

2014 WATERCRAFT INSPECTION REPORT

COMFORT LAKE FOREST LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

Background

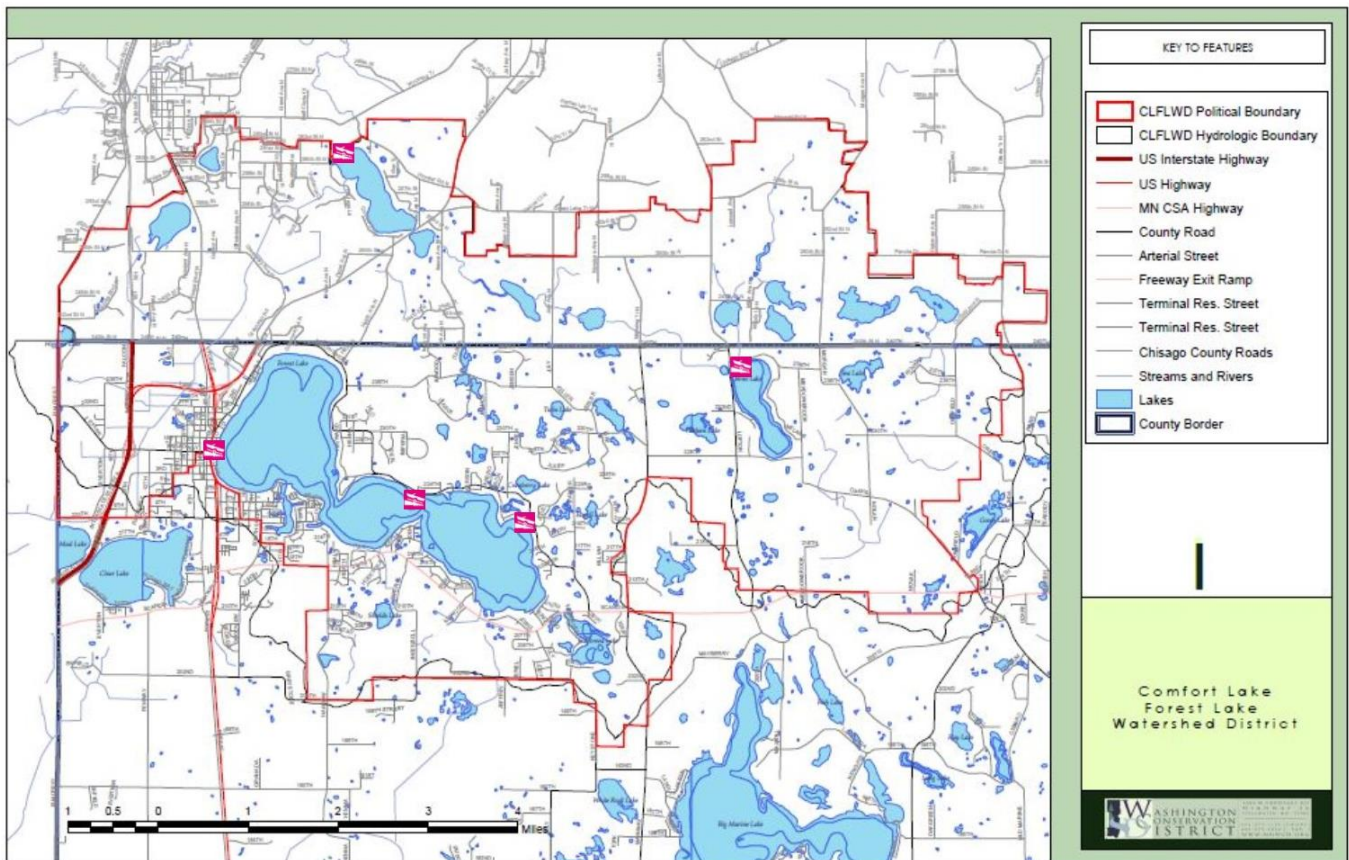
The lakes within in the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District are desirable locations for fishing, boating and other recreational activities. The lakes in the area vary in many ways, but they all have one thing in common, they are all susceptible to aquatic invasive species (AIS). Curly-leaf pondweed, which was first found in Minnesota in 1910, is widespread within the watershed. This plant has been a part of the aquatic landscape for so long that it often isn't recognized as an invasive species. The aquatic invasive plant Eurasian Water Milfoil, found in many east central Minnesota and metro area lakes is prevalent in both Comfort and Bone Lakes. The far less common aquatic invasive plant, Flowering rush, has recently been found in Forest Lake. These aquatic invasive plants grow rapidly, outcompeting desirable, native plants and can drastically impede recreational activities due to dense mats of vegetation forming near the shore and at the water surface.

