

End of season Report on Aquatic Invasive Species Inspection on Farm Island Lake

Submitted by Greg Anderson, FILIA board member

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I talked to Walt Weiser from Lone Lake regarding final totals from AIS inspections of Aitkin County & Farm Island Lake for the summer season of 2015. Walt is very active with ACLARA and is in close communication with Steve Hughes from Aitkin County Soil & Water. There were 24 inspectors hired for the season for all of Aitkin County. The early part of the season was slow in getting started because of hiring & training issues. That should smooth out in following years. There are 316 lakes in Aitkin County. The breakdown of inspection data is as follows.

- Ten lakes in Aitkin County requested grants for inspectors in 2015
- Total boats inspected for Aitkin County was 9,200+
- Total hours of for inspectors was 8,487 for a total cost of more than \$146,655.00
- Total Boats inspected:
 - Farm Island Lake 1,756 @ 2 landings
 - Big Sandy 1,653 @ 4 landings
 - Clear 1,050
 - Cedar 814
 - Ripple 456
 - Spirit 305
 - Lone 308
 - Mille Lacs 96

Many other lakes were covered even though they may not have requested a grant. Some don't have lake associations or lack the resources. They include Minnewawa, Round, Sugar, Nord, Hammel, Hill, Big Pine and others. The more awareness we build, the better. Lake Mille Lacs, because of its size, has a separate inspection plan that is handled by the DNR. The inspections listed were staffed by our inspectors a few times

during the season at landings within Aitkin County. **As you can see, Farm Island Lake had the most inspections of any lake in the county.**

There is a decontamination unit at Willey's Marine north of McGregor, another at FIRM (Farm Island Repair & Marine) south of Aitkin, and a portable unit at Spirit Lake. A total of 26 boats, county wide, were sent by inspectors to be decontaminated, 7 of which came from accesses at Farm Island. One very flagrant violation occurred at Big Sandy where a boat being launched had a very large area of the hull containing massive amounts of live zebra mussels. Without inspections that would have certainly been a disaster for Aitkin County. The boat owner was fined and sent to a decontamination station for cleaning.

In July, John Peirson from our lake association completed test netting for juvenile zebra's which turned out to be zero. So far we are clean from zebra's and Eurasian milfoil, and the comments by the inspectors indicates the awareness of the AIS problems has improved enormously.

We intend to apply for another grant as soon as we find out new rules and deadlines for application. Next year the lake association match will drop from 20% to 10%. This year FILIA paid \$2,903 for their 20% match, so that amount should be lower next year.