Public Access Water in Minnesota:

The Minnesota DNR State Parks and Trail’s water recreation program provides approximately 1,450 boat accesses, over 350 fishing piers and shore fishing sites and manages 35 designated Water Tracts 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 financed by fees included in boating fees, gas tax related to marine use.

Public accesses are usually open 24 hours unless otherwise posted. Most sites have launch ramps but some sites, especially on smaller rivers, are only in operation during hours. Bathrooms and docks are usually limited on the larger river sites.

Public Water Access Rules - The launch area must be kept clear and the following activities are unlawful: littering, camping, fishing, boating free, and consuming alcoholic beverages. See Minnesota Rules, chapter 610 for complete rules.

Boating in Minnesota

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

Licenses: All motorized and non-motorized 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 with them when fishing. Licenses are available through the DNR License Bureau, most County Auditors and many stores that sell fishing related goods. Trout fishing requires a trout stamp. For more information call the DNR Information Center at (651) 296-6517 or 1-888-646-4237. To purchase a license by phone, call 1-888-FISH-UME (646-8663).

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

1. Use barbed hooks.
2. Play the fish quickly and handle the fish carefully.
3. Never hold the fish by the gills.
4. Use a needle nose pliers to remove hooks or cut the line if it is too deep.
5. 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 and your water, do not transport bait water. If you are harvesting bait, commercial fishing, or diverting or removing water from one waterbody to another, you have the responsibility to ensure that all aquatic invasive species in your water are disposed of properly. There are no exceptions to this rule. To ensure your water is free of AIS, DO NOT pump unwanted water into any other body of water.

DO NOT dump unwanted water into water bodies or on the shoreline! Unwanted bait belongs in the trash or a designated wastewater system.

Waters with Invasive Species

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

To identify an infested lake, look for orange Invasive Species Alert signs at the access. You can also use LakeFinder to find out if a particular lake is listed as infested: mndnr.gov/lakefind. For more information about infested waters, including an up-to-date list of infested lakes and additional location information, visit mndnr.gov/infestedsites.

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

1. Clean all aquatic plants and animals.
2. Drain all water including live wells, live wells, bait buckets, motor and ballast tanks.
3. Pull the plug and let it out.
4. Get into the habit of taking these three simple steps, and it will soon become part of your routine. Pull full from the boat ramp area. Check for and remove plants while stopping the boat. 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.

Free Watercraft Inspections

Most sites have launch ramps, but some sites, especially on smaller lakes, are only in operation during hours. Bathrooms and docks are usually limited on the larger river sites.

Public Water Accesses in Murray & Nobles Counties

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

Minnesota State Parks and Trails-New Ulm (305) 559-0000

The DNR Information Center

The DNR Information Center is available to provide free publications of facilities and services as well as answer questions pertaining to DNR recreational opportunities in Minnesota. 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4040 651-296-6157 (local) or 1-888-MN-INSCORE mndnr.gov

AIS Bait Laws

It is illegal to transport lake and river water. To save your bait (or someone else’s), the DNR recommends bringing “fish soil”, treated water from home and keeping it in your vehicle or cooler. Boating guides can be a good idea on warm days to cool down the water.

DO NOT dump unwanted bait water into water bodies or on the shoreline! Unwanted bait belongs in the trash or a designated compost bin. Unwanted worms must be disposed of in the trash.

Working Together to Protect the Waters

The Watercraft Inspectors are here to enforce 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:

Way to help the Watercraft Inspectors:

1. Be sure your boat and all your equipment are “clean-in, clean-out” if you need assistance, have questions about the laws, or are curious about the program, please ask.

Way the Watercraft Inspectors can help you:

1. All inspections have taken place and the watercraft Inspectors can help pull weeds off boats or other such tasks. They also have grabbing tools for plants.

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