



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Watercraft Inspection Program

Background



- Initiated in 1992
- Focused on “infested” water bodies containing Eurasian watermilfoil, spiny waterflea, and zebra mussels
- Began inspecting at high-use “uninfested” water bodies in 1999



The goals of the program:



- Reduce the percentage of trailered watercraft carrying harmful invasive species
 - Complete 10,000 hours of inspections
 - Increase public awareness about invasive species
 - Increase educational efforts with citizen groups
- Staff
 - One program coordinator
 - Four program assistants
 - 90 watercraft inspectors (interns)



The Watercraft Inspection Program consists of



two parts:

- Watercraft Inspectors at public accesses across the state
- Volunteer training and awareness events



How do we choose those accesses?



- Infested / uninfested
- How busy is the access
- Which invasive specie is it
- Grant or cooperative agreements
- Other factor such as an infestation in a county with no other invasives



Priorities for inspecting watercrafts



- **Infested waters** – The first priority at infested waters is inspecting boats leaving infested waters.
- **Non-infested waters** - The first priority at non-infested waters is inspecting boats entering the access.



In 2010 the DNR hired and trained approximately 90 interns to conduct watercraft inspections at public accesses



What do the interns do?



- Inspection of watercraft and trailer for aquatic invasive species leaving and entering waters.
- Communication of the laws and issues
- Distribution of written materials
- Conducting a survey of pertinent questions



What do the interns do?



- Recording data necessary to evaluate the potential spread
- Ensuring that assigned public water accesses are free of invasive plants and debris.
- Answer or refer questions



When do inspectors work



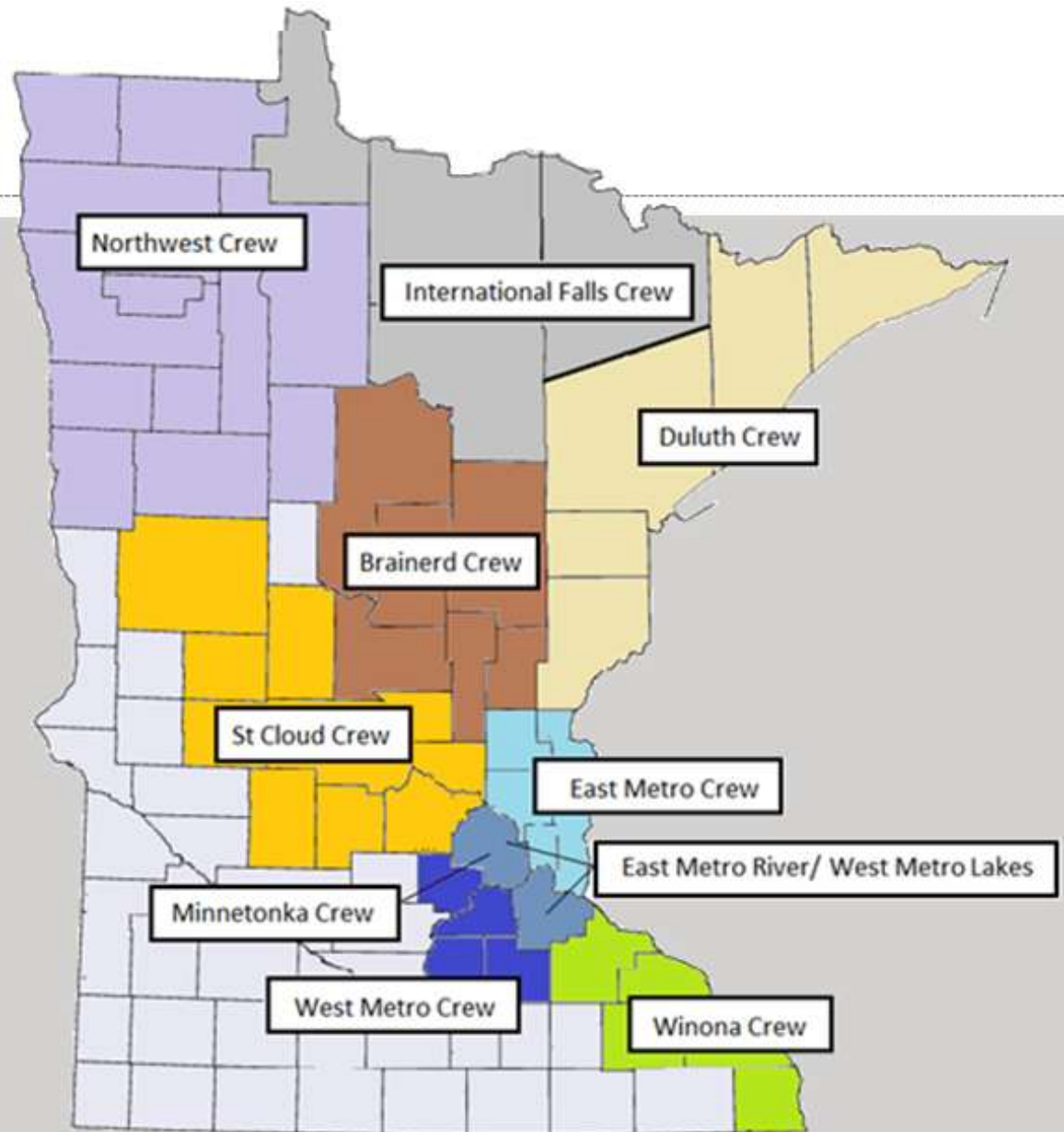
- Late April through Mid October each year
- 40 hours per week, half of those hours on the weekends
- 2 evenings and during peak times

Where are these inspections conducted?



