

Power loading is damaging Spring Lake Boat Ramp!

NOTICE | Spring Lake Boat Launch Closure

Monday, September 12 and Possibly Tuesday, September 13



Subsequent years of low rainfall have made the Spring Lake Boat launch more difficult to navigate for loading and unloading boats and pontoons. This has been made worse by some boaters who prefer to power load their boats onto their trailers resulting in a four foot hole at the end of the ramp and only 18" water depth on top of the mound which is too shallow for many boats to pass through.

The Spring Lake Association has worked with the DNR and has received a permit for the purpose of removing the mound and placing the material back in the hole. This work requires the boat ramp to be shut down **on September 12 and possibly September 13**. The work involves removal of the dock and placement of a floating silt barrier to control any sediment which could get distributed during the process. The additional day may be required if the water clarity has not improved and the floating silt fence is still required.

Spring Lake Association has hired Klingberg Excavating to perform the work. The estimated charge of \$4,000 will be paid using the Spring Lake Association Water Quality Fund.

The DNR has also agreed to place larger Power Loading signage at the ramp informing boat owners not to power load their boats onto their trailer.

What is power loading?

Power loading is what it's called when you use the boat motor to load and unload a boat onto and off a trailer. Power loading can damage your boat, motor and trailer, as well as the launch ramp and lakebed.

Why is power loading a problem?

Trying to load or unload your boat using engine power can erode sediment and dig large and hazardous holes at the base of the ramp. The eroded sediment creates a mound behind the propeller. Trailer tires can get stuck in these holes, and boats can run aground on the mound. It results in a barrier for both launching and loading.

- Boats and equipment can incur costly damage when boaters unknowingly back trailer wheels into the hole, damaging their trailer frames on the submerged ramps or getting the trailer stuck in the hole. When this happens, a tow truck may be the only option to retrieve the trailer and the vehicle attached to it.
- The boat or lower unit can run aground on the mound.
- In extreme cases, the end of the launch ramp can collapse, leaving it unusable and causing the access to be closed.
- Most of Minnesota's public launch ramps were not designed to sustain the forces of power loading generated by today's larger and more powerful boats.

Repairs by DNR crews are costly and time consuming.

What you can do?

- Always check the end of the ramp for power loading holes and mounds before launching, especially in low water level conditions. You may not be able to see holes from the surface of the water.
- Don't race your boat motor while on the ramp. Slightly more than idle speed should be all that is necessary to load or unload the boat.
- Instead of power loading, use the trailer winch to load and unload your boat.
- Back in just far enough that your boat starts to float - you don't need to back in so far that the boat floats entirely off the trailer. Consider using smaller watercraft or going to a different launch ramp if the water is too shallow.