

Vermont Public Waterbody Access Citizen Monitoring Instructions & Etiquette

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Program

802-241-3777

The overland movement of boats, personal watercraft, fishing gear, and other aquatic equipment is a significant method by which zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, water chestnut and other aquatic nuisance species (ANS) are spread between waterbodies. Citizen monitoring activities at public access areas can be an effective tool in preventing the spread of ANS. It is essential, however, that volunteers and paid staff involved in monitoring are well informed and act in a positive, non-confrontational manner. Over the past several years, the Agency of Natural Resources has received complaints from boaters and other waterbody users who had negative experiences with access monitors. This guide, developed by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC), is intended to help optimize the effectiveness of access monitoring efforts and ensure a positive experience for all.

Vermont Statutes prohibit the transport or introduction of specific nonnative aquatic plants and animals as described above, but there is no law requiring that boats or equipment be cleaned before being placed in a body of water. Therefore we can only politely encourage boaters and other water users to do so. **We cannot force a boater to inspect or wash their boat.** *

*The one exception to this is on the Quebec portion of Lake Memphremagog where Quebec municipalities have the authority to ticket anyone without possession of a certificate verifying that their boat was washed prior to launching.

Goal:

Prevent the introduction of aquatic nuisance species to Vermont waterbodies.

Objectives:

1. Educate water users about aquatic nuisance species and appropriate spread prevention techniques.
2. Assist with the inspection and washing of boats and trailers to locate and remove plants and zebra mussels before they are introduced to waterbodies.
3. Report violations of Vermont state laws to the proper authorities as appropriate.

Procedure:

1. When possible, approach boater/waters user before they put their boat or other equipment into the water. Often a boater will pull into an access area and immediately begin to back the trailer into the water. You will want to position yourself so that you are not in the boater's way and can be seen. You can politely motion to the boater to stop, but **you have no legal authority to force boaters to stop and you should not interfere with them in anyway.**
2. Approach boater/waters user and introduce yourself by name and affiliation (e.g. Lake Wannabe Association). Explain that you are there to inform water users about aquatic nuisance species. Ask boaters if they are familiar with aquatic nuisance species. Ask where the boat and equipment was last used and how recently, and whether any precautions were taken to ensure that the boat/trailer were free of aquatic nuisance species before arriving at the access.

3. Provide accurate information about aquatic nuisance species and boat/trailer cleaning techniques (see below) as necessary. Offer to give the boater informational watch cards or other handouts if available (copies may be obtained from VTDEC). Inform the boater of Vermont's ANS transport law (V.S.A. 10 ' 1266) and the fact that it is illegal to transport Eurasian watermilfoil, water chestnut, zebra mussels, and quagga mussels. It is important that this be done in a non-accusatory manor and tone.
4. If the boater indicated that the boat had been in a different waterbody within a period of 10 days or less and the boat and equipment had not been cleaned, or plants or other foreign objects can be seen attached to the boat or equipment, offer to assist the boater with an inspection and cleaning (see below). **Boat cleaning assistance can only be provided with the boater's consent. You have no legal authority to force individuals to clean their boats.** If plants are present on a boat or trailer and the owner insists that they are native plants of no consequence, you should point out that tiny juvenile zebra mussels will often attach to submerged aquatic plants (native and nonnative). Therefore, all plant material should be removed before placing the boat in the water.
5. Upon completion of the inspection and cleaning, encourage the boater to perform the same procedures each time the boat or other equipment is removed from the water. Point out that if a Vermont State Trooper or Fish and Wildlife Warden were to observe a prohibited species on the boater's boat or trailer, a \$150.00 fine (plus a surcharge) could be imposed.
6. If a violation of a Vermont law or regulation is observed and the violator refuses to comply with requests to correct the problem, the monitor should record details of the incident and contact the proper enforcement authorities. When appropriate, record the make and model of the automobile, the license plate number and state of both the vehicle and boat trailer, and the state and registration number of the boat. Also, write down a description of what was observed (i.e. several Eurasian watermilfoil plants hanging off of trailer axle). When appropriate, collect a sample of the plant or animal and place it and a dampened paper towel into a Ziploc bag. Take pictures of the violation if possible. Immediately call the district Fish and Wildlife Warden or Auxiliary State Trooper. **You should not attempt to inhibit the violator's actions in any way.**

Please keep in mind that the vast majority of recreational water users are responsible stewards of Vermont's waterbodies and are willing to do the right thing if properly informed. The goal of citizen monitoring is to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species. It is often more productive to be lenient with boaters who are cooperative and apologetic, and seem concerned about the issues, then it is to cause them to be fined. However, if a water user is performing an illegal act and is particularly recalcitrant, then the law should be properly enforced.