Movement of aquatic invasive species by boats is the number one way these harmful species spread from lake to lake. Fortunately aquatic invasive species that are threatening other waters of the state, specifically Zebra Mussels, Spiny Water Fleas, and Faucet Snails, are not known to be found in the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District. The watercraft inspection program is essential in our efforts to keep these invaders out of the watershed.

To implement the watercraft inspection program in 2014, the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District partnered with Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District's watercraft inspection program to conduct boat launch inspections. A total of four Level 1 inspectors were hired by Chisago County to perform inspections in the two districts. Two inspectors provided coverage to the Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District and two inspectors were stationed in the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District. Once trained and authorized, Level 1 inspectors can inspect water-related equipment and prohibit the launching of equipment in waters of the state if the individual refuses to allow an inspection of their equipment or refuses to comply with AIS laws.

The primary objective of the watercraft inspection program is to inform and educate the public on the threats of ecologically harmful aquatic invasive species to the lakes in the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District. The watercraft inspector works at boat launches educating the public by providing information to watercraft users and conducting a brief survey while inspecting watercraft for aquatic invasive species.

There are three lakes with public accesses within the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District where watercraft inspections took place; they are Bone Lake, Comfort Lake, and Forest Lake. Bone and Comfort Lakes each have one public access; Forest Lake is a large lake with three public accesses, referred to in this report as Forest-West, Forest-Central, and Forest-East.



Additionally, inspections took place at nine public accesses located in the adjacent Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District, including: Chisago-South Lindstrom, Green, Kroon, Little, Little Green, North Center, South Center, and Spider Lakes. Results from these lakes are not included in this report.

Watercraft inspections were conducted between May 5 and October 11, 2014. Inspections were rotated among the lakes with public accesses.

Summary

- 1662 watercraft were inspected. 1059 while entering boat launches. 603 while exiting boat launches.
- 37 watercraft arrived at the boat launch with water present in the boat or with vegetation or mud attached to the boat or trailer. In these instances water was drained from the boat or trailer and any vegetation or mud was removed prior to launching into the lake. While inspectors were present no watercraft entered waterways in the district with AIS or significant vegetation of any kind.
- 101 watercraft inspected were required to remove the bilge drainage plug prior to launching watercraft.
- Many of these boaters stated that they were unaware of the requirement while others claimed that removing the plug caused undue hardship as they would forget to replace it prior to launch.
- 88 watercraft exited a lake with vegetation attached to the boat or trailer. In all of these recorded instances the vegetation was removed before leaving the public access.

