

Vermont Public Waterbody Access Citizen Monitoring Instructions & Etiquette

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Aquatic Invasive 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 invasive species (AIS) are spread between waterbodies. Citizen monitoring activities at public access areas can be an effective tool in preventing the spread of AIS. 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 boaters to inspect or wash their boats.** *

*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 invasive species to Vermont waterbodies.

Objectives:

1. Educate water users about aquatic invasive 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 boaters/access users 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 any way.**
2. Approach boaters/access users and introduce yourself by name and affiliation (e.g. Lake Wannabe Association). Explain that you are there to inform water users about aquatic invasive species. Ask boaters if they are familiar with aquatic invasive species. Ask where and when the boat and equipment was last used, and whether any precautions were taken to ensure that the boat and trailer were free of aquatic invasive species before arriving at the access.
3. Provide accurate information about aquatic invasive 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 AIS transport law (V.S.A. 10 §1266) - 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 manner 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 \$199.00 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, wrap it loosely in a dampened paper towel, and place it in 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 invasive 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 authorities should be informed.

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 AIS:

- 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 AIS:

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 March 2007, this law is punishable by a civil ticket of \$199.00 (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.

Laws and Regulations Aimed at Preventing Invasive Fish Introductions

Invasive fish can be introduced into waters in a number of ways, including bait fish dumping, illegal stocking and aquarium dumping. Introduced fish can cause serious ecological disruptions, including competing with native and game fish species for food and habitat, introducing new fish diseases, and in severe cases, causing massive fish die-offs. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife regulates fishing and the sale and movement of fish. The following regulations have been adopted by Fish and Wildlife in accordance with Vermont Title 10 § 4081, § 4082, § 4083 and § 4605.

The following 16 baitfish species are approved for use in Vermont waters. All other species are prohibited.

- Eastern silvery minnow
- Fathead minnow
- Bluntnose minnow
- Emerald shiner
- Golden shiner
- Spottail shiner
- Common shiner
- Mimic shiner

- Creek chub
- Fallfish
- Blacknose dace
- Longnose dace
- Northern redbelly dace
- White sucker
- Longnose sucker
- Rainbow Smelt

Transport of Live Fish and Use of Baitfish – Summary of Key Rules

Personal Baitfish Harvest

- Personally harvested baitfish may be used only on the same waterbody from which they were collected.
- Personally harvested baitfish shall not be transported by motorized vehicle away from the waterbody from which they were collected.

Commercially Purchased Baitfish

- A person purchasing baitfish shall retain and show upon request a transportation receipt issued by a state-approved commercial bait dealer, authorizing transportation of baitfish overland by motorized vehicle.
- A transportation receipt shall be valid for 96 hours from time and date of sale.
- Anglers may purchase baitfish from a New York baitshop for use on Lake Champlain only, provided the baitshop is Vermont-licensed, and the baitfish are accompanied by a Vermont-issued baitfish transportation receipt. Likewise, anglers may purchase baitfish from a New Hampshire baitshop for use on the Connecticut River and its setbacks only, provided the baitshop is Vermont-licensed, and the baitfish are accompanied by a Vermont-issued baitfish transportation receipt.
- Anglers shall not transport baitfish away from waters of the state by motorized vehicle. Unwanted baitfish shall be discarded dead in the water or on the ice*.

*Note: Unwanted baitfish may also be safely disposed of in the trash

Importation of Fish

It is unlawful for any person to bring into the state any fish that will be introduced into any of the inland or outlying waters of the state unless upon application in writing and receipt of a fish importation permit from the commissioner.

Control of Noxious Weeds = Quarantine Rule #3

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

Contact information for Fish and Wildlife Warden and district coverage is provided below; however, contact information and coverage may change; contact the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife at (802) 241-3700 for the most current information.

CENTRAL DISTRICT

Warden	State Police Phone	Home Phone	Residence
Lt. Lawrence, Douglas	234-9933	728-4220	Randolph
Sgt Isabelle, Donald	773-9101	483-2017	Pittsford
Spl Eastman, Evan	234-9933	333-4815	Fairlee
Brown, Paul	773-9101	773-2586	Rutland
Connor, Christopher	234-9933	296-2240	West Hartford
Gallant, Keith	234-9933	728-9215	E Braintree
Sterling, Robert	773-9101	265-4602	Fair Haven
Whitlock, Dale	388-4919	388-4875	East Middlebury

NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT

Warden	State Police Phone	Home Phone	Residence
Lt. Denton, Kenneth	748-3111	426-3463	Cabot
Sgt Mann, Bradley	334-8881	895-2993	Morgan
Spl Shopland, Russell	766-2211	472-3040	E. Hardwick
Amsden, Dennis	748-3111	751-7695	Danville
Gregory, David	748-3111	626-4390	Lyndon Ctr
Klein, Kim	748-3111	754-9464	Barton
Schichtle, Mark	222-4680	584-3958	Ryegate
Szymanowski, Trevor	748-3111	695-1314	North Concord

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT

Warden	State Police Phone	Home Phone	Residence
Lt Lutz, Robert	878-7111	849-2764	Fairfax
Sgt Swainbank, Dan	524-5993	868-3295	Swanton
Barrett, Chad	229-9191	244-1680	Waterbury
Batchelder, Jason	229-9191	476-8321	Barre
Clark, Christopher	878-7111	434-3463	Huntington
Cook, Tom	878-7111	899-6716	Underhill Ctr
Fowler, Sean	229-9191	454-9919	Plainfield
Reinhardt, Dennis	635-7036	253-0974	Moscow
Smiley, Curtis	524-5993	849-2156	Fairfax
Stedman, Justin	878-7111	893-0105	Milton
Wedin, Carl	524-5993	868-9110	Sheldon

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

Warden	State Police Phone	Home Phone	Residence
Lt. Gaudreau, Paul	442-5421	394-2973	West Rupert
Buttle, Travis	442-5421	442-4383	Shaftsbury
Dengler, Wayne	257-7101	869-4961	Saxtons River
Eckhardt, Greg	773-9101	287-9367	Poultney
Majeski, Stephen	875-2112	674-6044	West Windsor
Price, Kelly	257-7101	251-2171	Brattleboro
Scribner, George	773-9101	259-3551	Belmont
Watkin, Richard	257-7101	368-7302	Wilmington

State Police Field Stations

Bradford	222-4680
Brattleboro	254-2382
Derby	334-8881
Middlesex	229-9191
New Haven (formerly Middlebury)	388-4919
Rockingham	875-2112
Royalton (formerly Bethel)	234-9933
Rutland	773-9101
Shaftsbury	442-5421
St. Albans	524-5993
St. Johnsbury	748-3111
Williston (formerly Colchester)	878-7111

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefits of participating in each of its programs and competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual preference, or other non-merit factors. This document is available upon request in large print, Braille or audio cassette.

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