Boat Cleaning Procedures:

1. Visually inspect all parts of the boat, trailer and automobile that may have entered the water. This includes: boat engine, propeller, hydraulic arms, trim plates, anchor line, and impeller port; trailer rollers, pads, axle, wheels and frame; automobile bumper and hitch. Look for any plants, plant fragments, zebra mussels or other foreign material. Be on the lookout for small fragments stuck inside the frame of the trailer.

2. Remove all plants, zebra mussels or other foreign material, and discard in the trash. It is important that the discarded materials not be left on the ground where they may be washed into the waterbody.
3. Inspect the inside of the boat to be sure there is no water trapped in the bilge, live well or other compartments. If there is, drain the water. Also lower the engine drive unit to allow water to drain from the lower cooling system. If the boat is arriving at the access from somewhere else, do not drain the water where it can run into the lake.
4. Run your hand over the hull of the boat below the water line. If the surface feels coarse like sandpaper it may mean that young zebra mussels are attached. If this is the case the boat should be thoroughly washed with hot, high-pressure water and dried in the sun for at least 5 days before being placed in a body of water. If facilities are available, it is a good idea to always thoroughly rinse the boat with tap water before placing it in a different waterbody. This is particularly important if the boat had been moored for an extended period in a zebra mussel infested waterbody

Other activities that can spread ANS:

Dumping of bait buckets
Dumping of aquariums
Scuba diving
Fishing
Construction activities (e.g., retaining wall repairs)

Equipment to watch for:

All boats (motorized and non motorized)
Personal watercraft (jet skis)
Water skiing equipment
Snorkeling/SCUBA gear - wet suits, buoyancy compensators
Fishing gear - bait buckets, fishing line
Aquatic construction equipment - erosion barriers, benthic barriers
Any other equipment used in the water

Vermont Laws Pertaining to ANS:

Zebra Mussel; Eurasian Watermilfoil; Water Chestnut; Quagga Mussel (Title 10 §1266)

No person shall transport zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugensis*), or water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) to or from any Vermont surface water.

As of May 1999, this law is punishable by a civil ticket of \$150.00 (plus a surcharge) similar to a traffic violation. This law does not restrict proper harvesting or other control activities undertaken for the purpose of eliminating or controlling the growth or propagation of these species. Also, the Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources may grant permission for the transport of these species for scientific or educational purposes. A letter from the secretary authorizing the transport must accompany the specimens during transport.

Minnow Nets, Traps, Transporting and Use (Title 10 §106)

A person shall not use or transport either dead or alive any spiny rayed fish, members of the pike or herring families, carp, goldfish, or lamprey for the use as bait; provided, however, that these species may be used as bait in those waters where taken.

*The herring family includes alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) a small forage fish that was recently introduced to Lake St. Catherine in Poultney, VT. Currently, alewives can only be used as a baitfish in Lake St. Catherine.*

Control of Fish, Game; Powers of Commissioner (Title 10 §4138)

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, through the Commissioner, may take necessary actions to control, in public waters, aquatic vegetation, insects or aquatic life, for the purpose of improving such waters as a habitat. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has the authority to control aquatic invertebrate species if improving habitat is interpreted broadly.

Placing Fish in Waters (Title 10 § 4605)

(a) A person shall not introduce or attempt to introduce pickerel or great northern pike into any waters, or any fish, except trout or salmon, into public waters frequented by trout or salmon.

(b) A person shall not bring into the state for the purpose of planting or introducing, or to plant or introduce, into any of the inland or outlying waters of the state any live fish or the live spawn thereof, unless, upon application in writing therefore, the person obtains from the commissioner a permit so to do.

The Fish & Wildlife Board or the Commissioner of the Department of Fish & Wildlife may authorize stocking of any fish in the state.

Importation, Stocking Wild Animal (Title 10 § 4709)

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, through the Commissioner, has the authority to regulate the introduction of any live wild bird or animal of any kind. The Department may dispose of unlawfully imported wildlife as it may judge best, and the state may collect damages from the violator for all expenses incurred.