- Statewide program ranging from the Lake of the Woods/Rainy River area to the Iowa Border
- 70-80% of time spent at infested waters
- Limited time spent at high-use uninfested waters

Where are these
inspections
conducted?



Grants and other cooperative efforts:



- 31 prevention grants
- 9 cooperative agreements
- Totaling in over 19,000 hours of inspections



Volunteer Efforts



- Concerned citizens can make a difference on a local level
- Approximately 18 volunteer inspection training sessions



Awareness Events



- Attended over 10 public awareness events and talks

Examples:

- Pick-it or Ticket weekend (July 4th)
- Kid's Day Fishing at 11 Mills Fleet Farm locations
- County Fairs and State Fair

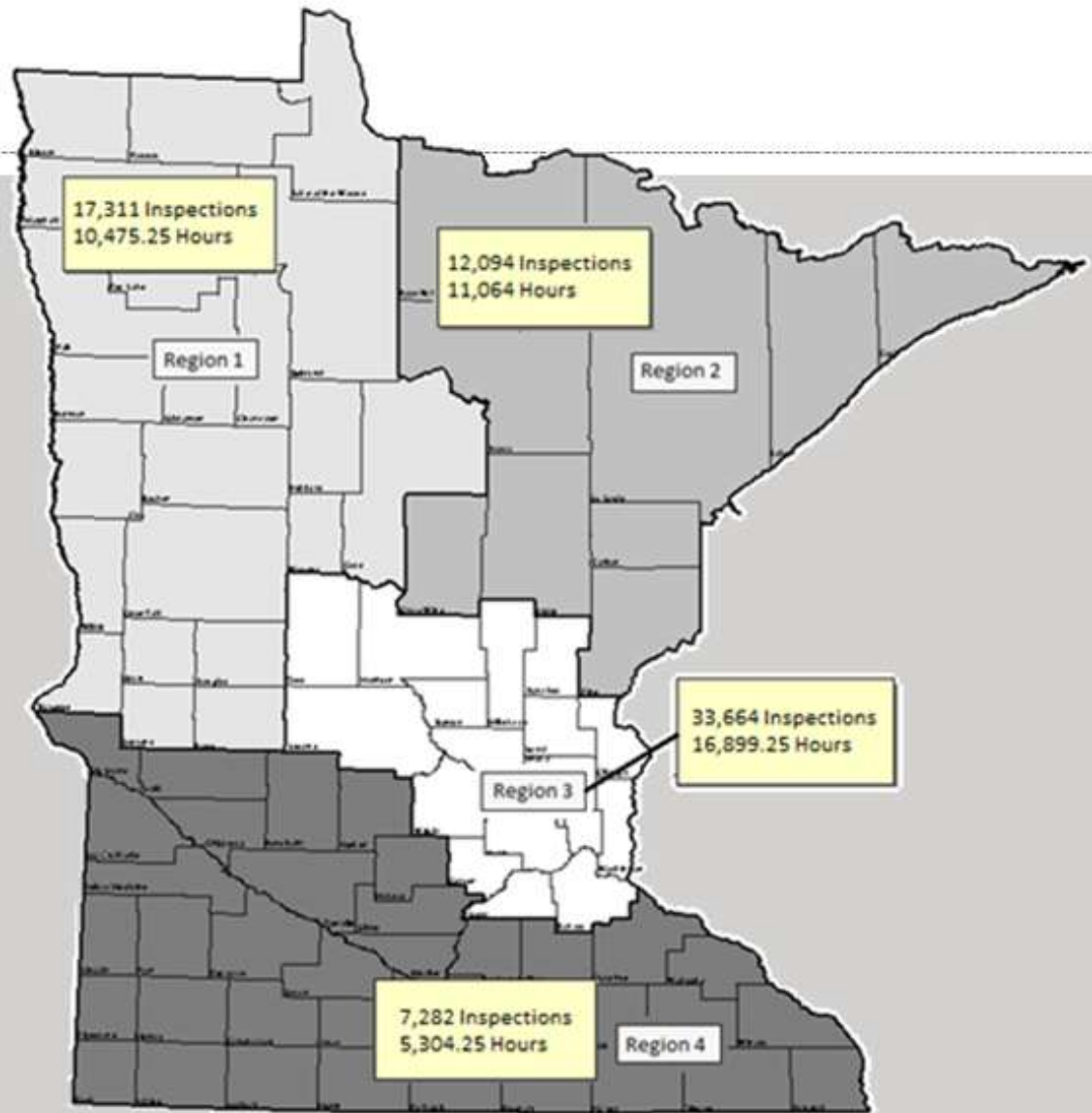


Accomplishments



- ~66,000 watercraft/trailers inspected
- ~51,000 inspection hours logged
- 95% of watercraft users surveyed are familiar with invasive species
- Conducted inspections at 15 fishing tournaments

2010 Regional Inspection Information



Challenges



- Managing 90 college age interns
 - Range of abilities
 - Personal safety
 - Managing schedules
- Watercraft user cooperation
- Roles of inspectors vs enforcement



General Questions



- **Can watercraft inspectors inspect livewells?**

Watercraft inspectors are not allowed to inspect livewells.

- **How do watercraft inspectors respond to violations they observe?**

Watercraft inspectors can contact DNR Conservation Officers and local peace officers to enforce the state invasive species regulations.

Summary



- Effective public awareness
- Inspect watercraft more than once
- Watercraft inspection is only one part of prevention





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