**Summer of 2017 Boat Inspection Report**

Following a bid process, Stearns County contracted with a service provider (LAMB Labor Services) to hire and manage inspectors. LAMB performed 2,089 inspections at the DNR access on Big Fish Lake which is the highest number at an individual access in the county! Out of those inspections, ten plants were removed, six boats with mud were taken off and two incoming boats had spiny water fleas. Another 600 inspections were done by the DNR which means we had a total of 2,689 inspections. For your information, here is a breakdown of what kind of boats came into our lake in 2017: fishing boats – 1,492; runabouts or ski-boats with no ballasts – 659; pontoons – 238; personal watercrafts – 138; wakeboard boats with ballasts – 100; canoes/kayaks or similar – 34; jon boats or skiffs– 10; sailboats – 15 and boat lifts/docks or similar – 3.

The agreement that LAMB has with the county gives them the authority to require inspections and to deny launch, provided that LAMB adheres to the DNR standards. Another item that LAMB’s inspectors do is to remove floating weeds around the dock with long-handled rakes during slack inspections times. This seems to be pretty effective so that the weeds don’t become stuck on the boat and then stay on the trailer to possibly be transported to another lake. Also, the county has encouraged the inspectors to remove weeds from trailers after the boat has been put in the water. This is not typical protocol with the DNR but they allow LAMB to do this provided that the inspector gets the boaters’ permission.

Inspectors always ask what lake was the boat previously on and the data shows that boaters go from lake to lake, and many of the last visited lakes are known to be infested. This reinforces our strategy in performing so many boat inspections so we are on the right track!

As far as enforcement is concerned for law officials, the supervisor of the Stearns Water Patrol attended the AIS training provided by the DNR and passed the information on to his employees. The Stearns County Environmental Services Department is working the Sheriff’s Department to have the deputies and Water Patrol receive AIS training as well.

**Stearns County Infestations**

The following is a list of the aquatic invasive species infestations known at this time. The infestations that were identified in 2017 are noted with an \*.

Zebra mussel

* Lake Augusta (connected to Clearwater Lake) - Clearwater Lake
* Big Birch Lake - Mississippi River
* Grass Lake (connected to Clearwater Lake) - Rossier Lake
* Otter Lake (connected to Clearwater Lake) - Lake Sylvia
* Three Mile Creek between Otter and Clearwater - Lower Watab Lake
* \*Knaus Lake - Watab Lake
* Watab River from Watab Lake to the Mississippi River

Eurasion Milfoil

* Lake Augusta - Lake Caroline - Clearwater Lake
* Lower Spunk Lake - Middle Spunk Lake - Otter Lake
* St. Anna Lake - Lake Sylvia - Little Birch Lake
* Sauk Lake - Clearwater River
* Unnamed wetland along Clearwater River

Flowering Rush

* Sauk Lake

Starry Stonewort

* Lake Koronis (includes Mud Lake)
* Rice Lake
* \*Grand Lake

Note: All of the above data was gathered from the Stearns County Committee Report on AIS in 2017 available to Kit.