Public Water Access in Minnesota:
The Minnesota DNR State Parks and Trails’ water recreation program provides approximately 1,500 boat accesses, over 365 fishing piers and four fishing sites and manages 35 designated Water Trails in Minnesota. The DNR, Federal Government and local communities operate boat accesses; see the table on the right for specific site information. The DNR boating programs are funded by user fees reducing boat engine & gas tax related to marine use.

PUBLIC ACCESS RULES: The launch area must be kept clear and the following activities are unlawful: parking, camping, shooting, building fires, and unauthorized discharge of sewage. See Minnesota Rules, chapter 220 for complete rules.

Boating in Minnesota:
The annual Minnesota Boating Guide summarizes Minnesota boating laws and regulations in an easy-to-read form. The guide supplies information about operating watercraft on the state’s lakes and rivers. Operator age requirements apply to operators 17 years old and younger.

Licensing - All registered and non-registered watercraft must be 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 or permit when fishing. Licenses are available through the DNR License Information Center at (651) 296-6157 or 1-888-DNR-INFO (1-888-367-4636). To identify an infested lake or river, look for orange Invasive Species Alert signs at the access. For more information about infested water, including up-to-date infested lakes and rivers list and additional location information, visit mndnr.gov/lakefind.

Invasive Aquatic Species (IAS) Laws and Requirements: The DNR lists lakes and rivers as “infested” with certain invasive aquatic species. If you are harvesting bait, commercial fishing, or diverting or taking water, you might need to follow special regulations in infested waters.

To identify an infested lake or river, look for orange Invasive Species Alert signs at the access. For more information about infested water, including up-to-date infested lakes list and additional location information, visit mndnr.gov/lakefind.

AIS Bait Laws
- It is illegal to transport lake and river water to save your bait (minnows or leeches), 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 unwanted bait into water bodies or on the shore. Unwanted bait belongs in the trash or a designated compost bin. Unwanted waste must be disposed of in the trash.

Free publications of facilities and services as well as equipment and motor boat fuels.

The DNR Information Center is available to provide Minnesota’s boating laws and regulations in an easy-to-read form. The guide supplies information about operating watercraft on the state’s lakes and rivers. Operator age requirements apply to operators 17 years old and younger.