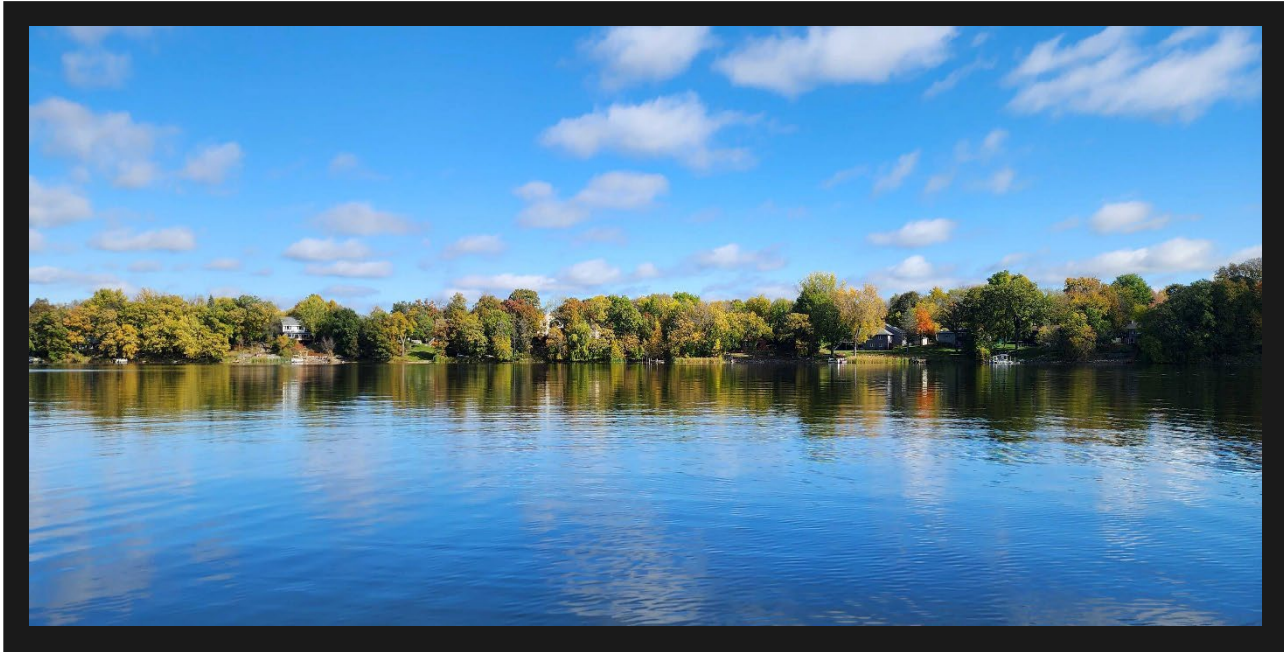


Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District



2023 Watercraft Inspection Program Yearend Report



CLFLWD
WATERSHED DISTRICT

December 11, 2023

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Cover Image: Sunny Fall Day on Comfort Lake – October 2023

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2023 Watercraft Inspection Summary Infographic

Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) Watercraft Inspection Program is a state-wide program that was first created in 1992. From the beginning, the DNR's goal for the program was "To prevent the spread of invasive species within Minnesota through boater education, watercraft inspections and watercraft decontaminations at public water accesses". In 2011, legislation was signed into law that allowed watercraft inspectors to visually and tactilely inspect water related equipment, decontaminate water-related equipment, prohibit access to boaters that refuse inspection or fail to remove contaminants and require watercraft be decontaminated prior to launching into Minnesota waters. Contaminates are anything that could harbor invasive species or be invasive itself such as plants, animals, mud, and water. While the DNR hires its own watercraft inspectors for the program, most inspectors in the state are hired and paid for by watershed districts, conservation districts, lake associations, lake improvement districts, and many other organizations. In total, organizations across the state performed over 466,000 watercraft inspections in 2023.

To implement the watercraft inspection program in 2023, the Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) entered into a joint powers agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for authority to conduct boat launch inspections. The District continued its multi-year partnership with Chisago County to hire, train, and oversee inspectors. Through this partnership, Chisago County managed payroll and human resources for inspectors and received reimbursement from the CLFLWD for hours worked within the District. Chisago County inspectors were stationed at public lake accesses within the CLFLWD (which covers portions of Washington and Chisago counties) as well as throughout the remainder of Chisago County. Additionally, the CLFLWD directly hired several of its own inspectors to increase inspector presence at boat launches on weekends and holidays.

There are five public lake accesses within CLFLWD, and inspectors were stationed at each one throughout the summer. Public accesses include one at Bone Lake, one at Comfort Lake, and three at Forest Lake: Forest 1 (located on the west basin at Lakeside Park), Forest 2 (located on the middle basin near Willow Point), and Forest 3 (located on the east basin and in some cases referred to as Hagberg). Hours worked by inspectors at each access are dependent upon funding and boater traffic. The Forest Lake 1 access has the highest boater traffic and is therefore assigned the most watercraft inspector shifts within the District.

Watercraft at the District's 5 public accesses were inspected by either a Level 1 inspector or a Level 2 inspector. Both Level 1 and Level 2 inspectors are trained by the DNR and perform visual inspections as well as verbal boater surveys. In

addition, Level 2 inspectors are qualified to operate a decontamination unit. This involves using a high-pressure, high-heat spraying machine to remove plants, animals such as mussels, and other potential contaminants from watercraft. Chisago County operates a decontamination unit which rotates between 14 high-traffic accesses throughout CLFLWD and Chisago County including Forest 1, Forest 3, Comfort Lake, and Bone Lake. The DNR also operates a decontamination unit which rotates between Forest 1 and other accesses throughout the East Metro. Level 1 inspectors are not permitted to operate the decontamination unit, and instead solely complete the visual inspections of the watercraft and verbal boater surveys.

Funding and Goals

Funding for the CLFLWD’s watercraft inspection program was provided by multiple sources including the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid Program for both Washington and Chisago counties, local municipalities, and local interest groups such as lake associations and the Lions Club. Figure 1 illustrates the yearend financial contributions to the 2023 watercraft inspection program. Note that certain organizations opted to allocate funding to specific waterbodies (e.g. Bone Lake Association’s donations allocated to Bone Lake).

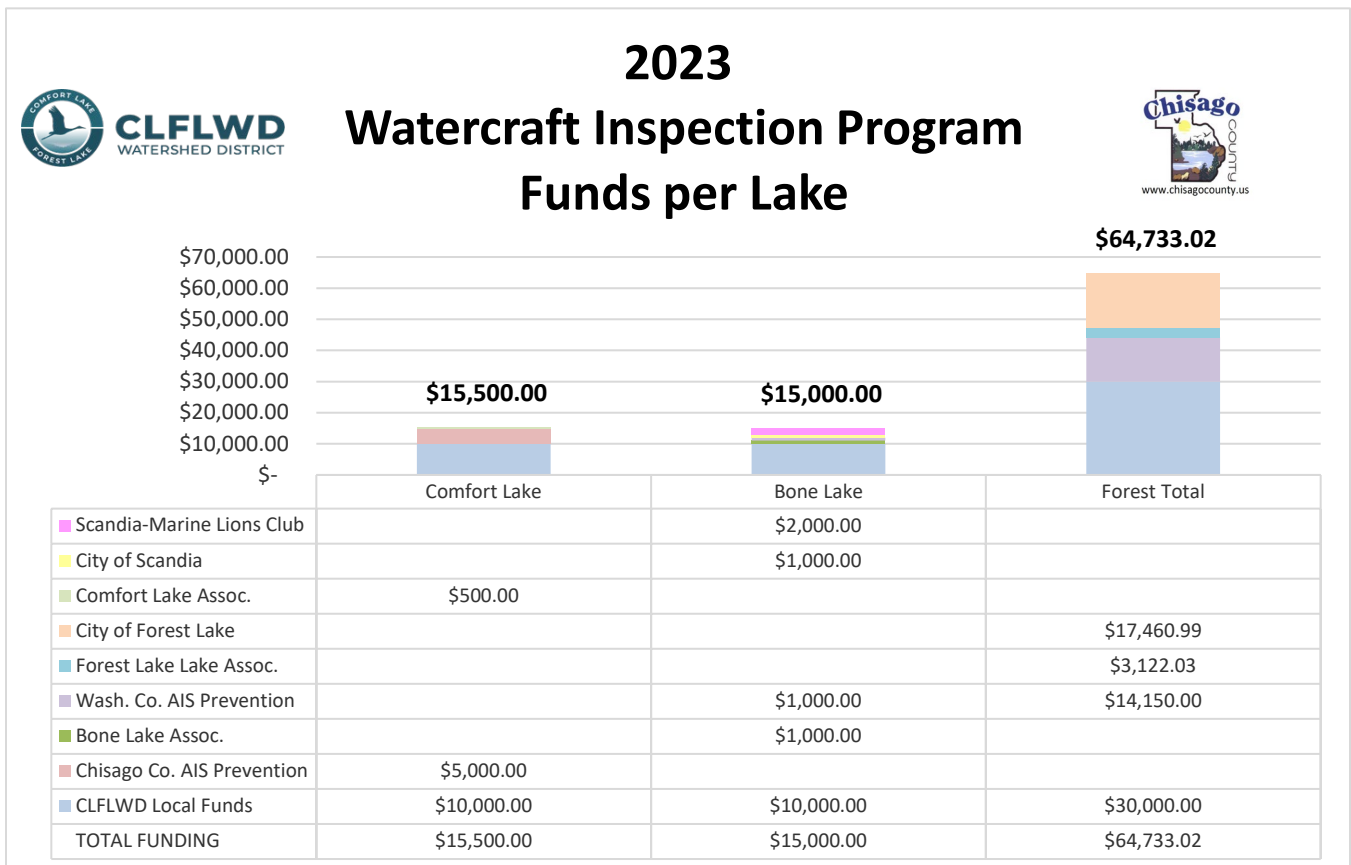


Figure 1. Financial contributions for 2023 watercraft inspection program

To set goals and determine hiring needs before the season starts, estimated financial contributions were converted to inspection hours using an average hourly billing rate. For level 1 and 2 inspectors, the billing rate was \$23/hour. The 2023 pre-season funding estimate for the entire program was \$84,100 , enough for 3,657 hours. Actual contributions were finalized towards the end of the season. In 2023, the yearend watercraft inspection program contributions totaled \$95,233. Figure 2 illustrates the number of hours each yearend financial contribution would cover.

