DOUGLAS AND POPE COUNTIES

Public Water Access in Minnesota:

The Minnesota DNR State Parks and Trails’ water recreation program provides approximately 1,650 boat access sites, over 365 fishing piers and show fishing sites and manages 35 designated Water Trails in Minnesota. The DNR, Federal Government and local community-operate boat access sites. See the table on the right for specific site information. The DNR boating programs are funded by user fees including boat gas and boat fees related to marine fuel.

Public accesses are usually open 24 hours unless otherwise posted. Many boat launch ramps have boat sites, but some have sites, especially on smaller rivers, are only open in the summer. Bathrooms and docks are usually located only on the larger and busier sites.

Public Water Access Rules – The launch area must be kept clear and the following activities are unlawful: littering, parking, swimming, boating, and consuming alcoholic beverages. See Minnesota Rules, chapter 6218 for complete rules.

Boating in Minnesota:

The annual Minnesota Boat-Register Guide summarizes boating laws and regulations in an easy-to-read form. The guide supplies information about operating watercraft on the state’s waters. In addition, boater education age requirements apply to operators 17 years old and younger.

Licenses – All motorized and non-motorized watercraft are licensed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Please contact the DNR license bureau for information.

Fishing in Minnesota:

Fishing Regulations and Licensing – All persons 16 and older are required to have the appropriate license with them while fishing. The Minnesota DNR State Parks and Trails-Bemidji Administrative: DNR - MN Dept. of Natural Resources

Aquatec Invasive Species (AIS) Laws and Requirements:

The DNR lists lakes and rivers as “infested” with certain aquatic invasive species.

To identify an infested lake, look at “invasive species” alert signs at the access. You can also use lida-fielder to find if a particular lake is listed as unknown. Remember to always look for more information about infested waters, including an up-to-date infested lakes list and additional location information, visit end.gov/invasives.

Before leaving the water access or shoreline property, you MUST:

- Clean off AIS aquatic plants and animals
- Drain all water including bilge, live wells, ballast, fuel, bilge, and ballast tanks
- Clean and dry piling and storefront.

Get into the habit of taking those three simple steps, and it will become part of your routine. Pull away from the boat ramp area. Check for and remove plants while standing up and down. Pull the plug when adjusting the motor. If you have other people/pets involved with you, have them help adding a few minutes will help safeguard our waters.

Cleaning water-related equipment is just as important as cleaning boats while you’re cleaning your boat, please remember to also:

- Clean anchors, ropes, fishing tackle, and any objects that were in the water. Many species can be transported in the mud or in fishing lines and rope.
- Dump water out of canoes, kayaks, and other watercraft before leaving.
- Notify the DNR if you are DIDT related goods. Trout fishing requires a trout stamp. For more information, call 1-888-MN-DNR.

Bait Laws

It is illegal to transport lake and river water. To save your bait, remember to also:

- Bring ice can be a good idea on warm days to cool down the bait.
- Always purchase your bait locally.
- If you are harvesting bait, commercial fishing, or diverting or transporting water in a manner that will benefit invasive species.
- When you see the Watercraft Inspectors, please be helpful. That way when the Watercraft Inspectors are here to ensure watercraft and fishing piers are ready to go.
- Working Together to Protect the Waters

DNR: 800-657-3469. To learn more about AIS laws and regulations, visit end.gov/invasives.

Federal Aid Project funded by your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels.

Clean your watercraft, Drain all water, Dispose of unused bait.

Safe Boating

Life Jackets – On all boats (except a sailboard) regardless of length there must be a readily accessible Coast Guard approved wearable life jacket for each person on board. In addition, on all boats 16 feet or longer, except canoes and kayaks, there must also at least one throwable device, such as a ring buoy or seat cushion.

Boating While Intoxicated (DWI) – Boating while intoxicated is illegal. For persons found under the influence there are significant penalties, including fines and possible jail sentence.

Personal Watercraft - Special laws apply including wearing a life jacket and operating at a slow speed at certain distances from other watercraft, swimmers, and other objects in the water. Operator age restrictions also apply. Consult the Boating Guide for more information. A DNR valid watercraft license is available free of charge.

Watercraft interceptors are here to ensure watercraft and equipment are “clean, clean, not guilty.” If you have assistance, have questions about the laws, or are curious about the program, please ask.

Ways you can help the Watercraft Interceptors:

- Please clean your boat and pull your plug so on as you are safely able. That way when the interceptors come, the inspection process will move quickly.
- If there is a decontamination unit present, please follow the instructions given to the inspector for your safety and theirs. There will be plenty of time when a fisher works with them, work from a safe distance
- Always be courteous, be friendly, work with them, work from a safe distance
- Communicate, if you have questions, ask if you are not sure if you have assistance, have questions about the laws, or are curious about the program, please ask.

Public Water Access in Douglas & Pope Counties

Public Water Accesses in Douglas & Pope Counties

Fish: C — Crappie, L — Largemouth Bass, M — Muskellunge, N — Northern Pike, S — Sunfish, SB — Smallmouth Bass, W — Walleye, N / A — Not Available

Accessible Waters with Boat Ramp Facilities

Lake Milton

Fishing piers and developed shore fishing sites have been designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Fishing access is generally located within 300 feet of the site and is a hard surface path from the parking area to the facility. The DNR cooperates with a variety of local units of government to maintain the facilities.

Sometimes, weather or vandalism can make these designated sites no longer accessible. If a site is found to be out of compliance, report problems to the site administrator listed in this table. Contact the DNR Information Center, 651-296-6157 (888-ENDMINN) or email info.dnr.state.mn.us.