



Clean Boats, Clean Waters 2022 Season Report

Overview

In 2022, Clean Lakes Alliance received a Wisconsin DNR Surface Water Grant to participate in its first season of the Clean Boats, Clean Waters (CBCW) program. CBCW is a state-wide aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention program aimed at increasing awareness and education to boaters, anglers, and general lake users on best practices to prevent the further spread of AIS at our local boat landings.

Aquatic invasive species can have broad and detrimental effects on our lakes. Many of these species are commonly introduced to new water bodies by “hitchhiking” on watercraft and surviving inside undrained live wells. To address the issue, trained inspectors offered courtesy boat and trailer inspections at four of the busiest boat launches located on the Yahara lakes: Olin, Olbrich, Marshall, and Warner. Clean Lakes Alliance also coordinated with the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department which covered two additional locations on Lake Waubesa (Babcock Boat Launch) and Lake Kegonsa (Fish Camp Boat Launch).

Courtesy watercraft inspections serve as a front line defense to the threat of emerging AIS. Educating our lake users on how to identify and report AIS, as well as how to implement best management

strategies when moving watercraft between water bodies, provides additional safeguards for our lakes when it comes to harmful invasives.





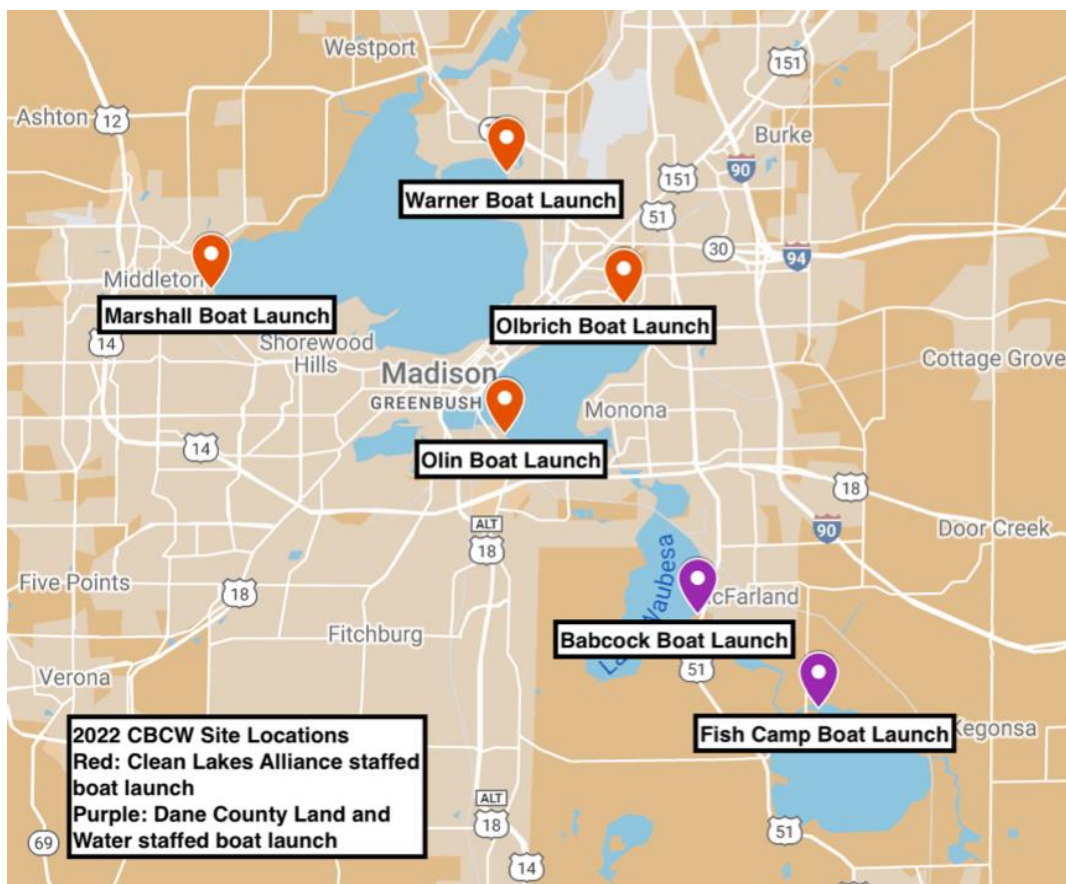
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Program Highlights