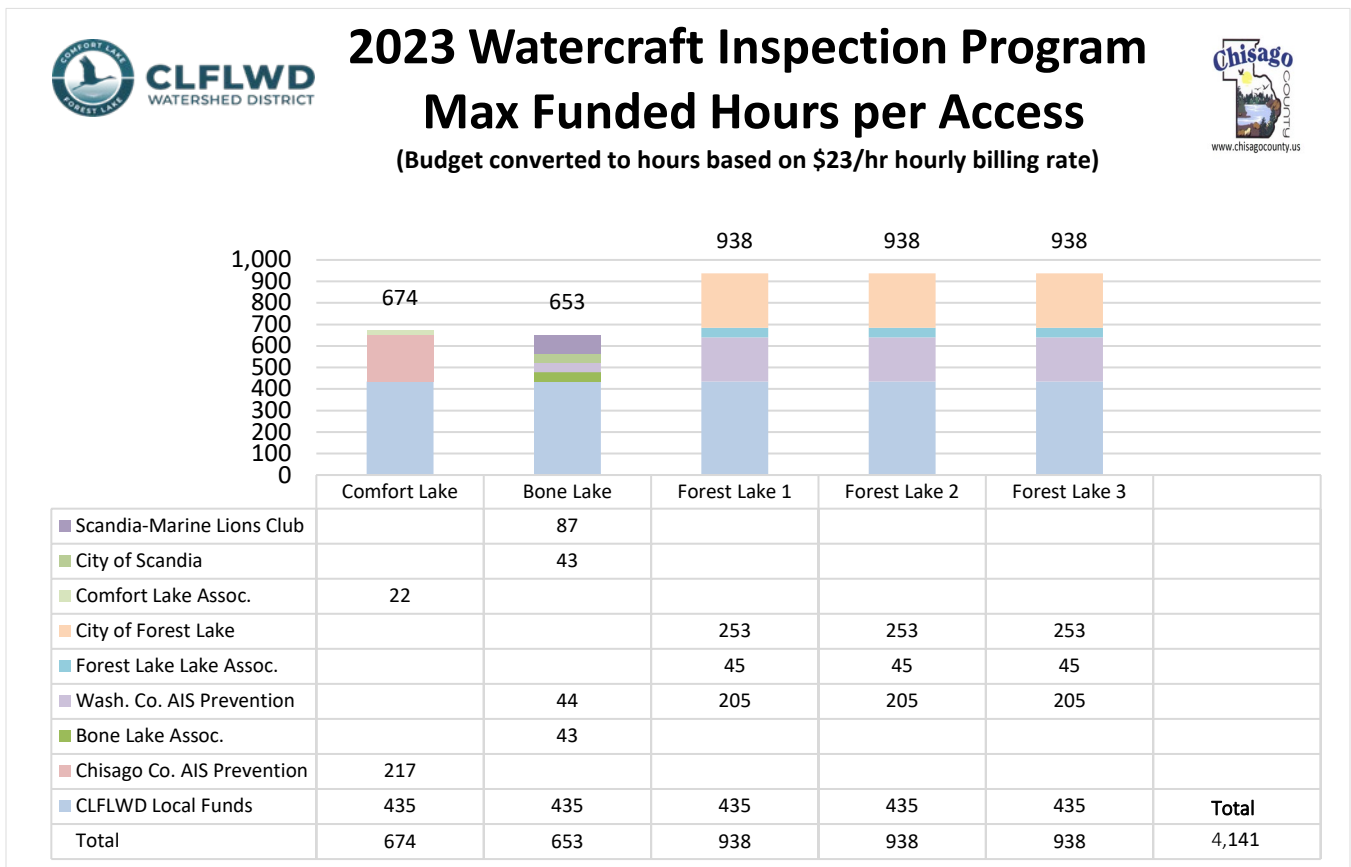


Figure 2. Funded inspection hours for 2023 watercraft inspection program

This year the District was able to hire a total of 13 inspectors to perform watercraft inspections at District accesses. Four inspectors were hired through the Chisago County joint program, and nine were hired directly by CLFLWD.

Results

District-Wide

Inspection Hours and Scheduling

District-wide, watercraft inspectors performed **7,903 inspections and worked 4,002.5 hours** in 2023. Inspectors averaged a rate of **1.97 inspections per hour**. Figure 3 summarizes the total number of inspection hours and inspections completed District-wide over the last nine seasons.

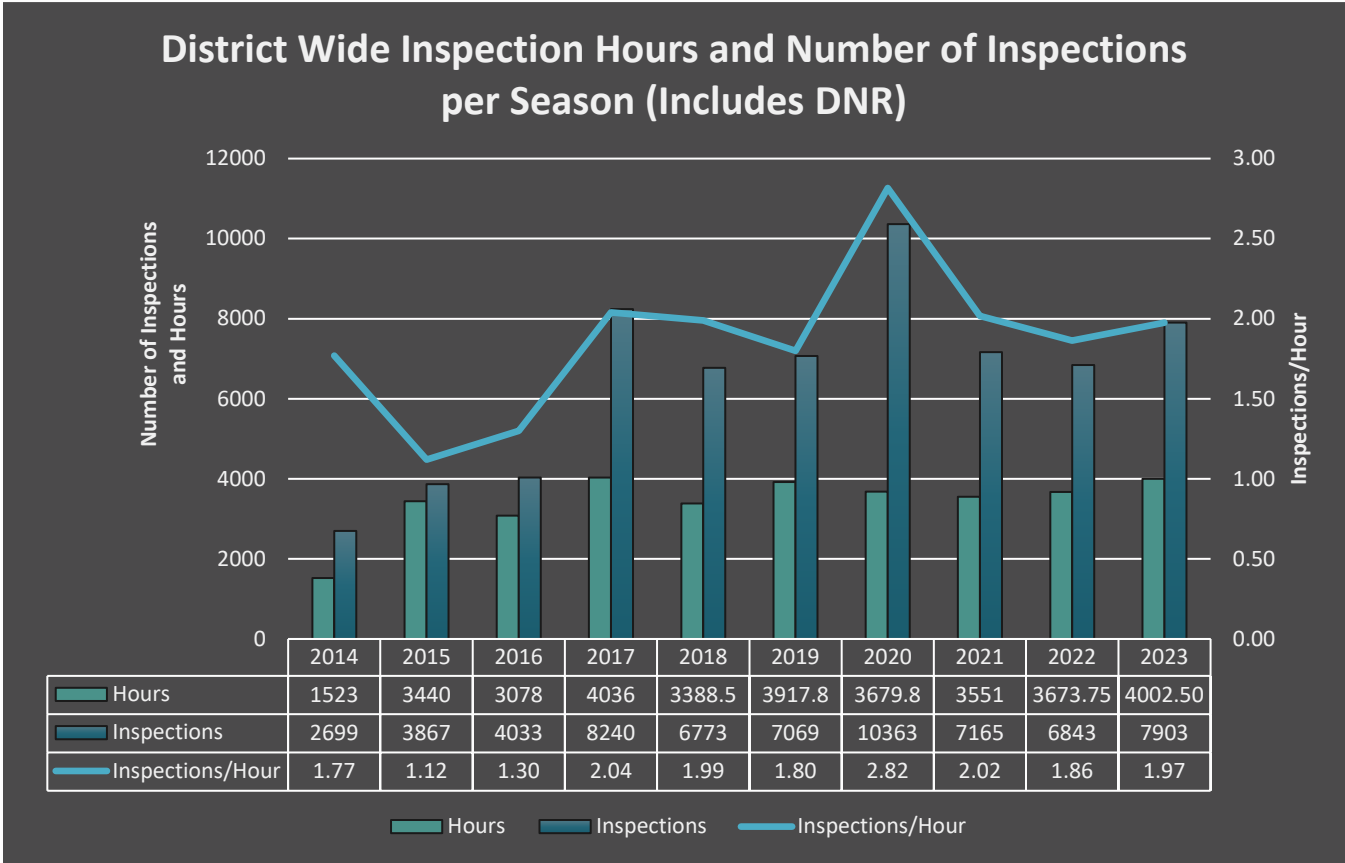


Figure 3. District-wide inspections and hours per season

As a planning tool to meet inspection hour goals, District staff take the number of funded inspections hours and divide it by the number of weeks in the watercraft inspection season. This calculation generates an average number of hours to work per week to use all funded hours by the end of the season. The goal number of hours per week of 145 was met by week 2 and was sustained until week 19 towards the end of the season. The number of inspections, and inspection hours by week throughout the season, as well as the rate of inspections/hour, and the hours/week goal can be found in Figure 4 . The spikes in inspections/hours that can be seen in the graph are generally attributed to holidays or seasonal changes (e.g. week five includes Memorial Day and week ten includes the Fourth of July).

