

Wright Regional Inspection Program

Operations to Cease

Courtesy Decontaminations Remain Available



What happened?

The Wright Regional Inspection Program (WRIP) started in the fall of 2017. The program required a free inspection at a regional site before entering three Wright County lakes. The program had a successful year in 2018 and here are a few highlights:

- Inspections for the lakes in the program increased 51% compared to 2017.
- Wait times to begin inspections were low--average was 30 seconds.
- Sixty-eight inspections failed with sixteen being zebra mussel violations. All violations were identified and corrected before accessing the lake.

In 2019, an expansion to nine lakes was proposed to further validate the cost effectiveness of the regional inspection model.

The DNR would not approve the expansion and Wright County Commissioner support was mixed.

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers, MN COLA, and the Initiative Foundation provided extensive and consistent support for the program, however the 2019 legislative efforts to secure DNR approval failed.

WRIP operations will cease on July 12th, 2019.

Why didn't WRIP get 2019 expansion approval?

- ✓ No support from the DNR to fund or enforce a regional inspection model. The lack of DNR engagement and a long-term funding model was interpreted as a negative by Wright County Commissioners.
- ✓ The DNR and the Wright County Commissioners faced community polarization regarding the program. Strong support or strong opposition was the norm. Opposition themes included:
 - Extra time needed to drive to the regional station for an inspection was inconvenient.
 - The requirement for inspection before launch at a regional site limited access.
- ✓ The threat and impact of aquatic invasive species is either not fully understood or is minimized by some boaters.
- ✓ Exit inspections for the participating lakes were requested by the DNR and some members of the public. Exit inspections at the regional site are only possible if the DNR requires boaters to return to the site after leaving a participating lake.

How will we move forward?

- ✓ Courtesy decontaminations remain available at 1300 Business Blvd, Annandale (HWY 55, north on Annandale Blvd and follow road till the end).
Hours are Mon-Thu 9am-5pm, Fri-Sun 8am-6pm.
- ✓ Develop an extensive summary report to include program financials, lessons learned, work done on "Float Your Boat" (a concept to decontaminate watercraft) and debriefs with stakeholders (DNR, County Commissioners, etc.).
- ✓ A small number of lake associations in Wright County will fund limited at the access inspections.
- ✓ Continue to educate and seek solutions to slow the spread of AIS.



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