

# Changing Our Ways: Clean Boats – Clean Waters

There was a time when fishing a northern lake meant a visit to a local boat livery – a lakeside business that provided a boat and often a fishing guide for a fee. Back then, the boats available to us stayed on a single lake.

Reel forward to modern fishing. Today, few serious anglers go without a modern fishing rig, complete with a powerful motor, electronic fish-locating devices, live well, and a cooler stocked with beverages, all mounted on a road-worthy trailer. If the fish aren't biting on one lake, anglers can move on to a different lake.

All that is fine, but it comes with a big risk. Each year, more northern lakes become hosts to aquatic invasive species (AIS) – unwanted plants or animals that upset the delicate balance of native lake life. Often, those invaders arrive on boats or trailers that recently visited a lake where an invasive species such as Eurasian water milfoil was present.

Today's mobile anglers have a responsibility to avoid transferring lake water, vegetation, baits, snails and other creatures from one lake to another. Wisconsin law requires anglers and all boaters to remove any potential "aquatic hitchhikers" from boats, motors and trailers and to empty live wells before leaving a landing area, and especially before launching on another lake.

To help Northwoods boaters and anglers learn these procedures, lake neighbors volunteer at landings to help perform routine inspections and clean watercraft. They also monitor and gather lake data to inform strategies for future invasive species prevention and control. The Wisconsin Clean Boats – Clean Waters Initiative provides training and coordination for the volunteers.

The next time you use a boat landing, be sure to thank the volunteers who seek to maintain the fisheries and the health and beauty of our northern lakes.

**One in a series of articles sponsored by the Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association ([www.oclra.org](http://www.oclra.org)). For more information, contact Bob Martini at 715-282-5896 or email to [webmaster@oclra.org](mailto:webmaster@oclra.org). OCLRA encourages the use and distribution of this material by lake associations, their members, and other parties concerned about water quality.**

## ***Did you know...***

*The extremely invasive Eurasian water milfoil can infest a lake starting with just one part of a plant that "hitchhikes" on a boat or trailer.*

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