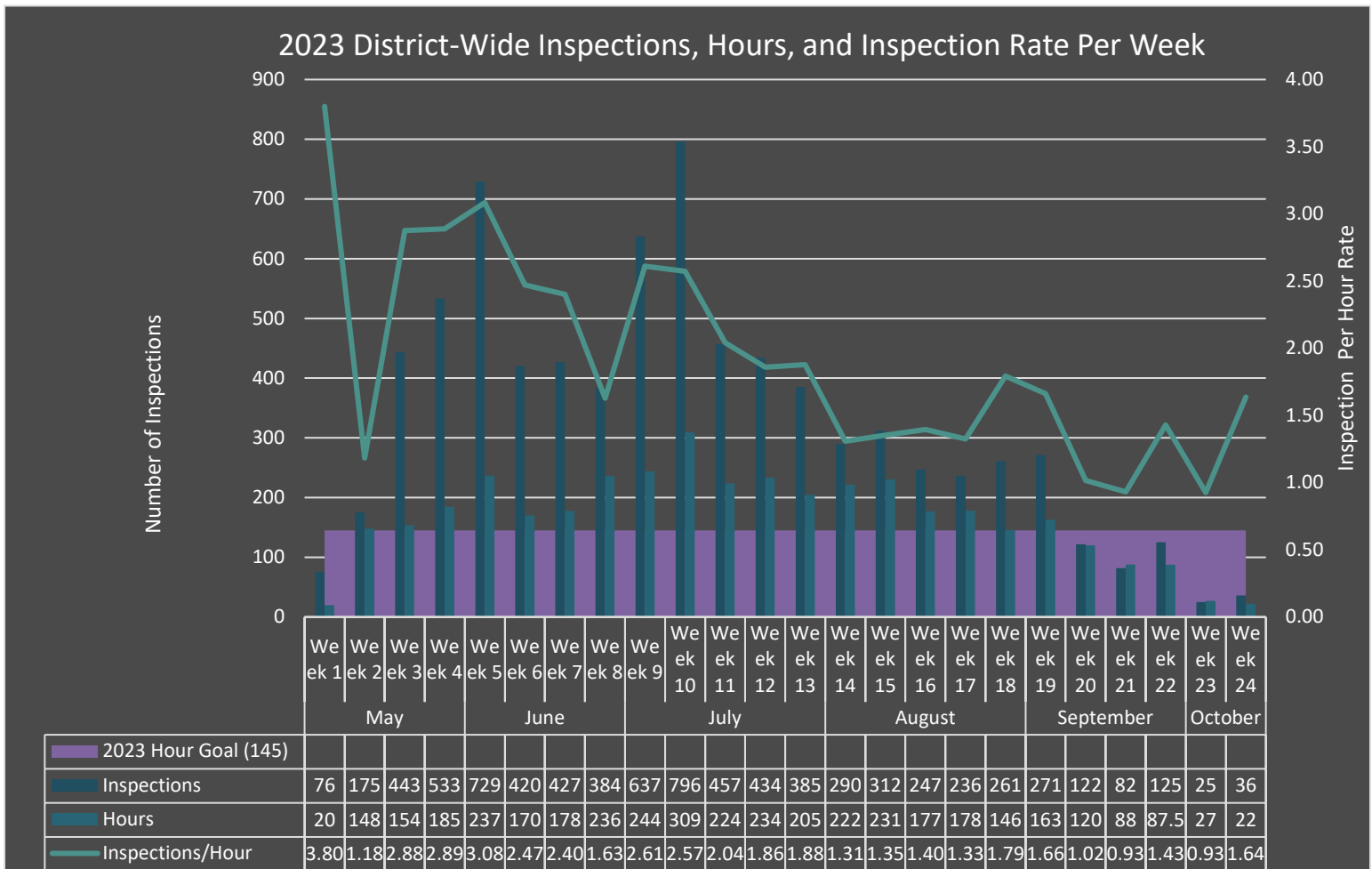


Figure 4. District-wide inspections, hours, rates, and goals

To maximize cost effectiveness and inspection numbers, weekend hours are prioritized for conducting watercraft inspections due to the general higher level of activity. As a result, 65% of hours and 78% of inspections occurred Friday

through Sunday. Inspection hours worked during the week (Monday – Thursday) are typically performed by Chisago’s and the DNR’s inspectors. Figure 5 shows the number of inspections and hours per day of the week for the 2023 season.

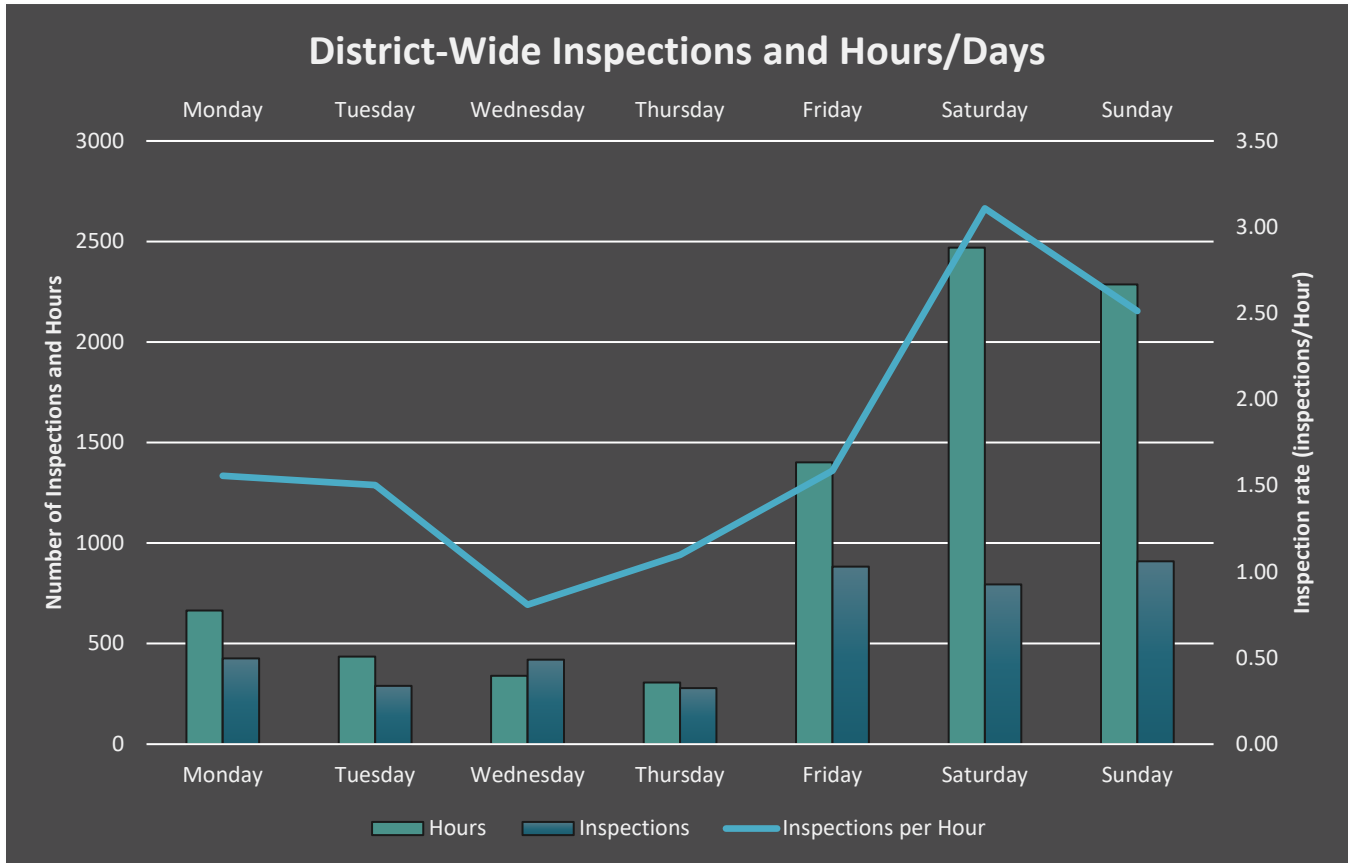


Figure 5. District-wide inspections and hours per day of the week for the 2023 season

Survey Results

In addition to a watercraft inspector’s responsibility to thoroughly inspect watercrafts for aquatic invasive species (AIS) and other contaminants, they are also required to complete an inspection survey for each boat that enters or exits a lake. Completed surveys are uploaded to the DNR’s state-wide inspection survey database where program coordinators across the state can view the data. Important information such as number of boats entering and exiting a lake, incoming boat AIS violations, and new AIS infestation risk assessment can be calculated. In 2023, a total of 7,903 watercraft inspection surveys were performed on District lakes. Below are some findings from the

inspection survey data. A summary of this information can be found in Figure 6.

- **67 watercrafts arrived at District lakes with contaminants such as plants, animals, mud, or water on their equipment.** This number was 50 in 2022, 65 in 2021, 148 in 2020, 122 in 2019, 140 in 2018, 213 in 2017, 41 in 2016 and 39 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. These watercrafts were cleaned off and/or drained prior to launching. If vegetation or mud could not be removed by hand, watercraft were denied launch.
- **68 watercraft required removal of the bilge drainage plug** upon arriving at District lakes. This number was 29 in 2022, 33 in 2021, 83 in 2020, 85 in 2019, 115 in 2018, 115 in 2017, 19 in 2016 and 67 in 2015. After educating the watercraft user on the potential of AIS in their bilge water, bilge plugs were removed from the watercraft and all water was drained prior to the watercraft launching in an area that would not flow into the lake.
- **1,275 watercraft exited District lakes with contaminants such as plants, animals, mud, or water present.** This number was 850 in 2022, 786 in 2021, 1462 in 2020, 867 in 2019, 931 in 2018, 804 in 2017, 187 in 2016 and 260 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. All contaminants were removed from the watercraft and trailer before departing from the lake.

