



2017 Lake Vermilion Resort Pilot Summary

Background

- 12 Lake Vermilion resorts, campgrounds, and marinas (“resorts”) signed a Private Launch Partnership Agreement to inspect entering and exiting watercraft at their respective private access. 2 resorts chose not to be reimbursed for Level 1 training (in-kind donation of \$200).
 - Optional \$100 training reimbursement
 - Optional \$7 per inspection uploaded into database
- 15 resort owners/employees were trained as Level 1 Watercraft Inspectors
 - All resort inspectors were supplied a tablet and all other necessary inspector equipment.
 - Resort inspectors were identified by a safety vest with the SWCD logo.
- 10 out of 12 resorts conducted watercraft inspections.
 - 3,107 inspections were uploaded - smashing the initial goal of 1,800.
 - 9 resorts collected \$7 per uploaded inspection as reimbursement, and one chose to not be reimbursed for inspections (in-kind donation of \$133).

Resort	June WIP Survey through 6/6/17	July WIP Survey through 6/27/17	August WIP Survey through 7/31/17	September WIP Survey through 8/31/17	October WIP Survey through 9/27/17	November WIP Survey through 11/1/17	Total
McKinley Park Campground	350	202	731	552	387	96	2,318
Head-O-Lake Resort	61	48	72	28	19	11	239
Spring Bay Resort		16	52	57	57	21	203
Retreat Lodge	18	26	44	41	45	14	188
Whispering Winds Resort		26	33	14	21	15	109
Ludlow’s Island Resort		19					19
White Eagle Resort		8	4				12
Life of Riley Resort			5	3			8
Muskego Point Resort						7	7
Vermilion Dam Lodge		4					4
Gruben’s Marina							0
Timbuktu Marina							0
Monthly Total	429	349	941	695	529	164	3,107

Successes

- 3,107 watercraft inspections were conducted at 10 of the 23 private accesses on Vermilion.
- Inspecting watercraft at resorts meant reaching many out-of-town and out-of-state visitors who may launch high-risk watercraft, may be unaware of the AIS in Lake Vermilion, or may be unaware of Minnesota's AIS laws.
 - Based off of vehicle registration data from the surveys, resort inspectors encountered watercraft users from 20 different US states.
- Several resorts encouraged guests to bring their boats to a decontamination unit prior to arrival. One resort used their own hot water pressure washer to clean watercraft.
- Many of the same resorts conducting AIS inspections at their private access, also participated in the AIS Sentry Program, a citizen-science based AIS early detection program. Participating resorts attended a half-day workshop, which included classroom and outdoor training, received a field guide, identification pocket guide, and monitoring tools such as a throw rake to survey their dock area monthly for AIS.
 - Though Gruben's Marina did not conduct inspections, they did survey their dock area monthly for AIS and had two identification inquiries:
 - In July, Gruben's removed a sample from a boat that was later identified as a type of freshwater sponge native to Minnesota
 - In September, while removing a boat that had been in Lake Vermilion since May, Gruben's found organisms in various sizes and locations on the boat's hull. Pictures were taken, and the organisms were identified by a DNR Invertebrate Biologist as an encrusting type of bryozoan, native to Minnesota but not widespread.

Limitations

- Due to the resort industry's constraints, such as minimal staffing and availability, there was difficulty arranging Level 1 training for resort owners and employees. Many resort owners want to help with AIS inspections but logistically couldn't figure out how to do so.
 - Two resorts had staff trained who then left. New staff were unable to fit Level 1 training into their schedule as resort business was in full swing.
 - Staff time is at a premium.

Future Plans

- Increase the number of inspections at private accesses.
 - Increase the number of resorts inspecting watercraft.
 - Increase the number of lakes with resorts that inspect watercraft (both Burntside and Pelican Lake associations have expressed interest).
- Partner with Cass and Itasca Counties to regionally increase inspection efforts at private accesses as a part of the Initiative Foundation approved Multi-Region Resort Ambassador Program: AIS Prevention Partnership.
- Explore training options allowing greater flexibility to meet demands of resorts interested in conducting inspections.