

# Itasca State Park to begin watercraft inspections May 22

All watercraft entering Itasca State Park will be inspected starting May 22, as part of a new plan to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in park waters, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Watercraft will be inspected at the north entrance and hours will vary. During inspection hours, all watercraft arriving at the south or east park entrances will be routed to the north entrance.

Inspectors will check to ensure boaters follow clean, drain, dispose laws and may deny access if necessary. Information will be available to visitors about what they need to do to protect Minnesota waters.

“The lakes and waters of Itasca State Park are precious resources,” said Chris Gronewold, Itasca State Park resource specialist. “Our visitors have a stake in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species in park waters, as well as all waters in the state.”

The law requires boaters to clean weeds and debris from their boats, remove drain plugs and keep them out while traveling, and dispose of unused bait in the trash. Zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil and spiny waterfleas can be easily carried from one lake to another if aquatic plants or water are left on a boat or trailer.

Some invasive species are small and difficult to see at the access. To remove or kill them before moving to another body of water, especially after leaving zebra mussel or spiny waterflea infested waters, the DNR recommends that boaters either:

- Spray boat with high-pressure water;
- Rinse boat with hot water (120 degrees for two minutes, or 140 degrees for 10 seconds); or
- Dry boat and equipment for at least five days.

Watercraft inspections at Itasca State Park are a cooperative effort by the DNR Parks and Trails Division and Clearwater County, which funded the watercraft inspector positions.

More information, including a 30-second public service announcement about stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species, is available at [www.mndnr.gov/AIS](http://www.mndnr.gov/AIS).