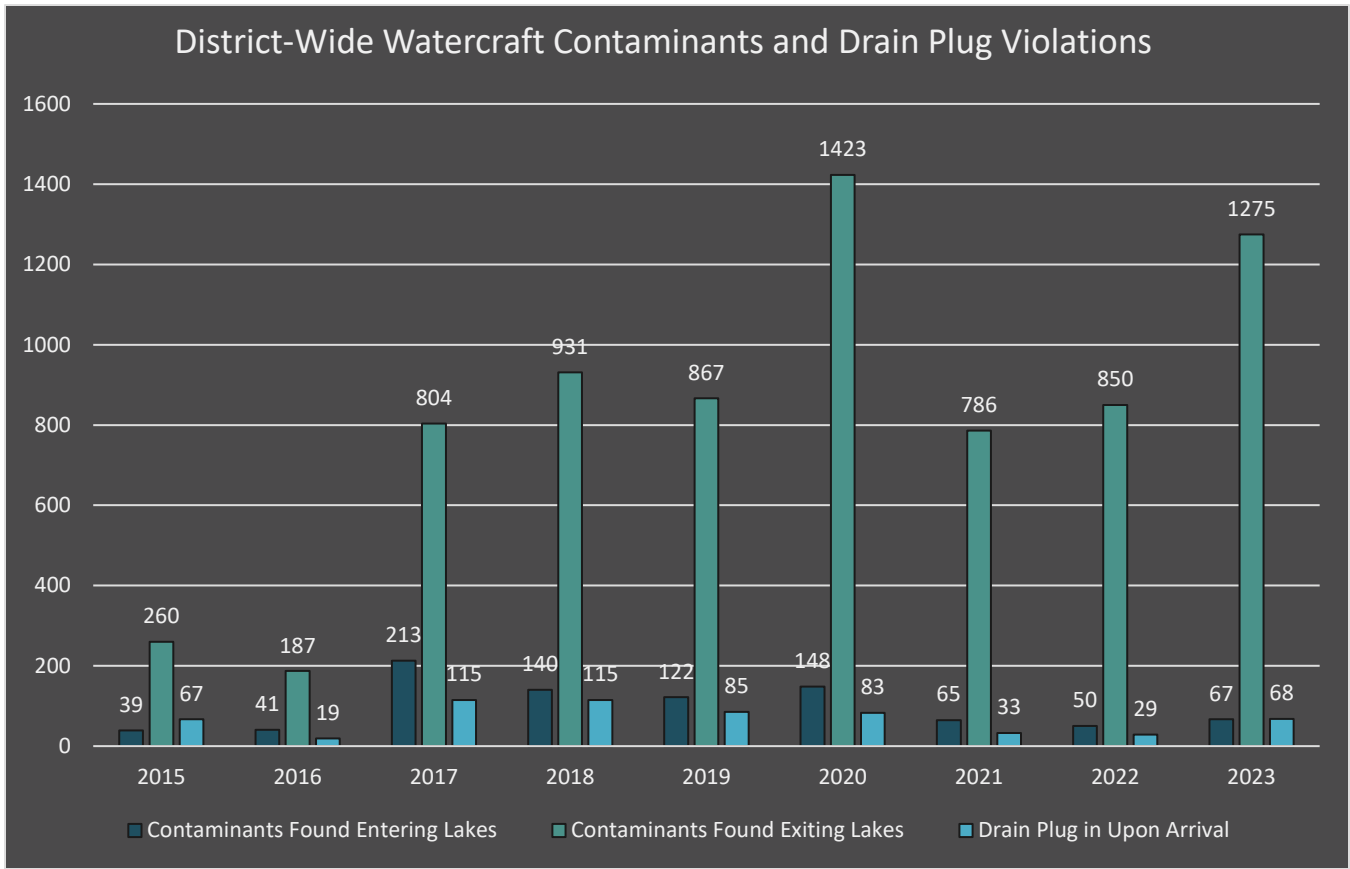


Figure 6. District-wide watercraft contaminants and drain plug violations as reported over the last nine seasons. Contaminants include plants, animals, mud, and water.

Included in the inspection survey are questions regarding the waterbody most likely to be visited next by the boater. Many of the lakes that boaters intend to visit after leaving a District lake do not have all the same AIS present in them. This information stresses the importance of not just preventing AIS from entering District lakes but also preventing AIS from leaving them. Results of this aspect of the survey can be found in Table 1.

Next Lake Boaters Intend to Visit after Leaving a District Lake				
Lakes	Eurasian Watermilfoil	Zebra Mussels	Flowering Rush	Spiny Waterflea
Big Marine, Washington Co.	EWM	X	X	X
St. Croix River, Multiple Co.	EWM	ZM	X	X
White Bear, Ramsey Co.	EWM	ZM	X	X
Coon, Anoka Co.	EWM	X	X	X
Minnetonka, Hennepin Co.	EWM	ZM	FR	X
Chisago, Chisago Co.	EWM	X	X	X
Mille Lacs, Mille Lac Co.	EWM	ZM	X	SW
Bald Eagle, Ramsey Co.	EWM	ZM	FR	X
Clear, Washington Co.	EWM	X	X	X
Green, Chisago Co.	X	X	X	X

Table 1. Top 10 lakes boaters intended to visit after leaving a District lake in 2023

Risk of New Invasive Species

Unfortunately, many CLFLWD lakes are home to several aquatic invasive species such as curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, flowering rush, zebra mussels, and several others. Species such as these are a concern to the District as they have the ability to cause ecological, recreational, economic, and physical harm. While the District manages many of the aquatic invasive species present in its lakes, it is still widely known that the most effective management strategy is prevention. There are still many species that are not yet in District lakes and one of the main goals of the CLFLWD watercraft inspection program is to prevent their introduction.

Starry stonewort and the spiny water flea are two examples of aquatic invasive species found in Minnesota that are not yet found in District lakes. Starry stonewort is an invasive macro-algae that forms dense mats in lakes that can impede boating and prevent the establishment of beneficial native plants. Starry stonewort was discovered in Lake Koronis near Paynesville, MN in 2015 and has since been discovered in 21 additional lakes across the state. In 2023, five new lakes were added to the DNR’s infested waters list for starry stonewort, Clearwater Lake in Wright County, Long Lake in Kandiyohi County, Long Lake in Hubbard County, and Blackduck and North Twin Lakes in Beltrami County.

The spiny water flea is an invasive species of zooplankton which is about the size of a grain of rice that competes with small fish for the same food resource (other zooplankton). The spiny water flea was first discovered in Lake Superior in the early-1980s and has since spread to more than 68 inland lakes in

Minnesota including: Mille Lacs Lake, Lake Vermilion, Lake of the Woods, and others.

Both invasive species are thought to be transported primarily by recreational watercraft. Figure 7. contains photos of spiny water flea and starry stonewort.



Figure 7. Spiny water flea (left) and starry stonewort (right). Source: MNDNR

Part of the watercraft inspection survey involves asking the boaters which lake they visited last. The boaters' responses can be cross referenced with records that the DNR keeps of infested waters. This is a way to estimate the risk of these species spreading to District lakes. Note that transportation of water or *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. District watercraft inspectors required that these watercrafts be cleaned off, decontaminated and/or drained prior to launching into the lake.

- **151 boats launching into District lakes came from lakes infested with spiny water flea.** This number was 95 in 2022, 96 in 2021, 158 in 2020, 111 in 2019, 104 in 2018, 171 in 2017, and 231 in 2016.
- **35 boats launching into District lakes came from lakes infested with starry stonewort.** This number was 48 in 2022, 48 in 2021, 30 in 2020, 22 in 2019, 61 in 2018, 14 in 2017, and 83 in 2016.
- **In 2023, 85 boats came from a waterbody infested with New Zealand mudsnail, 121 from a faucet snail infested lake, and 85 from a lake with the VHS virus.**

Number of Entering Watercrafts Last in an AIS Infested Waterbody						
	Bone	Comfort	Forest 1	Forest 2	Forest 3	Grand Total - All Lakes
Starry Stonewort	3	3	16	4	9	35
Spiny Waterflea	18	14	57	17	45	151
Zebra Mussels	50	30	173	46	110	409
Flowering Rush	21	8	57	19	32	137
Grass Carp	14	10	39	14	30	107
Silver Carp	14	10	39	14	30	107
Big Head Carp	14	10	39	14	30	107
New Zealand Mudsnail	11	8	29	10	27	85
Round Goby	11	8	29	10	27	85
White Perch	11	8	29	10	27	85
VHS	11	8	29	10	27	85
Ruffe	11	8	29	10	27	85
Faucet Snail	14	10	46	17	34	121
EWM	141	118	366	79	212	916

Table 2. The number of watercrafts entering District lakes that reported last being in an AIS infested lake. These figures could be a slight underestimation as a substantial number of inspections did not include enough information to determine which waterbodies boaters were last in.

Bone Lake

Inspection Hours and Scheduling

This season, watercraft inspectors performed **714.25 hours of inspections** on Bone Lake which resulted in **866 inspections and associated surveys**. Inspectors averaged **1.21 inspections per hour**. Figure 8. below summarizes the total number of inspection hours and inspections conducted on Bone Lake over the last ten seasons.