Quarantine #3 - Noxious Weeds

The Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets by the authority of 6 V.S.A., Chapter 84, Pest Survey, Detection and Management has adopted Quarantine Rule #3 prohibiting the movement, sale, possession, and/or distribution in Vermont of 32 aquatic, wetland, and terrestrial plants and all federally listed noxious weeds. The aquatic and wetland species are as follows:

Class A (prohibited movement, sale, possession, cultivation and/or distribution)

Cabomba caroliniana (fanwort)
Egeria densa (Brazilian elodea)
Hydrilla verticillata (hydrilla)
Hygrophila polysperma (E. Indian hygrophila)
Myriophyllum aquaticum Verdc. (parrot feather)
Myriophyllum heterophyllum (variable-leaved milfoil)
Salvinia auriculata (giant salvinia)
Salvinia biloba (giant salvinia)
Salvinia herzogii (giant salvinia)
Salvinia molesta (giant salvinia)

Class B (prohibited movement, sale and/or cultivation)

Butomus umbellatus (flowering rush)
Fallopia japonica (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) (Japanese knotweed)
Hydrocharis morsus-ranae (frogbit)
Lythrum salicaria (purple loosestrife)
Myriophyllum spicatum (Eurasian watermilfoil)
Nymphoides peltata (yellow floating heart)
Phragmites australis (common reed)
Potamogeton crispus (curly leaf pondweed)
Trapa natans (water chestnut)

Law Enforcement

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Wardens have authority to enforce all fish and wildlife laws including the Zebra Mussel; Eurasian Watermilfoil; Water Chestnut; Quagga Mussel Transport Law (Title 10 §1266). Wardens can be reached directly or by calling the nearest State Police dispatcher.

Vermont State Police Troopers and Auxiliary Troopers can enforce the Zebra Mussel; Eurasian Watermilfoil; Water Chestnut; Quagga Mussel Transport Law (Title 10 §1266). It will typically be an Auxiliary Trooper that responds to a Transport Law call as they are specifically assigned to boating detail. If unable to get a response from the State Police Field Station, contact Lieutenant Begiebing, State Police Recreational Enforcement Division, at 802-878-7111 ext. 2207 and he will make every effort to have an officer respond.

Fish and Wildlife Warden Contact Information

Southern District

<u>Warden</u>	<u>State Police Phone</u>	<u>Home Phone</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Lt. Hathaway, Dane	257-7101	257-7920	Brattleboro
Sgt. Gaudreau, Paul	442-5421	394-2973	W. Rupert
Batchelder, Jasonl	257-7101	464-4205	Wilmington
Denqler, Wayne	257-7101	869-4961	Saxtons River
Eckhardt, Greg			

Price, Kelly	257-7101	251-2171	Brattleboro
Scribner, George	257-7101	259-3551	Belmont

Central District

<u>Warden</u>	<u>State Police Phone</u>	<u>Home Phone</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Lt. Lawrence, Douglas	234-9933	728-4220	Randolph
Sgt. Isabelle, Donald	773-9101	483-2017	Pittsford
Spl. Eastman, Evan	234-9933	333-4815	Fairlee
Gallant, Keith	234-9933	728-9215	Braintree
Conner, Chris	234-9933	296-2240	W. Hartford
Sterling, Robert	773-9101	265-4602	Fair Haven
Whitlock, Dale	773-9101	453-7399	Middlebury

Northwestern District

<u>Warden</u>	<u>State Police Phone</u>	<u>Home Phone</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Lt. Lutz, Robert	878-7111	849-2764	Fairfax
Sgt. Swainbank, Daniel	524-5993	868-3295	Swanton
Clark, Christopher	878-7111	434-3463	Huntington
Cook, Tom	878-7111	899-6716	Underhill Ctr
DiNardi, Meira	229-9191	454-0162	Plainfield
Reinhardt, Dennis	635-7036	253-0974	Fairfax
Smiley, Curtis	524-5993	849-2156	Plainfield
Stedman, Justin	878-7111	893-0105	Milton
Szymanowski, Trevor	229-9191	479-7590	Barre
Wedin, Carl	524-5993	868-9110	Sheldon

Northeastern District

<u>Warden</u>	<u>State Police Phone</u>	<u>Home Phone</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Lt. Denton, Kenneth	748-3111	684-2219	Danville
Sgt. Gregory, David	748-3111	626-4390	Lyndon Center
Spl. Shopland, Russell	766-2211	472-3040	East Hardwick
Amsden, Dennis	748-3111	751-7695	Danville
Carvey, Kevin	748-3111	584-3985	Groton
Fowler, Sean	748-3111	751-0459	East St. Johnsbury
Klein, Kim	748-3111	754-9464	Barton
Lewis, Robert	766-2211	766-8824	Derby
Mann, Bradley	766-2211	895-2993	Morgan

State Police Field Stations

Bethel	234-9933
Bradford	222-4680
Brattleboro	254-2382
Derby	766-2211
Middlebury	388-4919
Middlesex	229-9191
Rockingham	875-2112
Rutland	773-9101
St. Albans	524-5993
St. Johnsbury	748-3111
Shaftsbury	442-5421
Williston	878-7111

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VT Relay Service for the Hearing Impaired
1-800-253-0191 TDD>Voice - 1-800-253-0195 Voice>TDD