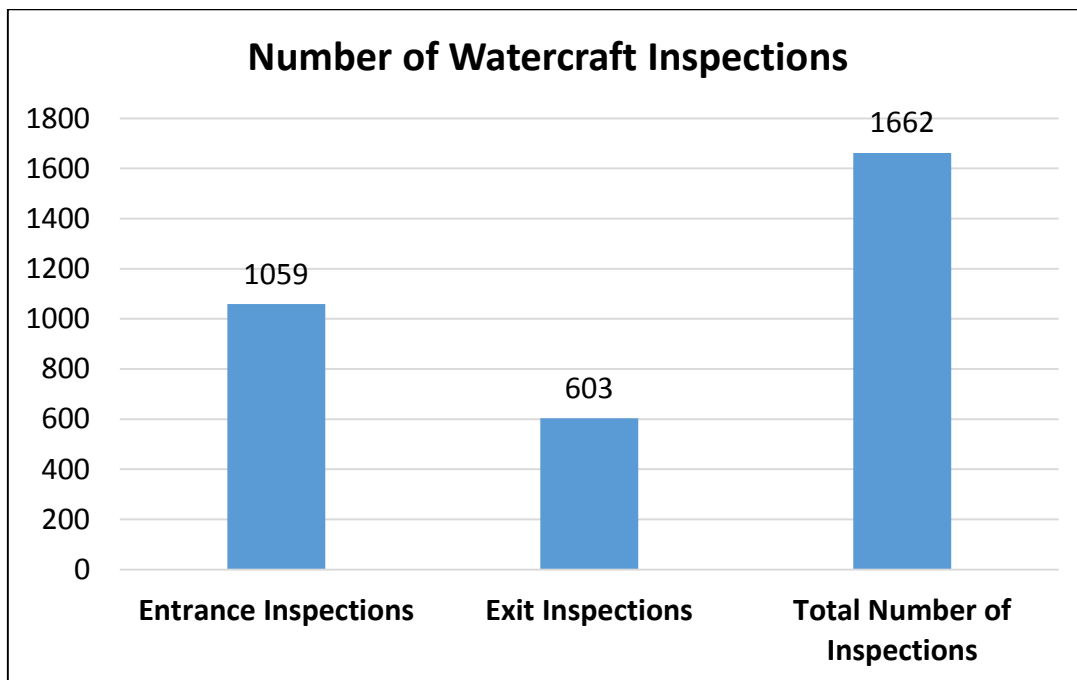
- No animal AIS were observed. Animal AIS include Zebra Mussels, Spiny Water Fleas, and Faucet Snails.
- All bilge plugs were removed prior to leaving boat launches.
- Many boaters consistently use the same public access each time they visit a lake.
 - When asked “what was the last water body visited?” responses were as follows:
 - 56% of boaters visited the same lake.
 - 2% of boaters visited a different lake within the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District.
 - 30% of boaters visited a lake outside the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District.
 - When asked “what lake are you planning to visit next?” responses were as follows:
 - 49% of boaters plan to visit the same lake.
 - 2% of boaters plan to visit a different lake within the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District.
 - 22% of boaters plan to visit a lake outside the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District.

2014 Totals for Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD)

Number of Watercraft Inspections

Watercraft inspectors stationed at a public access inspect all incoming and exiting watercraft. At the time of the inspection they also ask the boaters a series of questions relating to their boating activities.

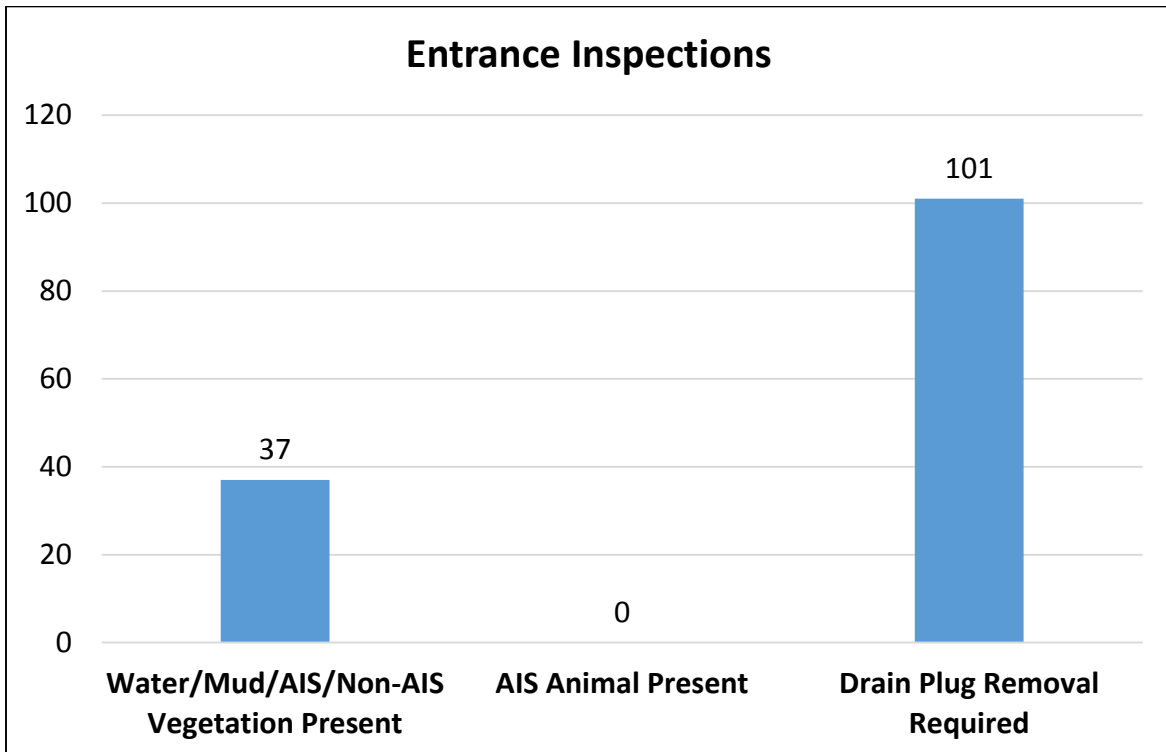
Lake Access Name	Entrance Inspections	Exit Inspections	Total Number of Inspections
Bone	100	64	164
Comfort	146	73	219
Forest-West	274	150	424
Forest-Central	136	77	213
Forest-East	403	239	642
Total	1059	603	1662



