Public Water Access in Minnesota:
The Minnesota DNR State Parks and Trails’ water recreation program provides approximately 1,260 boat accesses, over 365 fishing piers and doors, fishing sites, and manages 35 designated Water Trail in Minnesota. The DNR, Federal Government and local communities operate boat accesses. See the tables for specific site information. The DNR boat programs are funded by user fees including boat license & gas tax related to marine use.

Public accesses are usually open 24 hours unless otherwise posted. Most have parking lots but some sites, especially on smaller rivers, are in or on water. Bathrooms and docks are usually located only on the larger and busier lakes.

Public Water Access Rules - The launch area must be kept clear and the following activities are unallowed: littering, camping, parking, fishing, building fires, and preventing adverse behaviour. See Minnesota Rules, chapter 6212 for complete rules.

Boating in Minnesota:
The annual Minnesota Boating Guide summarizes Minnesota’s water regulations and offers a free publications of facilities and services as well as answers questions pertaining to DNR recreational fishing equipment and motor boat fuels. Check the DNR Information Center at (651) 296-6157 or 1-888-MINNDNR for more information about infanted boats, including up-to-date infanted boats list and additional location information, visit Minnesota.gov/infanteds. Before leaving the water access or shoreline property, you MUST:

1. Clean off AIS, aquatic plants and animals.
2. Drain all water including bogs, hatchets, bellows, bat bails, baskets, motor, and mooring equipment.
3. Pull out any lead and clean out.

Get the best of both by taking these three simple steps, and it will become part of your routine. Pull away from the boat ramp area. Check for and remove plants while dragging the boat down. Pull the plug when adjusting the motor. If you have other people (especially kids) with you, have them help. Adding a few minutes will help safeguard our waters.

Fishing in Minnesota:
Fishing Regulations and Licensing - All persons 16 and older are required to have the appropriate license with them when fishing. Licenses are available through the DNR License Bureau, most County Auditors and many stores that sell fishing related goods. Most fishing requires a license. For more information call the DNR Information Center at (651) 296-6157 or 1-888-666-6167. To purchase a license by phone 24 hours a day, call 1-888-MN licence (654-3423).

Selective Harvest Fishing - Improved technology and increased fishing have caused the quality of fishing to decline in many waters. Practicing “Selective Harvest” offers anglers an opportunity to take some fish while releasing others back into the water to improve fishing quality. There are some tips to use for effective Selective Harvest fishing:

1. Use barbless hooks
2. Use light line
3. Play the fish quickly and handle the fish carefully
4. Never hold the fish by the eyes
5. Use a needle nose pliers to remove hooks or cut them out while in water if it is too deep
6. Ease the fish back into the water, do not throw it back.

AIS Bait Laws
It is illegal to transport lake and river water. To save your bait (minnows or leaches), the DNR recommends bringing “fish safe”, treated water from home and keeping it in your vehicle or cooler. Draining water can be a good idea on warm days to cool down the water.

DO NOT dump untreated bait water into bodies or on the shoreline. Untreated bait balls in the intestine or in a designated compost bin. Untreated water must be disposed of in the trash.

Working Together to Protect the Waters
Watercraft inspectors are here to ensure watercraft and equipment are “clean in, clean out!” If you need assistance, have questions about the laws, or are curious about the program, please ask.

Ways you can help the Watercraft Inspectors:
1. Please carry your boat and pull your plug as soon as you are safely able to. That way when the inspector comes, the inspector process will move quickly.
2. If there is a Decontamination Unit present, please follow all the instructions given by the inspector, for your safety and theirs. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and watch them work from a safe distance.

Ways the Watercraft Inspector can help you:
1. The inspectors have tools, wrenches and pliers, so if you are having trouble with your plug, ask!
2. If there are weeds that are hard to reach, inspectors can also help pull needed out of boat or other such tasks. They also have goldblading tools for plants.

When you see the Watercraft Inspectors, please be cooperative. The law requires compliance with inspectors, and it will help everyone to do their way in a timely and pleasant manner.

Access to Public Water Accesses in Martin & Watonwan Counties:
Public water access sites developed after 2012 have been designed with accessible parking spaces and accessible routes to the top of the boat ramp. Some sites have additional accessible route to a dock or other site amenity. These sites are identified with the red, accessible symbol shown above.

Fishing piers and developed shore fishing sites have been designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Parking is generally located within 300 feet of the site and there 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 fishing piers.

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