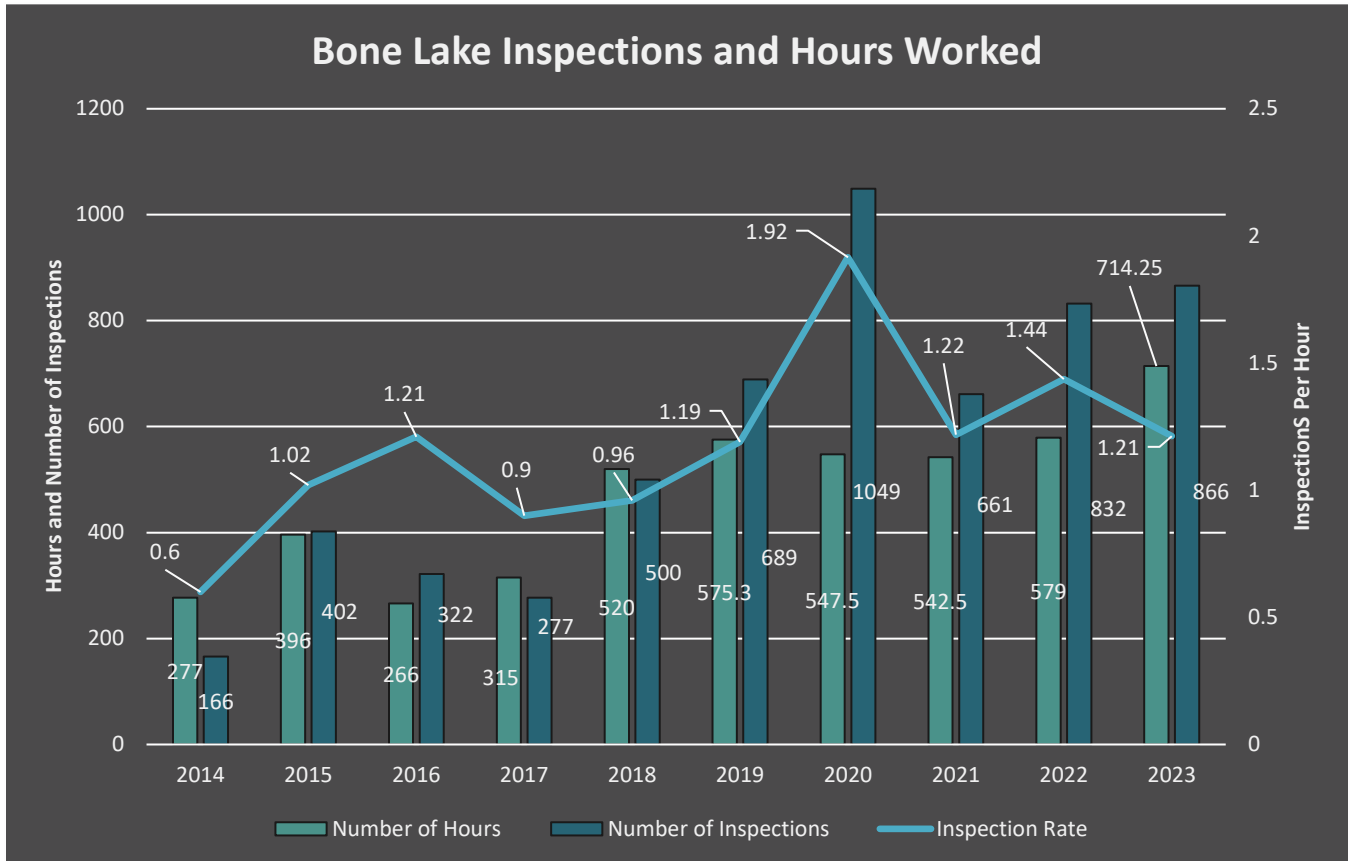


Figure 8. Summary of the total number of inspection hours, number of surveys, and inspection rates for Bone Lake over the last ten seasons.

Survey Results

A total of 866 surveys were performed on Bone Lake this season. Findings and a summary of the results from the compiled inspection survey data for Bone Lake can be found below and in Figure 9.:

- **4 watercraft arrived at Bone Lake with plants, animals, mud, or water on their watercraft.** This number was 1 in 2022, in 2021, 3 in 2020, 7 in 2019, 16 in 2018, 11 in 2017, 1 in 2016 and 4 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. These watercrafts were cleaned off and/or drained prior to launching into Bone Lake.
- **8 watercraft required removal of the bilge drainage plug upon arriving at Bone Lake.** This number was 1 in 2022, 13 in 2021, 12 in 2020, 12 in 2019, 8 in 2018, 1 in 2017, 2 in 2016 and 6 in 2015. After educating the watercraft user on the potential of AIS in their bilge water, bilge plugs were removed from the watercraft and all water was drained prior to the watercraft launching in an area that would not flow into the lake.
- **38 watercraft exited Bone Lake with plants, animals, mud, or water present.** This number was 79 in 2022, 35 in 2021, 47 in 2020, 50 in 2019, 70 in 2018, 59 in 2017, 7 in 2016 and 24 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. All contaminants were removed from the watercraft and trailer before departing from Bone Lake.

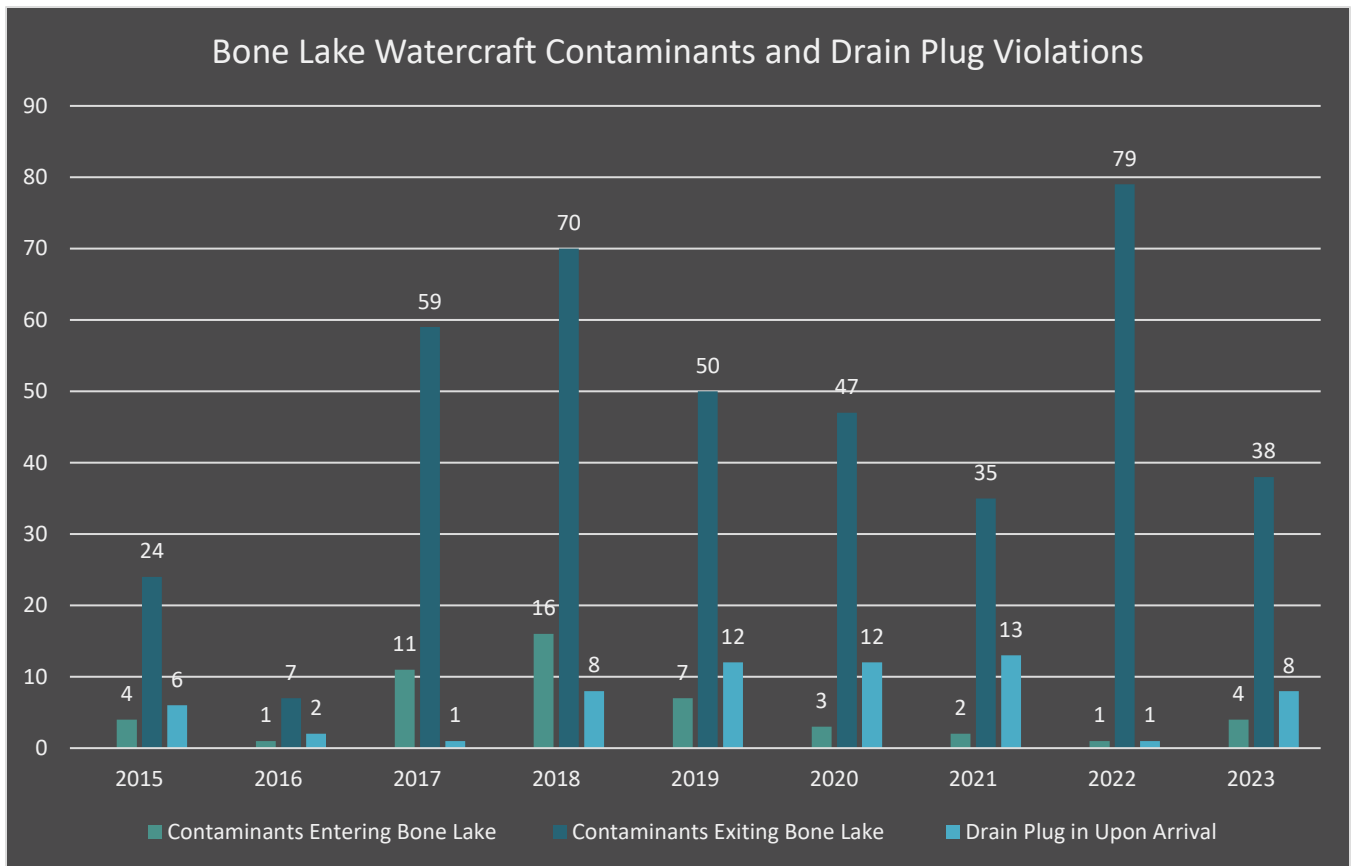


Figure 9. Bone Lake watercraft contaminants (ex. plants, animals, mud, and water) and drain plug violations reported over the last nine seasons.

Risk of New Invasive Species

A portion of the inspection survey process involves asking boaters which lake they visited last. The boaters' responses can be cross referenced with records that the DNR keeps of infested waters. This is a way to estimate the risk of these species spreading to Bone Lake. Note that any watercraft with contaminants such as plants or standing water are required to be decontaminated prior to launch.

- 18 boats launching into Bone Lake came from lakes infested with spiny water flea.** For comparison, this number was 10 in 2022, 5 in 2021, 14 in 2020, 7 in 2019, 2 in 2018, 5 in 2017, and 25 in 2016.
- 3 boats launching into Bone Lake came from lakes infested with starry stonewort.** This number was 4 in 2022, 5 in 2021, 2 in 2020, 3 in 2019, 3 in 2018, 0 in 2017, and 2 in 2016.

Forest Lake

Inspection Hours and Scheduling

This season, CLFLWD watercraft inspectors performed 2,200 hours of inspections, and DNR inspectors performed 370 hours, totaling **2,570 total hours of inspections on the three Forest Lake public accesses**. During this time, CLFLWD inspected 5,279 watercraft and the DNR inspected 777 watercrafts, totaling **6,056 inspections and associated surveys**. Together, CLFLWD and DNR inspectors averaged **2.36 inspections per hour**. A summary of this information is presented in Figure 10. and Tables 3 - 5.