Entrance Inspections

During the entrance inspection, watercraft inspectors help boaters check for aquatic plants and animals that may be attached to the watercraft. They also check to see if the drain plug is in or out of the boat. If the plug is in during the time of the inspection the inspector sends the watercraft away to remove the plug to drain the boat of any water at a location away from the lake.

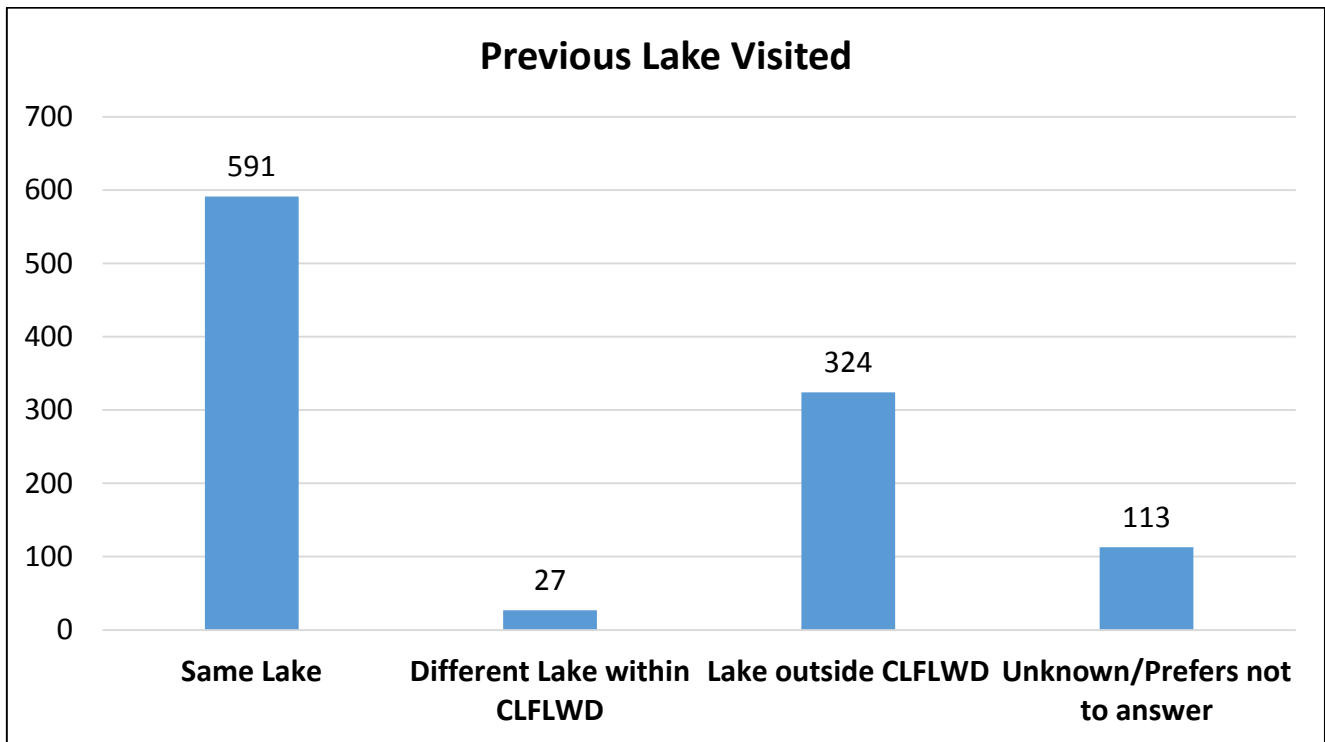
Lake Access Name	Water/Mud/AIS/ Non-AIS Vegetation Present	AIS Animal Present	Drain Plug Removal Required
Bone	3	0	6
Comfort	5	0	21
Forest-West	10	0	22
Forest-Central	3	0	22
Forest-East	16	0	30
Total	37	0	101



