



Sturgeon Chain Lake Association Watercraft Inspection Program 2023 Season Update

(Jon Utecht – NSL SWCD AIS Program Coordinator) – 11/16/2023

2023 Watercraft Inspection Highlights

- **Inspectors completed 469 inspections at 4 public accesses from May 12th – October 7th**
 - 96% Minnesota Boats
 - Other 4% from 10 other states
 - Of Entering inspections 58% of boaters had spoken with inspectors this year.
 - 72% (339 watercraft) of inspections were conducted on entering watercraft
 - Of those entering, 17% (56 watercraft) have been out of the water less than 5 days
 - 14 of these watercrafts came from other lakes. These are the watercraft that have the highest risk of spreading AIS.
 - 7 boaters had their boat plugs in when speaking to the inspectors, none arrived at the access with the plug in (all boaters were Minnesota residents)
- **Zebra Mussel monitoring settling plate deployed near Little Sturgeon (Rudstrom) landing**
 - No signs of zebra mussels found on the plate
- **Inspectors continue to engage with Lake users and promote Clean, Drain, Dry efforts**
 - Lots of free handouts: bobbers, key floats, plug holders, koozies, pamphlets, **TOWELS!**
- **Conducted AIS booth at Celebrate Side Lake event**
 - Educated public on AIS and how to perform a proper watercraft inspection
- **Breakdown of Inspections conducted at each location**

Lake / Access	Inspector Hours	Inspections Conducted	Efficiency (Inspections/Hour)
Perch	37	35	0.95
Little Sturgeon / Rudstrom	184	348	1.89
Sturgeon / McCarthy State Park	78	17	0.22
Sturgeon / Sixberry's	129	69	0.53
Totals	428	469	1.10

2023 Struggles

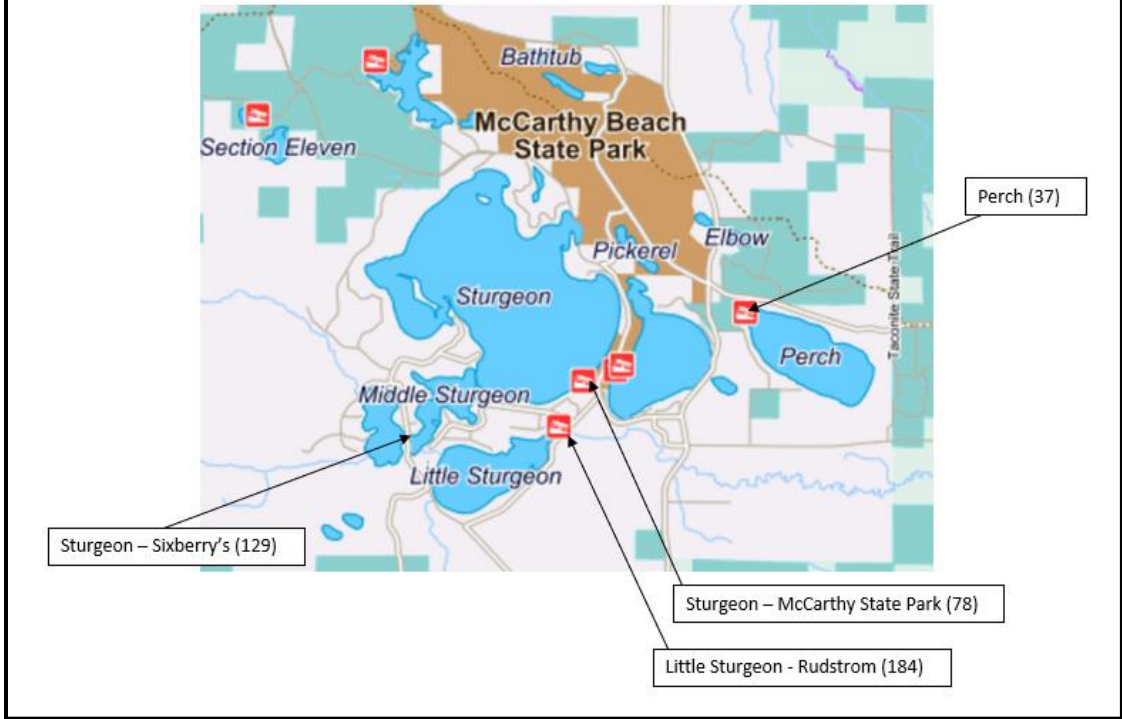
- **Watercraft Inspector STAFFING!**
 - SWCD program only able to hire 72% of needed inspectors
- **Decontamination Location**
 - Was unable to locate or get permissions for a site suitable for a decontamination unit
- **Water levels at McCarthy State Park (Sturgeon) – limited access most of the summer**