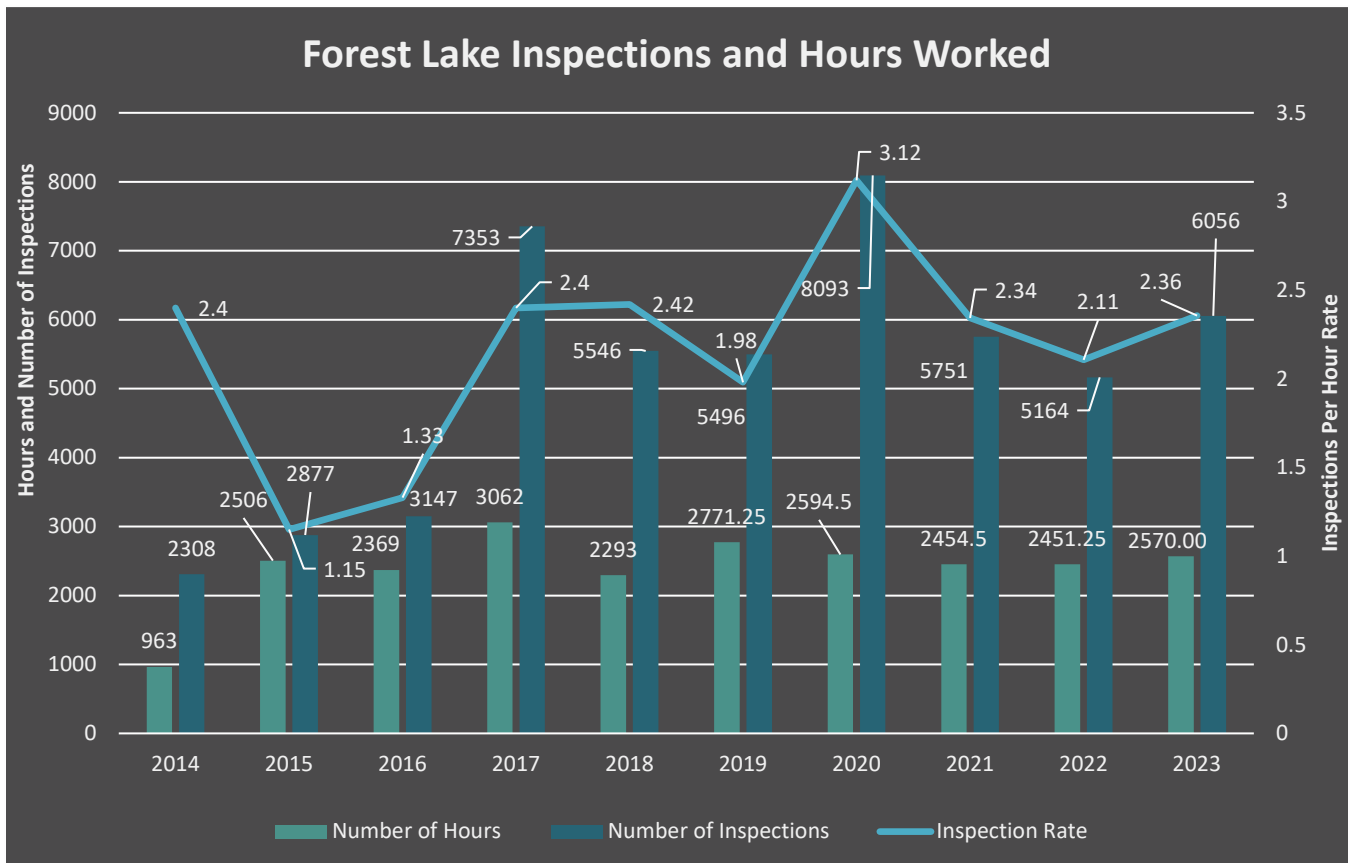


Figure 10. summary of inspections hours, number of surveys, and inspection rates over the last ten seasons at all three Forest Lake public boat launches.

Table 3. Forest Lake inspection hours

	Forest 1 (West or Lakeside Park)	Forest 2 (Middle or Willow Point)	Forest 3 (East or Hagberg)	Total
CLFLWD Inspection Hours	819.5	585.25	795.25	2,200
DNR Inspection Hours	370	-	-	370
Total Inspection Hours	1,189.50	585.25	795.25	2,570

Table 4. Forest Lake number of inspections

	Forest 1 (West or Lakeside Park)	Forest 2 (Middle or Willow Point)	Forest 3 (East or Hagberg)	Total
CLFLWD Inspections	2,464	920	1,817	5,279
DNR Inspections	777	0	0	846
Total Inspections	3,319	920	1,817	6,056

Table 5. Forest Lake inspection rate (inspections/hour)

	Forest 1 (West or Lakeside Park)	Forest 2 (Middle or Willow Point)	Forest 3 (East or Hagberg)	Average
CLFLWD Inspection Rate	3.01	1.57	2.28	2.29
DNR Inspection Rate	2.10	-	-	2.1
Average Inspection Rate	2.56	1.57	2.28	2.14

Survey Results

A total of 6,056 surveys were performed on Forest Lake this season. Findings and a summary of the results from the compiled inspection survey data for Forest Lake can be found below and in Figure 11. Below are some findings from the inspection survey data:

- **59 watercraft arrived at Forest Lake with plants, animals, mud, or water on their watercraft.** This number was 44 in 2022, 61 in 2021, 132 in 2020, 87 in 2019, 117 in 2018, 177 in 2017, 32 in 2016, and 32 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. These watercraft were cleaned off and/or drained prior to launching into Forest Lake. It is against state law to launch a contaminated watercraft at a MN lake, regardless of known current infestations of that lake.
- **55 watercraft required removal of the bilge drainage plug upon arriving at Forest Lake.** This number was 20 in 2022, 131 in 2021, 62 in 2020, 65 in 2019, 92 in 2018, 110 in 2017, 15 in 2016, and 54 in 2015. After educating the watercraft user on the potential of AIS (e.g. microscopic zebra mussel larvae) in their bilge water, bilge plugs were removed from the watercraft and all water was drained prior to the watercraft launching in an area that would not flow into the lake.
- **1,207 watercraft exited Forest Lake with plants, animals, mud, or water present.** This number was 755 in 2022, 727 in 2021, 1191 in 2020, 762 in 2019, 817 in 2018, 670 in 2017, 158 in 2016, and 229 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. All contaminants were removed from the watercraft and trailer before departing from Forest Lake.

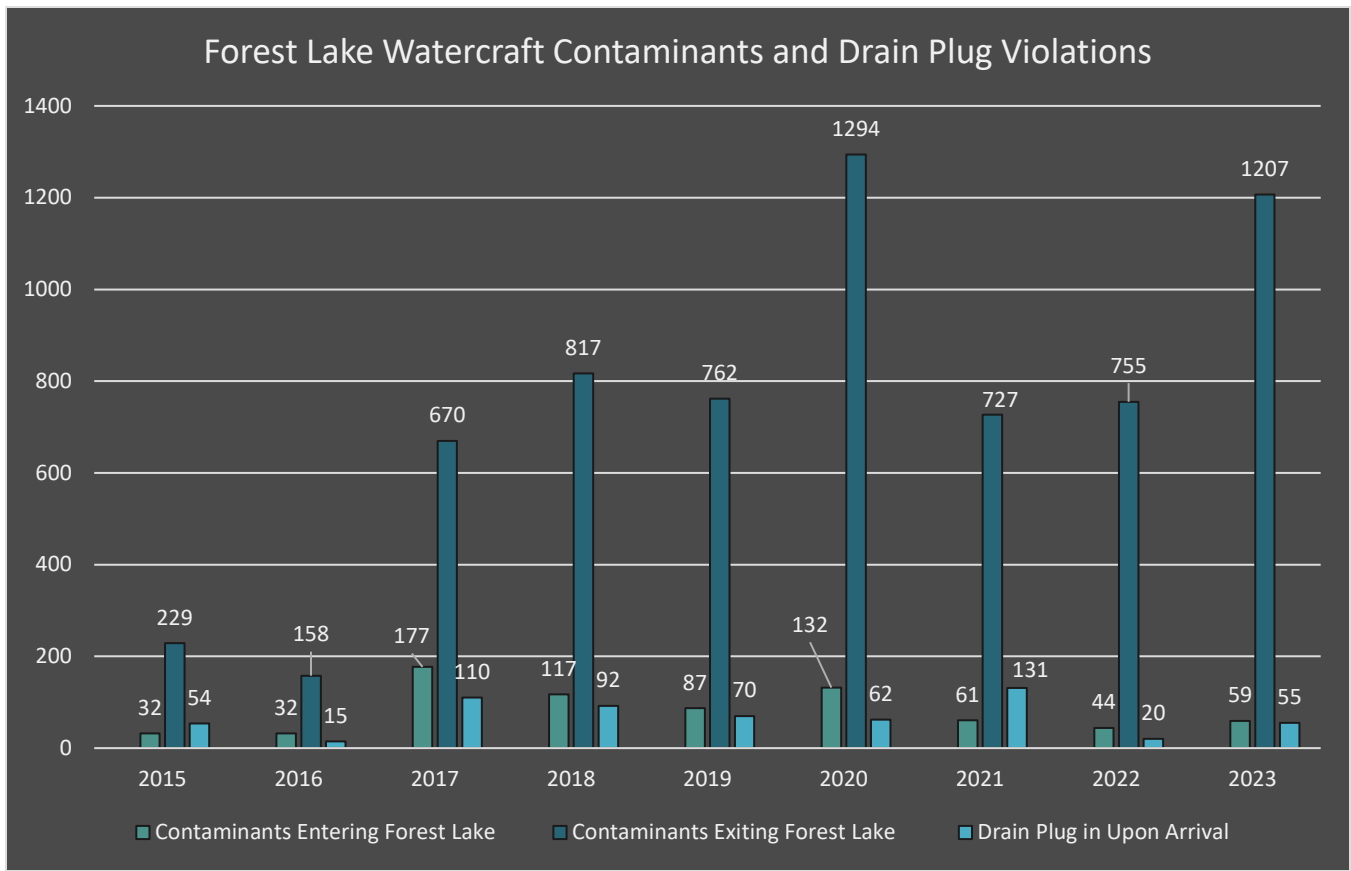


Figure 11. Forest Lake watercraft contaminants and drain plug violations as reported at Forest Lake accesses over the last nine seasons

Risk of New Invasive Species

Part of the inspection survey involves asking the boaters which lake they visited last. The boaters' responses can be cross referenced with records that the DNR keeps of infested waters. This is a way to estimate the risk of these species spreading to Forest Lake. Note that any watercraft with contaminants such as plants or standing water are required to be decontaminated prior to launch.

- 119 boats launching into Forest Lake came from lakes infested with spiny water flea.** This number was 74 in 2022, 82 in 2021, 131 in 2020, 92 in 2019, 101 in 2018, 153 in 2017, and 183 in 2016.
- 29 boats launching into Forest Lake came from lakes infested with starry stonewort.** This number was 38 in 2022, 42 in 2021, 27 in 2020, 18 in 2019, 53 in 2018, 12 in 2017 and 74 in 2016.

Comfort Lake

Inspection Hours and Scheduling

This summer, watercraft inspectors performed **718.25 hours of inspections** on Comfort Lake which resulted in **981 inspections and associated surveys**. Inspectors averaged **1.37 inspections per hour**. A summary of this information is presented in Figure 12..