Previous Lake

During the entrance inspection the inspector collects information in the form of a survey. The inspector is interested in knowing what body of water the boater had previously visited.

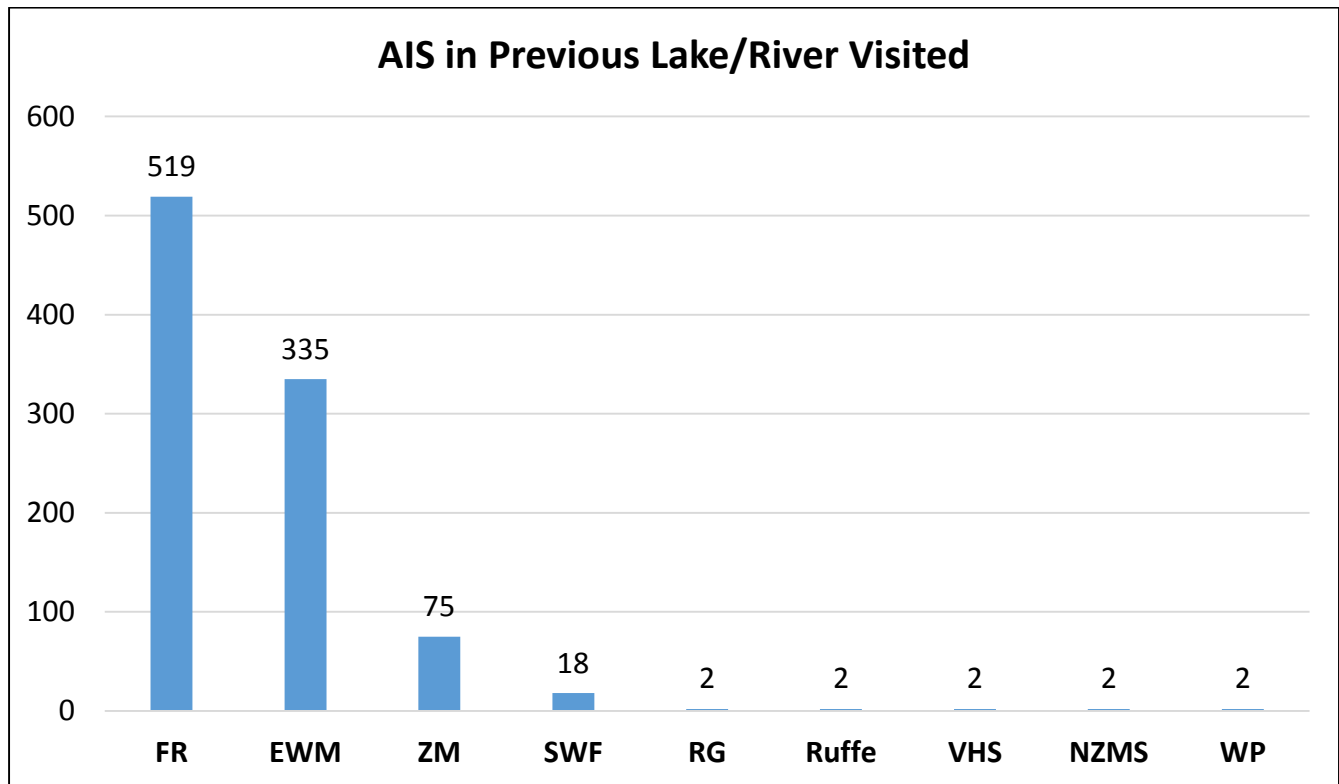
Lake Access Name	Same Lake	Different Lake within CLFLWD	Lake outside CLFLWD	Unknown/ Prefers not to answer
Bone	38	7	45	10
Comfort	69	8	47	22
Forest-West	155	3	86	30
Forest-Central	84	3	38	8
Forest-East	245	6	108	43
Total	591	27	324	113
	56.0%	2.6%	30.7%	10.7%



AIS in Previous Lake Visited

Knowing what body of water a boat had previously been in gives a good indication of what aquatic invasive species are our biggest threat and how effective watercraft inspections are in preventing the spread.

