from lake to lake within one day, it is very realistic to expect someone to try to launch a weed-filled trailer at your landing. Since 2001, it has been illegal to launch a boat or trailer with aquatic plants or zebra mussels attached, and in 2009 it became illegal to transport aquatic vegetation or water from one place to another, in addition to other AIS laws (see Section 3 for more details). Not all folks know about Wisconsin's AIS laws. Even after a number of publications, news articles, and television programs concerning invasive species, not all boaters realize the importance of their action or lack of action in preventing the spread. Keep in mind that you should first try to educate the public.

If you choose to report launching violations, make sure you have done your homework. Contact your local DNR Conservation Warden and local law enforcement to let them know that you'll be doing inspections. Ask if they are willing to provide you with support in the case of a violation, what information is necessary for enforcement, and more importantly, ask whether the enforcement officer will be willing to act on a violation if he or she has not witnessed the event. Knowing these answers before the event will certainly predict a better outcome.

So what happens when a boater violates an AIS law? Several options can occur, from the least offensive reaction to the strongest objections to remove and comply with the law.

**The soft touch:** Boaters who are unaware of the AIS laws will probably put the boat in the water and think nothing about it. Unfortunately, this has been the practice for many years, which is one reason Wisconsin is struggling to control the spread of aquatic invasive species. However, you have an opportunity to educate that boater about the dangers of invasive plants and the prevention steps that boaters need to take each time they leave a body of water. With luck, boaters will listen to your message and remove aquatic plants and drain all water without any assistance.

**An assertive approach:** So what do you do if a boater doesn't get the point? Offer to assist the boater in checking and removing any aquatic plants. Always ask permission first before you touch any boat, trailer, or personal equipment. If the boater gives you permission, go ahead and help remove the plants and ask if you can keep a sample, especially if you suspect an invasive species. Let the boater know that you're just trying to prevent them from receiving a citation from any law enforcement or wardens that stop by, because the wardens are stepping up the number of citations they're issuing for AIS violations.

**The strongest approach:** And what if the boater refuses to remove the aquatic plants or drain water from their boat and equipment? At this time, you really stress the fact that it is illegal to not comply with the prevention steps that you're recommending, and you use the Violation Report form to record the basic information that a law enforcement officer requires in order to pursue the complaint. If you take a picture, it should include the boat registration number and attached plants. Usually, by this last



step, the boater complies, the plants come off the boat, and the lake remains safe from another invasive arrival.

If the boater chooses to launch after all your efforts, then you can report the facts to a law enforcement officer. The definition of “law enforcement officer” for purposes of section 30.715 (4), Wisconsin Statutes, is noted at section 30.50 (4s), Wisconsin Statutes, which reads:

30.50 (4s) “Law enforcement officer” has the meaning specified under s. 165.85 (2) (c) and includes a person appointed as a conservation warden by the department under s. 23.10 (1).

Section 165.85 (2) (c), Wisconsin Statutes, in turn defines “law enforcement officer” as any person employed by the state or any

political subdivision of the state, for the purpose of detecting and preventing crime and enforcing laws or ordinances and who is authorized to make arrests for violations of the laws or ordinances that the person is employed to enforce.

The definition of “law enforcement officer” is obviously very broad and would clearly allow law enforcement officers of counties and municipalities throughout the state to enforce the AIS regulations and laws. Your best resource is your regional DNR Water Guard or local DNR Conservation Warden. Before you pursue any enforcement action, make contact with your local warden to know what information the warden expects from you. The warden will decide how to process the violation.



*Department of Natural Resource Conservation Wardens are wonderful partners to the CBCW effort. Contacting your local Conservation Warden and letting them know when and where your group is conducting watercraft inspections is an important step.*

Photo provided by WDNR



## AIS Violation Report Form

Boat Landing/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM or PM

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Town/Village/City: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State Registered: \_\_\_\_\_

Boat Registration: \_\_\_\_\_ State Registered: \_\_\_\_\_

Car/Boat/Personal Watercraft Information -

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Violator Information:      Male      or      Female

Name of Boat Operator: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. Height/Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Description (clothing, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Photo Taken of Violation:      Yes      or      No

Description of Violation/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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CBCW Inspector's Contact Information -

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please check box if law enforcement may contact you for more information about the violation. You will remain confidential in this case.

☐ Please check box if you do not want law enforcement to contact you for more information about the violation.

Local DNR Warden Contact Info:

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**To report the violation,  
contact your local  
DNR Warden OR call  
1-800-TIP-WDNR**

Local Law Enforcement Contact Info:

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