- Grant funding awarded through Wisconsin DNR's Surface Water Grant Program
- Hired and trained 3 LTE Watercraft Inspectors
- AIS and watercraft inspection training for LTEs provided by Dane County Land and Water Resources Department (Pete Jopke), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (Shelby Adler), and Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (Matt Wallrath)
- 433.5 inspection hours as part of 107 weekday and weekend shifts throughout the boating season (May 27, 2022 - September 10, 2022)
- 3,615 lake user interactions at 4 boat landings (Marshall, Warner, Olin, and Olbrich)



From left to right: Chloe Czachor, Caitlin McAleavey (CBCW Coordinator), Alyssa Martin, and Pharaoh Graham





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Current state of AIS in the Yahara lakes

The Yahara chain of lakes has already been exposed to several harmful AIS species throughout the last few decades. Below is a table summarizing those species currently found within our lakes, highlighting the importance of measures to prevent their spread or introduction.

	Spiny Water Flea	Zebra Mussel	Chinese Mystery Snail	Banded Mystery Snail	Eurasian Water-Milfoil	Curly Leaf Pondweed	Purple Loose-strike	Water Lettuce	Aquatic Forget-me-not	Yellow Iris
Mendota										
Monona										
Wingra										
Waubesa										
Kegonsa										

Program Details

a. Training and Scheduling

On May 23, 2022, watercraft inspectors began the season with training on how to conduct inspections, how to identify invasive species, and best practices for interacting with and educating boaters. Dane County has participated in the CBCW program for several years, and played a lead role in the training. Inspectors also received supplemental online training offered through the UW Extension Lakes website, as well as guidance from Clean Lakes Alliance coordinators on program and outreach goals.



Pete Jopke (Dane County Land & Water Resources Department) demonstrating proper watercraft cleaning



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Once trained, inspectors were assigned locations and timeframes to ensure adequate coverage at each landing. When making this calendar, inspector hours were skewed to the weekends when boat landings are typically at their busiest. To reach anglers and mid-week lake users, a smaller percentage of shifts were allocated to weekday mornings and early evenings. Inspector shifts were anywhere from 3-6 hours each, based on inspector preference and availability. One inspector was stationed at any given boat landing at a time. Inspectors rotated among the boat landings, switching locations with each shift. As a condition of the grant, at least 200 hours of coverage was required for each set of paired landings (Lake Monona landings being one set, and Lake Mendota landings being another set), for a minimum of 400 hours in total.

Boat Landings	Hours staffed	Total boater interactions
Marshall	102	1,081
Warner	109	919
Olin	111.5	863
Olbrich	111	752
Totals:	433.5	3,615

Inspector Name	Total hours worked	Total shifts
Alyssa Martin	232	46
Chloe Czachor	165.5	49
Pharaoh Graham	36	12

b. Watercraft Inspector Responsibilities

Watercraft inspectors started each interaction by introducing themselves and then asking a set of questions upon the boaters' arrival or departure from the landing. All responses were recorded on data sheets provided by UW Extension Lakes. With CBCW being a statewide program, questions were predetermined.

Questions posed to all boat launch users:

- Are you willing to answer a few questions?
- Have you been contacted by a watercraft inspector this season?
- Has your boat been used on another body of water in the past 5 days? If so, where?



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The questions are designed to collect useful data on lake user habits and possible patterns in AIS transfers, and help foster conversation between inspectors and boat launch users. After boat launch users responded to the set questions, we encouraged inspectors to further engage boaters by asking what questions they had regarding AIS. Inspectors had several outreach flyers, program brochures, and supplemental information for those who requested take away materials to review later. Staff ended each conversation with friendly reminders on state requirements (Chapter NR 40) regarding live bait reuse, draining livewells, and removing all attached aquatic vegetation before leaving the boat landing. Courtesy watercraft inspections were offered and taken up by many boat owners. Watercraft and trailers were thoroughly inspected for any remaining plant debris which was then removed.