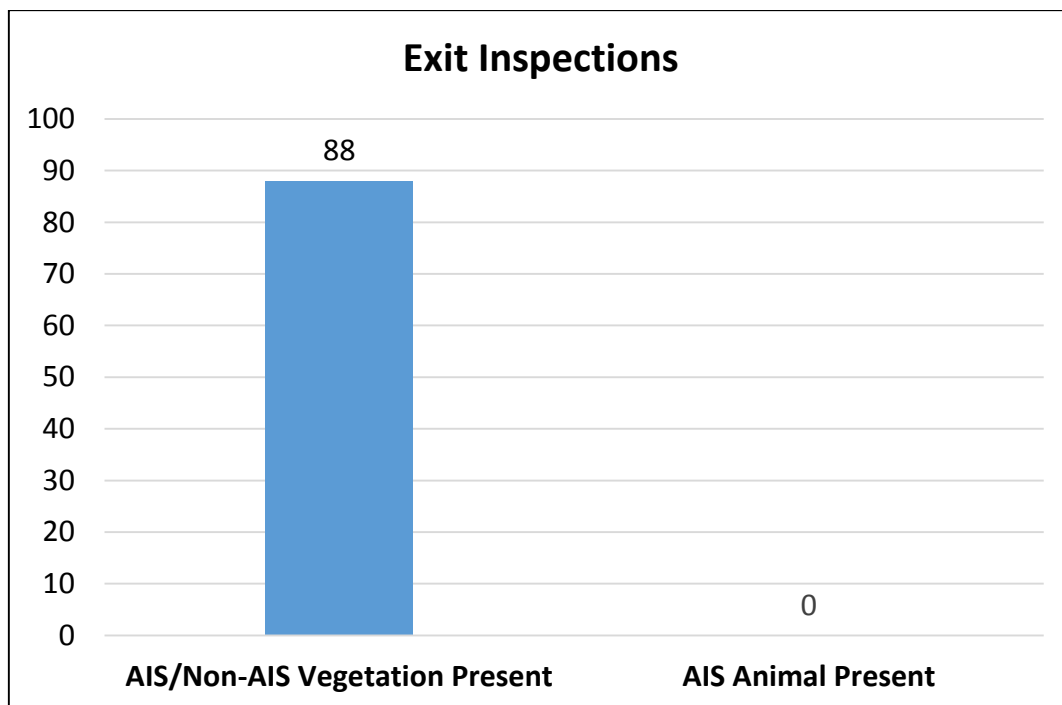
Species	Flowering Rush (FR)	Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM)	Zebra Mussels (ZM)	Spiny Water Flea (SWF)	Round Goby (RG)	Ruffe	VHS	New Zealand Mud Snail (NZMS)	White Perch (WP)
Total	519	335	75	18	2	2	2	2	2



Exit Inspections

While leaving a body of water an exit inspection is performed by the watercraft inspector. During this inspection the inspector may be having an encounter with a person(s) who went through an entrance exam earlier in the day. The inspector will help look for aquatic plants or animals that may be attached to the boat or trailer from the lake that they just left. If any material is found it is promptly removed and properly disposed of.

Lake Access Name	AIS/Non-AIS Vegetation Present	AIS Animal Present
Bone	7	0
Comfort	3	0
Forest-West	23	0
Forest-Central	13	0
Forest-East	42	0
Total	88	0



Next Lake

Upon the exit inspection, the inspector performs another survey, with one question asking where the boater plans to go next.

Lake Access Name	Same Lake	Different Lake within CLFLWD	Lake outside CLFLWD	Unknown/ Prefers not to answer
Bone	19	5	16	24
Comfort	26	6	21	20
Forest-West	97	0	25	28
Forest-Central	46	2	16	13
Forest-East	110	3	59	67
Total	298	16	137	152
	49.4%	2.7%	22.7%	25.2%