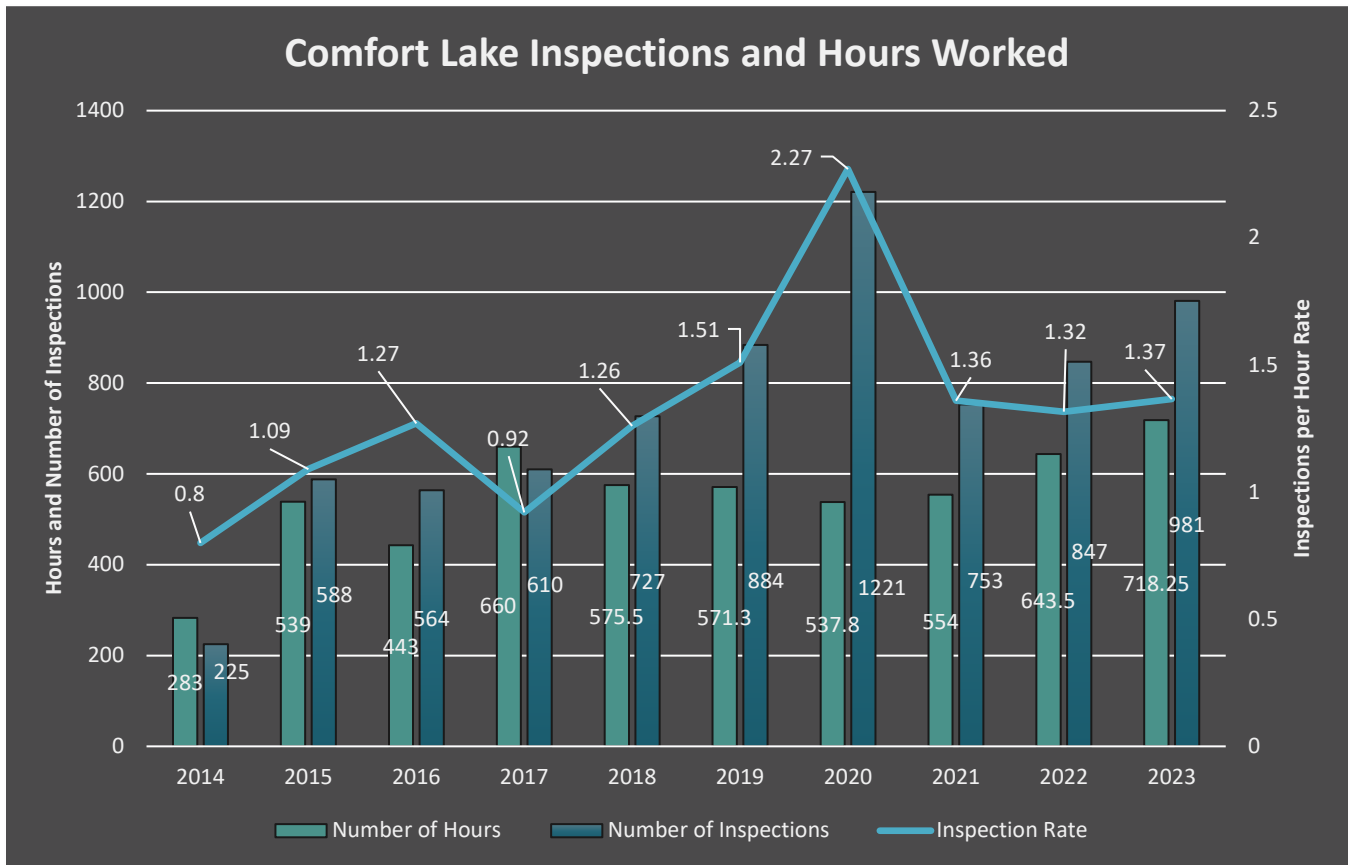


Figure 12. Summary of the inspection hours, number of surveys, and inspection rates completed on Comfort Lake over the last ten seasons.

Survey Results

A total of 981 surveys were performed on Comfort Lake this season. Findings and a summary of the results from the compiled inspection survey data for Comfort Lake can be found below and in Figure 13.

- **4 watercraft arrived at Comfort Lake with plants, animals, mud, or water on their watercraft.** This number was 5 in 2022, 5 in 2021, 13 in 2020, 28 in 2019, 7 in 2018, 25 in 2017, 8 in 2016, and 3 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. These watercraft were cleaned off and/or drained prior to launching into Comfort Lake.
- **5 watercraft required removal of the bilge drainage plug upon arriving at Comfort Lake.** This number was 8 in 2022, 10 in 2021, 9 in 2020, 8 in 2019, 15 in 2018, 4 in 2017, 2 in 2016 and 7 in 2015. After educating the watercraft user on the potential of AIS in their bilge water, bilge plugs were removed from the watercraft and all water was drained prior to the watercraft launching in an area that would not flow into the lake.
- **30 watercraft exited Comfort Lake with plants, animals, mud, or water present.** This number was 16 in 2022, 24 in 2021, 82 in 2020, 55 in 2019, 44 in 2018, 75 in 2017, 22 in 2016 and 7 in 2015. Note that transportation of *any* plants or animals on watercraft, not just invasive species, is prohibited. All contaminants were removed from the watercraft and trailer before departing from Comfort Lake.

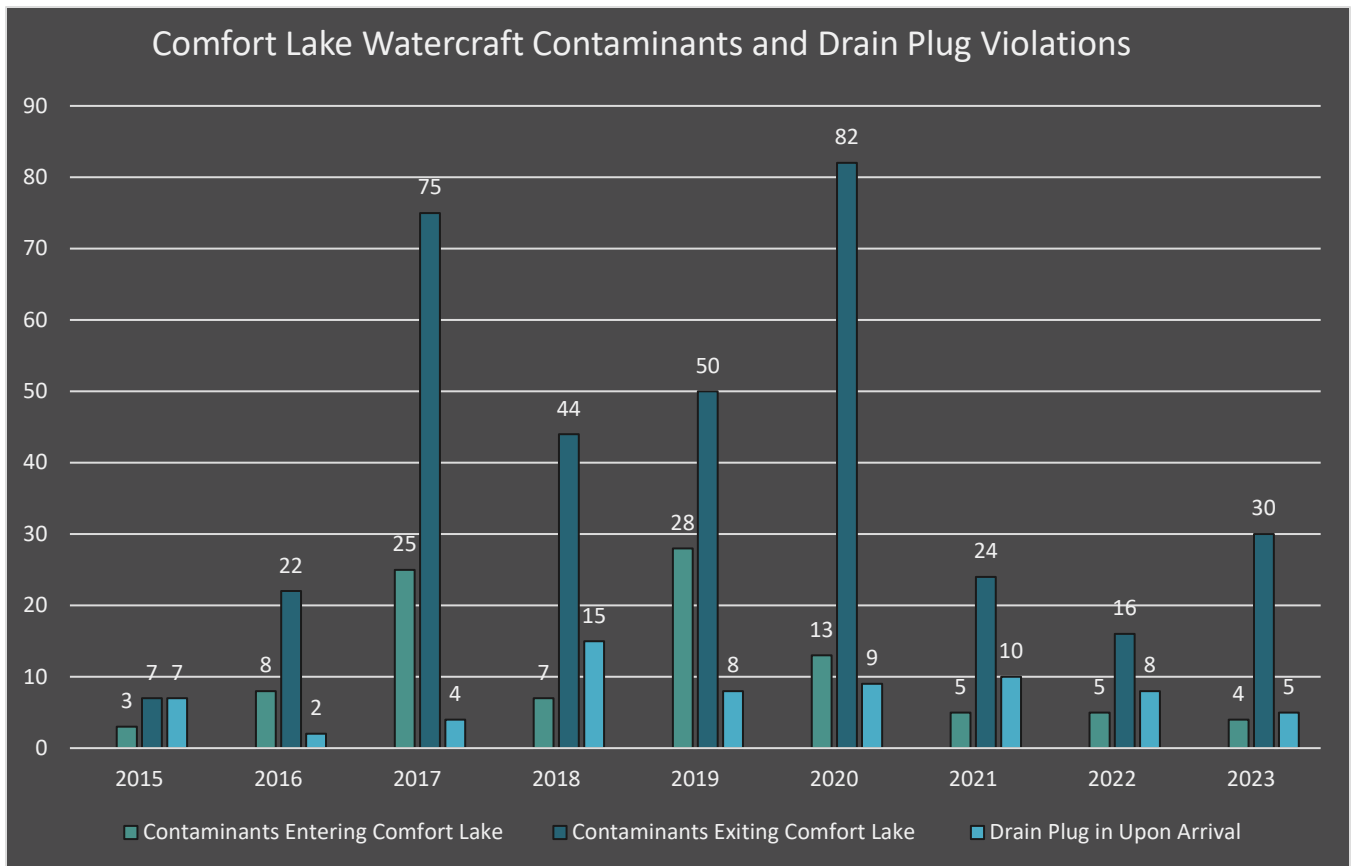


Figure 13. Comfort Lake watercraft contaminants and drain plug violations as reported at Comfort Lake over the last eight seasons

Risk of New Invasive Species

Part of the inspection survey involves asking the boaters which lake they visited last. The boaters' responses can be cross referenced with records that the DNR keeps of infested waters. This is a way to estimate the risk of these species spreading to Comfort Lake. Note that any watercraft with contaminants such as plants or standing water are required to be decontaminated prior to launch.

14 boats launching into Comfort Lake came from lakes infested with **spiny water flea**. For comparison, this number was 11 in 2022, 9 in 2021, 13 in 2020, 12 in 2019, 7 in 2018, 13 in 2017, and 24 in 2016.

- **3 boat launching into Comfort Lake** came from lakes infested with **starry stonewort**. This number was 6 in 2022, 1 in 2021, 1 in 2020, 1 in 2019, 5 in 2018, 2 in 2017 and 7 in 2016.

