

## NEWS RELEASE

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**SUBJECT: Eighth Annual Landing Blitz tackles aquatic invasive species**

**(Waukesha)** – Citizen volunteers and aquatic invasive species experts will be teaming up to educate boaters and conduct free boat checks during the weekend of July 4<sup>th</sup> at boat landings throughout Wisconsin so the boaters do not accidentally spread Eurasian water-milfoil, zebra mussels, and other aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Throughout the eighth annual Landing Blitz inspectors stationed at many high use boat landings from June 30<sup>th</sup>-July 4<sup>th</sup> will help boaters understand Wisconsin's invasive species laws and what steps to follow to avoid spreading invasive species.

During last year's holiday, inspectors contacted 23,000 people and inspected over 10,000 boats across the entire state. Inspectors included citizen volunteers, state and local AIS staff, wardens and water guards, and numerous lake associations, organized by the Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin-Extension's Clean Boats, Clean Waters program.

Other states have seen the success of Wisconsin's Landing Blitz and adopted their own. In 2014, Michigan launched their inaugural Landing Blitz. "We are happy to see the dedicated work of our boat inspectors inspire Michigan to start their own Landing Blitz. Michigan's program complements our efforts and will strengthen regional efforts to control the spread of invasive species," said Bob Wakeman, DNR's Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator.

Invasive species can crowd out native species, disrupt lake ecosystems, interfere with boating, fishing and other recreation, and cause economic harm. The main way that invasive species and fish diseases such as viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) spread to new waters is aboard boating and fishing equipment and with live fish or water moved from one waterbody to another.

Inspectors will demonstrate the required prevention steps boaters must take, provide educational prompts to remind boaters of these steps, and talk about Wisconsin invasive species and VHS laws. Boaters found already practicing the prevention steps can again be rewarded with a free microfiber boating towel. "We're happy to have these prizes to give to boaters. They are always happy to receive the towels and it is a great conversation starter," said Brad Steckart, Waukesha County's AIS coordinator.

Boaters, anglers, and others enjoying Wisconsin waters are required to:

**INSPECT** boats, trailers, and equipment.

**REMOVE** all attached aquatic plants and animals.

**DRAIN** all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment.

**NEVER MOVE** plants or live fish away from a waterbody. \*

\*Limited exceptions apply. Visit [www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov) and search for “bait laws.”