After each shift was completed, inspectors entered their hours, location, and collected data into the Wisconsin DNR's SWIMS database.

Chapter NR 40: The Invasive Species Identification, Classification, & Control Rule

The CBCW program utilizes the guidelines established in NR 40 to prevent the spread of invasive species within the state of Wisconsin. The rule establishes “preventive measures” to highlight what actions boaters can take to slow their spread. For all boaters, paddlers, and anglers, the following rules apply:

- INSPECT your boat, trailer, and equipment.
- REMOVE any attached aquatic plants or animals (before launching, after loading, and before transporting on a public highway).
- DRAIN water from boats, motors, and equipment.
- NEVER MOVE live fish away from a waterbody.
- DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash.
- BUY minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer. Use leftover minnows only under the following conditions:
 - You may take leftover minnows away from any state water and use them again on that same water.
 - You may use leftover minnows on other waters only if no lake or river water or other fish were added to their container.

Our inspectors shared these requirements with each boat launch user and acted as a resource for those who wanted to learn more.





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2022 Results

Questions posed to all boat launch users:

- Are you willing to answer two questions?
 - a. Yes - 3,589
 - b. No - 26
- Have you already been contacted by a watercraft inspector this season?
 - a. Yes - 770
 - b. No - 1,387
- Has your boat been used on another body of water in the past 5 days?
 - a. No - 1,918
 - b. Yes - 181
 - i. If so, where:



Within the watershed:	No. of responses
Lake Mendota	28
Lake Monona	30
Lake Waubesa	32
Lake Kegonsa	9
Outside the watershed:	
Beaver Dam Lake (Dodge County)	2
Blue Spring Lake (Jefferson County)	1
Castle Rock Lake (Juneau County)	1
Delavan Lake (Walworth County)	1
Fox Lake (Dodge County)	1
Green Bay	2
Green Lake (Green Lake County)	1
Lac La Belle (Waukesha County)	1
Lake Delton (Sauk County)	2
Lake Geneva (Walworth County)	4

Lake Koshkonong (Jefferson County)	1
Lake Michigan	1
Lake Redstone (Sauk County)	1
Lake Ripley (Jefferson County)	2
Lake Winnebago	2
Lake Wisconsin	4
Mississippi River	3
Rock Lake (Jefferson County)	3
Rock River (Jefferson County)	1
Twin Lakes (Kenosha County)	1
Willow Flowage (Oneida County)	1
Wisconsin River	4
Declined/unable to specify waterbody	42
Total:	181



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The numbers above reflect a general receptiveness of lake users to interact with the inspectors and answer questions. Less than 1% of total boat launch users declined to speak with an inspector. If launch users did not want to engage with an inspector, we did not push them to give responses. The results above also show that, by the season's end, more than half of boat launch users (64%) had already interacted with an inspector at some point during the season.

It's worth noting that total interactions (3,615) represents the total number of individuals who were actively engaged with the inspectors. For example, if there were four people in a boat, and all four were participating in answering questions and sharing information, then all four individuals were tallied in this count. Conversely, if an inspector talked with a boater who had three others waiting on the dock that did not participate in the conversation, then only one individual was tallied for this count.



Questions regarding if boat launch users had been contacted by an inspector already this season and if they had their boat on another waterbody within the last 5 days were only asked of the boat owners themselves (not of the accompanying group). This resulted in fewer responses compared to total interactions. The number of responses to these questions is also lower than the total interactions count due to shoreline anglers without watercraft being interviewed.

A point of discrepancy with the total number of interactions is if a boat launch user stated they had already been contacted by an inspector earlier in the season. These responses were still tallied and recorded for that day regardless if they had interacted with an inspector on a prior occurrence. We are unable to determine how many of the total interactions are repeats. Because CBCW is a statewide program, many people shared that they had previously interacted with either other Clean Lakes Alliance inspectors, Dane County staff, or CBCW inspectors in other counties.

