

# Welcome to Itasca County !

The Itasca area is known for 1000+ lakes, clean water, great fishing, and incredible recreational opportunities. We're working to keep it that way for your future visits and for future generations.

**We need your help.**

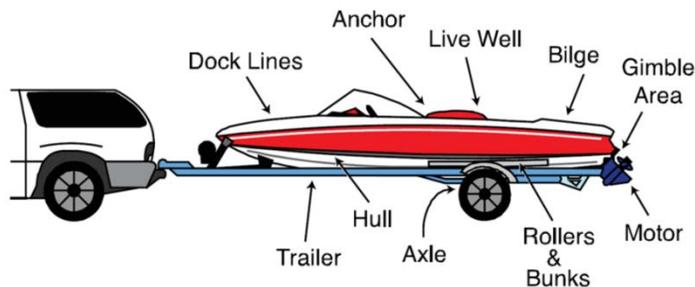


**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**

Aquatic invasives (AIS) threaten Minnesota lakes and rivers. Zebra mussels, starry stonewort, spiny waterflea, Eurasian watermilfoil, and other prohibited invasives harm fish habitats and disrupt water recreation. **Boaters and anglers can unknowingly move invasives from one lake or river to another** via boats, trailers, bilge, live-well, bait-water, fishing and other water gear.

If you plan to rent or bring watercraft or recreational gear with you, **you can help by implementing a few simple safeguards before and during your visit.**

1. **View** this 10 minute video about what you can do <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkJL4Q-ggU>
2. **Learn** which waters already include invasives, both in your home area and in the Itasca area <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/infested.html>
3. **Practice clean, drain, dispose, and dry** before leaving any water access or shoreland:
  - **Clean** aquatic plants, mud, zebra mussels, and other prohibited invasives from watercraft, trailers, and water-related gear
  - **Drain** standing water from boat, ballast-tank, live-well, bait-well, and portable bait container. Remove drain plugs. Keep drain plugs out and water draining devices open during transportation. Tilt motor down. Personal watercraft users should briefly run the powertrain to expel all water.
  - **Dispose** of unwanted bait, including minnows, leeches, and worms, in the trash. It is illegal to release bait into a waterbody or release aquatic animals from one waterbody to another. If you want to keep your bait, you must refill the bait container with bottled or tap water.



If you're departing waters that already include prohibited invasives like zebra mussels, starry stonewort, and spiny waterflea, please **dry** watercraft and gear for five days before you launch again. If you won't have five days, then **decontaminate**:

- Decontamination for recreational gear like waders, inner-tubes, fishing, and other similar gear that can't hold standing water many times can be accomplished by visual inspection, removal of plants, animals, and mud, along with a thorough warm or cold fresh-water rinse
- Watercraft, trailers, and similar gear coming from infested waters require careful inspection and may require hot-water decontamination to DNR-specifications to keep lakes and rivers safe

**The Itasca AIS program is happy to provide inspection and decontamination services to you for free**

Please consider stopping for a **free** boat inspection and cleaning at one of the boat decontamination stations in the Itasca area during your trip up. **Call** the Itasca AIS Program at **218-256-4243** or check [www.ItascaAIS.info](http://www.ItascaAIS.info)