2024 Goals

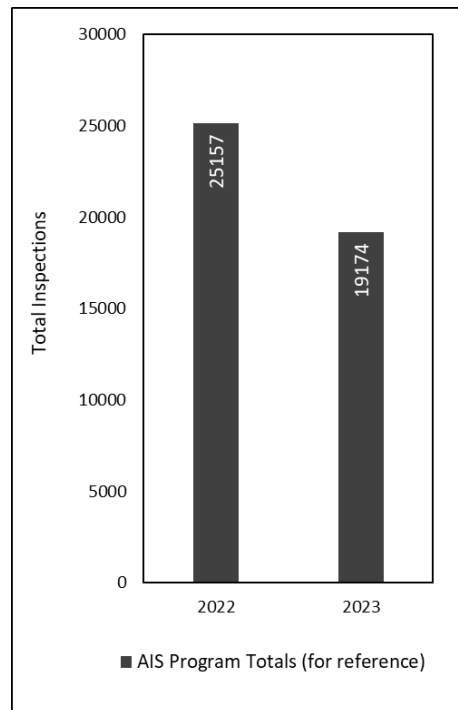
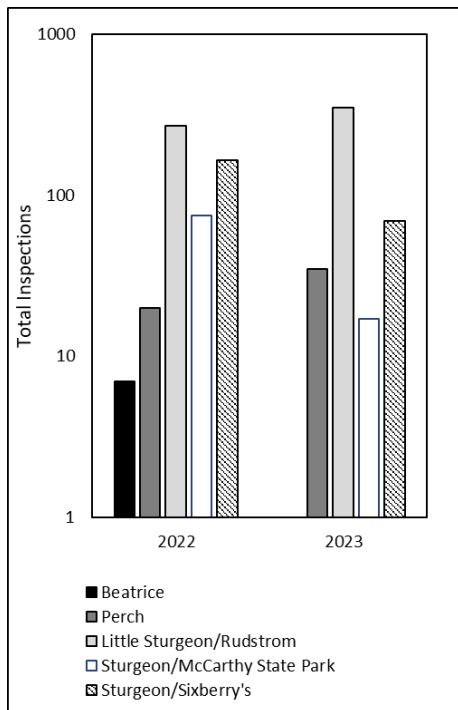
- **Increase the number of Watercraft Inspectors**
 - Boost inspector shifts/hours around the area
- **Continue to provide free items to promote Clean, Drain, Dry**
- **Continue to educate public about AIS in the Sturgeon Chain area**
 - Make sure boaters are completing inspections when inspectors are not around
- **Explore possibilities of adding a decontamination unit to the Sturgeon Chain area**
- **Add Side Lake into watercraft inspection schedule (with State Park permission)**
- **Work with the lake association to provide AIS support!**

Sturgeon Lake Area Watercraft Inspections (2023)

428 inspections conducted



Map of inspection locations with 2023 total inspections collected in parenthesis.



Historical inspection trends. The graph on left shows inspection totals for each Sturgeon Chain lake included in the inspection program. The right graph is totals for the entire NLSWCD watercraft inspection program during the same period (for reference).