Discussion and Conclusion

The 2023 watercraft inspection season was a success in terms of reaching hour goals set pre-season (District-wide goal = 3,600 hours). In total, 4,002.5 hours were worked by watercraft inspectors across the District's five public accesses, which resulted in 7,903 related inspections surveys. While 2020 remains the year's busiest for inspection surveys (10,363 surveys), 2023 ranked third in the District history with the program, barely beat out for second by 2017 (8,240 surveys). One area in which the 2023 program excelled was providing excellent boat launch coverage during the peak of the season (June – August). This coverage is mostly due to fewer hiring difficulties early-season, which allowed the program to start off strong beginning in early-May.

As mentioned, a major component of this year's success was due to fewer hiring difficulties. In total, the District hired 9 in-house inspectors, 6 of which were returning individuals. Not only do returning inspectors reduce onboarding and administrative work, but they also bring seasoned experience and expertise specific to the District's program. The District greatly values its returning inspectors and has made efforts to retain them through yearly pay raises, among the other compensation offerings available to all, which include competitive starting wages, holiday pay, and performance bonuses. Through Program Coordinator and Lead Watercraft Inspector support and flexible scheduling, the District continues to foster a fun, fair, and enjoyable working environment that will hopefully keep valuable inspectors returning.

In addition to the nine inspectors hired in-house, Chisago County provided an additional four inspectors through the joint power agreement. These four inspectors rotated through the District's five accesses and focused their hours Monday-Thursday, whereas the District primarily focuses its hours Friday-Sunday. In total, Chisago County Inspectors worked 978 hours (24% of all hours) and performed 897 inspections (11% of all inspections). Additionally, the DNR also provided inspector coverage at the Forest Lake West public access. In total, the DNR worked 370 hours (9% of all hours) and conducted 777 inspection surveys (10% of all inspections). The partnership and collaboration with both parties helps provide great coverage across the District.

Beyond inspections, District inspectors continued to emphasize the importance of education and engagement. Included in the inspector's equipment kits were lake brochures and other educational AIS handouts. Inspectors were encouraged to offer these items to interested visitors, especially those that were new to the area or were unfamiliar with AIS. For each of the season's three holidays (Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day), inspectors were given other fun District branded handouts which included key floats, can koozies, sunglasses, buttons, stickers, and pens. The

District wants each interaction with the WCI Program to be a positive one, and this effort has been well received and popular for the last couple of years. Next season, District staff will consider other educational handouts and public access amenities to maintain a positive, helpful, and educational public image.

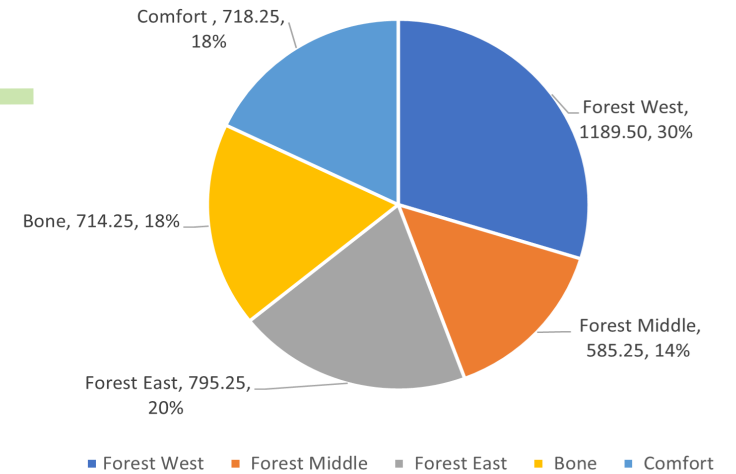
Overall, the CLFLWD's 2023 watercraft inspection season was very successful in reaching its hour and inspection goals. These achievements would not have been possible without the support of the community, local lake associations, and the District's partners. Their generous financial contributions and feedback are greatly appreciated and go a long way to support the program. In 2024, the District will again seek out passionate water stewards for the watercraft inspector positions that will best represent the District and serve the community to preserve the ecological health and recreational quality of the area's waterbodies.

Comfort Lake—Forest Lake Watershed District

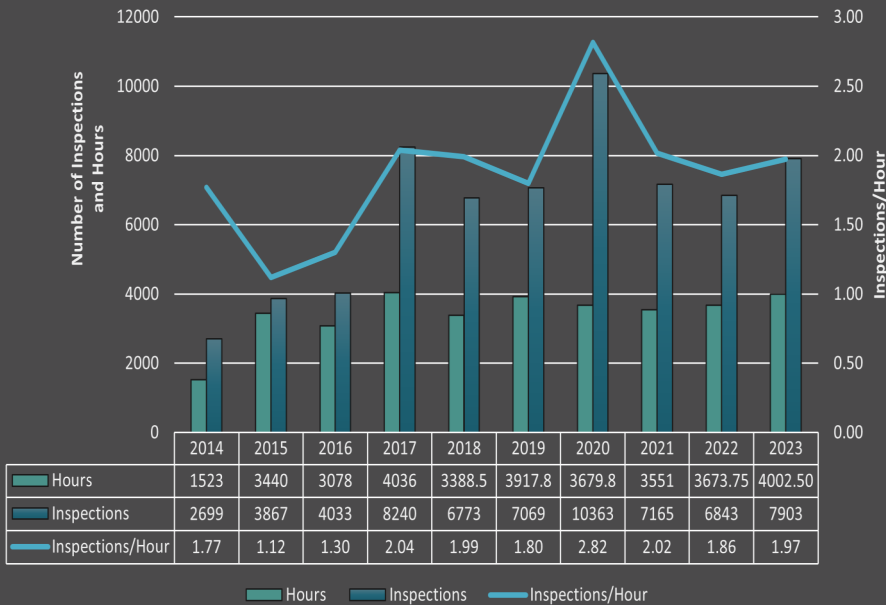
2023 Watercraft Inspections

In 2023, CLFLWD and Minnesota DNR inspectors spent a total of **4,002.5 hours** at landings in the CLFLWD inspecting watercraft and educating boaters. **7,903 inspections** were completed this year.

Inspection Hours at Each Access And % Of Total Hours (DNR Hours Included)



District Wide Inspection Hours and Number of Inspections per Season (Includes DNR)

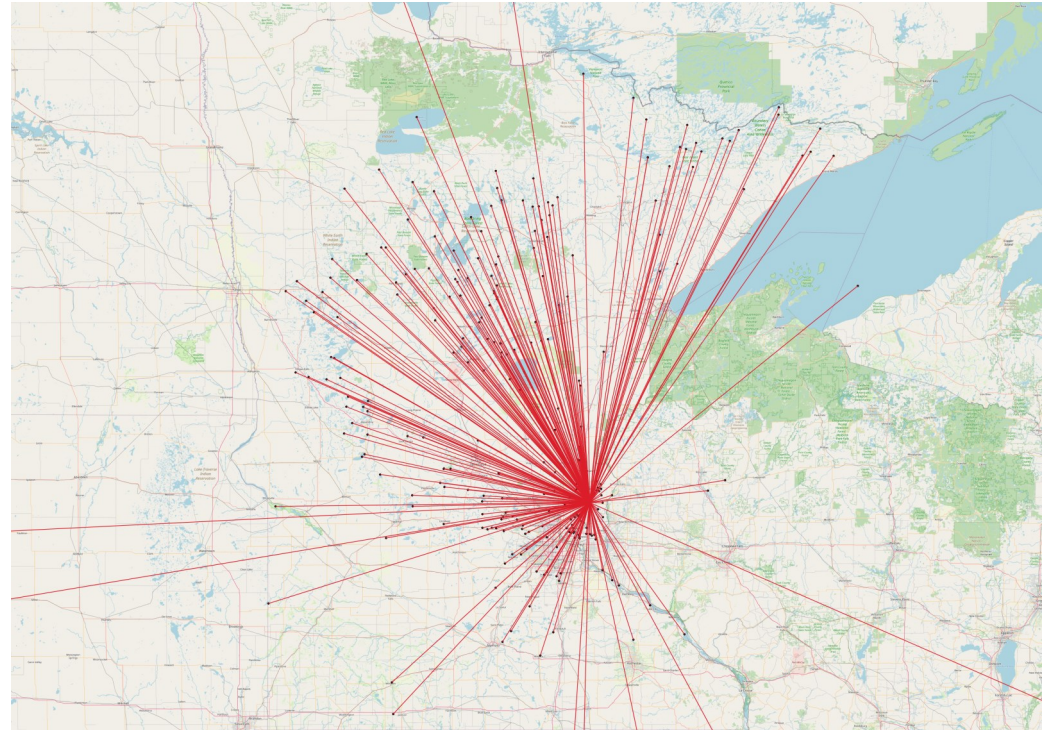


- **1.48 %** of boaters **entering** the water had **plants, animals, water, mud**, etc. on their boat at the time of inspection. This can be compared to 1.23% in 2022, 1.06% in 2021, 0.03% in 2020, 1.7% in 2019, 3.8% in 2018, 5.4% in 2017 and 2.4% in 2016.
- **1.50%** of boaters **arriving** at the launch had their **drain plug in** at the time of inspection. This can be compared to 0.72% in 2022, 0.54% in 2021, 0.01% in 2020, 1.2% in 2019, 3.1% in 2018, 3.8% in 2017 and 3.1% in 2016.
- Inspectors averaged **1.97 inspections per hour**. This can be compared to 1.86 in 2022, 2.02 in 2021, 2.83 in 2020, 1.8 in 2019, 2.0 in 2018, 2.04 inspections per hour in 2017 and 1.31 inspections per hour in 2016.



Inspections were performed on:

- **151 watercraft that had previously been in spiny water flea-infested lakes.** This number was 95 in 2022, 96 in 2021, 158 in 2020, 111 in 2019, 104 in 2018, 171 in 2017, and 231 watercraft in 2016.
- **35 watercraft that had previously been in starry stonewort-infested lakes.** This can be compared to 48 in 2022, 48 in 2021, 30 in 2020, 22 in 2019, 61 in 2018, 14 in 2017, and 83 watercraft in 2016.



Spiny Water Flea



Starry Stonewort

Above: Flow map showing the lakes that were visited by watercraft before coming to either Forest Lake, Comfort Lake, or Bone Lake. Each line represents at least one boater who traveled from another Minnesota lake into a CLFLWD lake.