In addition to the questions asked above, Clean Lakes Alliance decided to have inspectors collect home zip codes from each of the boat launch users to shed light on where they were coming from. Zip code data was only collected during the last three weeks of the season and many people declined to share their home zip codes. These factors contributed to only 294 responses being documented. Only one zip code was collected from each group. Of the 294 responses, 31% of boat launch users resided outside of the watershed.



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Lessons Learned

With this being our pilot year, we assessed areas for improvement and what we will continue for next year's program. Each inspector also provided detailed responses to what they believed worked well and what should be changed for next year.

a. What went well

- i. Skewing shifts to the weekends when landings are busiest.
- ii. In-person and virtual training opportunities with Dane County Land and Water Resources Department, Wisconsin DNR, UW-Extension Lakes, and Clean Lakes Alliance.
- iii. Visuals and AIS samples for boaters to interact with, having supplemental material to share, and program stickers and tattoos for kids.
- iv. Bi-weekly (virtual) group check-ins with inspectors to debrief on what they were noticing or struggling with. This time also allowed me to answer questions inspectors were receiving from boaters that they weren't knowledgeable on, and provide additional resources and updates.
- v. Periodically visiting inspectors and joining them when interacting with boaters and lake users. Being out with the inspectors was insightful and helped the program coordinator provide training and support. This also allowed for picture taking that could be used in program-related outreach.
- vi. Extra hours buffered into the schedule for those inevitable times when inspectors had to cut their hours short due to weather conditions or personal conflicts. Because we had a set number of hours to hit at each landing, inspectors were allowed to make up hours they missed due to inclement weather later that week, allowing us to stay on track with our grant requirements.
- vii. Expressing to inspectors the importance of making a friendly and informative introduction to all boat launch users. This let them know who we were and the purpose of our program. It also let boaters know we were not a regulatory agency looking to review their catch, license, watercraft, etc.
- viii. Encouraging communication by call, text, or email should inspectors have any issues or need support, especially because inspectors were alone on site.





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- ix. Setting clear expectations on what to wear, set up, and share with/ask boaters during their shifts. Likewise, making it clear to inspectors they never needed to push an aggressive or uncomfortable interaction. Inspectors were not meant to be a sounding board for all frustrated lake users and could walk away from any interaction (or avoid disgruntled lake users entirely) if they felt the need.

b. Areas for improvement

- i. One of the biggest requests from inspectors was being able to have another inspector there during the busy weekend shifts. For example, many of the weekend shifts had over 100 interactions in the span of a few hours. This resulted in less meaningful interactions between inspectors and launch users, as well as several boaters being missed in our counts because there wasn't enough coverage. Moving forward, more joint shifts during these times will be added into the calendar so our inspectors can provide more thorough coverage, learn from, and get to know each other better.
- ii. As the season went on, more and more of our launch users had already interacted with our inspectors at least once, if not several times. For certain launch users, this led to a bit of frustration or resentment for having to repeatedly answer our inspector's questions. Clarification is needed by UW Extension Lakes and the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department on how to best move forward with these encounters and how to ensure every launch user has a pleasant experience.
- iii. Providing additional training and information sharing opportunities with inspectors. Not all of our inspectors had backgrounds in lake ecology or knew specifics on our chain of lakes. Moving forward, more expanded training for inspectors will be made available to improve their awareness and understanding of related lake topics.
- iv. Similar to above, creating a cheat sheet for inspectors to be able to provide contact information to lake users asking about certain lake issues. Clean Lakes Alliance has no authority or responsibility over the Yahara lakes despite certain public perception. Giving launch users information about who is the best entity to contact with their concerns would be useful for inspectors.
- v. Pontoon ride around Lake Mendota earlier in the season to give context for our inspectors who have not experienced the lake from the water before. We offered this experience near the end of last season and it was determined by inspectors to be an insightful and useful opportunity to learn more about the lakes they are aiming to protect.
- vi. A shift duration of 3-4 hours was considered an ideal timeframe.