



Washington County Planning and Parks Department

PRESS RELEASE

Dated 06/15/17

Contact: Bradley Steckart, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator
Washington County Planning and Parks Department
email: bradley.steckart@co.washington.wi.us phone: 262.335.4806

All hands are on deck this fourth-of-July weekend to stop aquatic invasive species in Wisconsin

Madison - Thousands of Wisconsinites will take to the water this fourth-of-July weekend for the state's busiest boating holiday, and many will be greeted at boat landings by volunteers sharing a simple but powerful message: You have the power to protect lakes and rivers from aquatic invasive species. The weekend will be host to the ninth annual Landing Blitz, a statewide effort to remind boaters and other water lovers to take action to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species, which pose great risks to the health of our lakes and fisheries.

“This campaign has become a mainstay of our prevention efforts, since the holiday draws both frequent and infrequent boaters to the water, allowing us to empower a lot of people,” says Bob Wakeman, statewide aquatic invasive species coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Volunteer inspectors will be on hand at landings around the state from June 30th through July 4th to give demonstrations of the prevention steps or answer questions about invasive species. Their efforts will build on the success of last year's campaign, when volunteers inspected over 14,000 boats and spoke with over 32,000 people.

“One of the most exciting things about this campaign is the strong volunteer effort. Every year hundreds of concerned citizens participate as volunteers to help us raise awareness and empower boaters,” says Wakeman.

New this year is a coordinated way for boaters to share the campaign's message. For those who use social media, they can help spread the word about the importance of aquatic invasive species prevention by posting photos and messages using the hashtag #CleanBoatsCleanWaters.

Boaters can also contribute to a crowdsourced Story Map that will showcase their photos and messages about how they protect Wisconsin's waters from aquatic invasive species. Contributions can be made at this link: <http://arcg.is/2o9YIU9>.

Invasive plants and animals, like Eurasian watermilfoil, spiny water fleas and zebra mussels, can spread easily by hitching a ride on boats and other equipment, including trailers, anchors, livewells, buckets and bilges. But boaters can also easily prevent this by taking the following simple steps before they leave a boat landing:

- **Inspect** your boat, trailer and equipment
- **Remove** all attached plants or animals
- **Drain** all water from boats, motors, livewells and other equipment

- **Never move** live fish away from a waterbody
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash
- **Buy** minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer, and use leftover minnows only if you will be using them on that same waterbody or if no lake or river water or other fish have been added to the container.

Following these steps also helps boaters comply with Wisconsin state law, which prohibits the transport of aquatic invasive species.

To learn more about invasive species and their impacts to Wisconsin's waters and economy, visit DNR.wi.gov and search "Invasive Species."

Follow us @WashCoParks on Facebook and Twitter.