

Clean Boat and Clean Waters 2009

The BLPRD 'Clean Boats and Clean Waters' inspection program for 2009 is off to a great start for our third year. We continue using student volunteers from Unity High School who need volunteer hours for graduation, and want to earn some money. Our program is partially WDNR grant funded so we use the 50% funding formula for payment (they get paid one hour for two hours they work and receive volunteer credit hours for the second one). I have 45 students that have worked so far this year.

Our goal again this year is to cover all four of the public landings on the lake (Balsam Village Beach Landing, 46 Store Landing, Little Balsam, and East Balsam) at various times throughout the summer from opening of fishing through Labor Day. We always have two volunteers at any landing at the same time working weekends and some weekdays.

As a reminder again; this is a three focus program. We inspect boats for invasive species, educate boaters on invasive species along with the local and state rules, and gather data. State law states that it is illegal to launch or transport a with aquatic vegetation attached to boat or trailer.

Boat inspections include asking a series of questions including;

1. Was it used in the last 5 days; if used then questions related to removal of plants, drain water, bait disposal, ice your catch, and wash equipment or dry for at least 5 days.
2. Awareness of the law?
3. Sources of information about invasives that they have experienced. Sources include inspector/volunteer, public service announcement, news, brochure, signage at landings, billboards, and web.
4. Observation Y or N data related to removal of plants on entering or leaving the water.
5. Number of people in the party.
6. Last water-body that the boat was used.

The data is summarized for each day and specific landing, then entered into the State DNR database at a latter time.

Boater awareness of the importance for keeping invasive aquatic species out of the lake is our goal. If you see a volunteer, say 'Thank You', as their efforts with inspection, education, and data collection benefits all of us.

Carl Holmgren, BLPRD Commissioner