

WaterGuards, LLC

February 17, 2026



Proposal for

Le Sueur County

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program

AIS Boater Education and Inspection Services

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I. Executive Summary

WaterGuards is pleased to submit this proposal to Le Sueur County for watercraft inspection and boater education services in Le Sueur County for the summer of 2026. WaterGuards is an experienced provider and will fulfill the requirements outlined in the request for proposal at an hourly rate of \$29.45*/hour for Level I inspections. Please see detail below.

II. Introduction

WaterGuards provides lake access watercraft inspection and boater education services in order to prevent, limit or slow the introduction, establishment and spread of aquatic invasive species into our lakes and other waters. Our mission is to help counties, government units and lake improvement districts fight against invasive species.

III. Our Package/Scope of Work

Our standard watercraft inspection and education package includes:

- **Watercraft Inspectors.**
 - DNR trained Level I and/or II Inspectors to monitor your lake landings for invasive species.
 - Inspectors educate boaters on the laws and best practices to avoid spreading invasive species, improving our long-term odds of limiting the spread of invasive species.
 - Inspectors are dedicated to protecting Minnesota waters from invasive species.
 - Inspectors are uniformed with an official vest and lanyard designating status as an inspector to provide quick recognition by boaters and offer a visual sign of authority.
 - WaterGuards Level 1 inspectors are at least 16 years of age. Supervisors are at least 18.

- **Professional Management.**
 - WaterGuards hires the watercraft Inspectors. This includes advertising for employees, interviewing, and finding the right people to protect your waters.
 - We hire the most reliable and professional inspectors. We do not discriminate and are proud to hire military veterans, seniors and college students alike. We respect and treat our people well!
 - We work to ensure our inspectors get the best training and support to do the best work.
 - We schedule the inspectors so your access points are covered when you want them covered. We use an online scheduling app/system to maximize employee utilization and minimize any absences from your lake accesses.
 - We use an electronic attendance app with built-in GPS. Employees "clock in and out" via personal cell phone. Employees may not clock in or out if they are not at their designated site.
 - We regularly spot check watercraft Inspectors for quality assurance and immediately address staffing issues if they arise.
 - We assign a roving crew manager to coach inspectors.
 - We assist our inspectors when they must report findings or submit samples of invasive species to the DNR or make reports to law enforcement.

- We keep inspectors up-to-date on recent invasive species infestations and also provide ongoing reminders of best practices all summer long.
- WaterGuards maintains a good working relationship with the Minnesota DNR.

- **Payroll Management.**
 - WaterGuards is an independent contractor. WaterGuards hires the employees, generates the W-2s, checks the I-9s and gathers the W-4s. The inspectors are WaterGuards, LLC employees.
 - WaterGuards includes payroll taxes (FICA, FUTA, worker's compensation and state and federal unemployment) in its hourly rate.
 - WaterGuards maintains its own workers compensation and liability insurance.
 - We pay our employees higher hourly wages to attract and retain the best available talent.

IV. Inspection Schedule/Lakes

WaterGuards will provide inspection services from mid-May to September 2026.

Level I Inspections at the following lakes:

Total number of hours for the season will be approximately 3000 hours.

Inspection start date is dependent on DNR training schedule and availability of training sessions for Isanti.

Hours of operation will concentrate around the busiest time periods and will vary over the course of the season based on daylight.

Inspectors will use personal electronic devices for data collection.

Table 1. Lakes and Accesses Watercraft Inspection Program WaterGuards will provide inspection services from mid-May to October 2026.

Lake Name	Number of Hours	Number of Accesses	Dates/Times of Inspections	Additional Comments
Volney	125	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing	Most people use lake during holidays and opening weekend for fishing, have inspectors there during those times
Emily	100	1	Holidays, opening weekend for fishing	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener. Any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend for fishing can be filled in as needed
Rays	100	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener. Any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend for fishing can be filled in as needed
Francis	500	2-east and west end	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing	Need inspectors at both accesses. The east access gets utilized more than the west access, any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend for fishing can be filled in as needed
Gorman	100	2	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener. Any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend for fishing can be filled in as needed Dam modification project at County park access. Use other 2 accesses for this season

Upper Sakatah	350	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, most weekends	Heavy use by boaters and fishermen, inspectors there almost every weekend
Tetonka	300	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, most weekends	Heavy use by boaters and fishermen, inspectors there almost every weekend, on average sheriff's department is there for 100 hours
German	250	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, most weekends	Heavy use by boaters and fishermen, inspectors there almost every weekend, on average sheriff's department is there for 150 hours
West Jefferson	250	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening day for fishing, most weekends	Heavy use by boaters and fishermen, inspectors there almost every weekend, on average sheriff's department is there for 75 hours
East Jefferson	225	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, most weekends	Heavy use by boaters and fishermen, inspectors there almost every weekend, on average sheriff's department is there for 100 hours
Washington	525	2	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing	Heavy use by boaters and fishermen, two accesses will need to split time between the two (focus during holidays and opening day of fishing), any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend for fishing can be filled in as needed, on average sheriff's department is there for 100 hours. West access tends to be more popular based on last few years data
Pepin	25	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, fill in remaining hours during summer and fall weekends	Have not inspected in the past few years, focus on holidays and fishing opener. Any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend can be filled in as needed

Greenleaf	25	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, both opening weekends waterfowl hunting season, fill in remaining hours during summer and fall weekends	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener, any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend can be filled in as needed
Sabre	25	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, fill in remaining hours during summer and fall weekends	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener. limit number of hours and see how it goes, any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend can be filled in as needed
Clear	50	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, fill in remaining hours during summer weekends	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener. limit number of hours and see how it goes, any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend can be filled in as needed
Fish	25	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, fill in remaining hours during summer weekends	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener, any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend can be filled in as needed. Considered high quality lake and want to protect.
Roemhildts	25	1	Holidays (include the weekend and/or week the holiday falls on), opening weekend for fishing, fill in remaining hours during summer weekends	Based on last few years this lake is usually quiet, focus on holidays and fishing opener, any remaining hours after holidays and opening weekend can be filled in as needed. Considered high quality lake and want to protect.

- Hours between German, West Jefferson, and East Jefferson are flexible. Really dependent on whether the sheriff's department is at an access more than others. Will not exceed a total of 725 hours of inspections between the three lakes. Heavy fishing lake, preference is inspectors for early morning hours or later afternoon hours.
- Gorman lake has three different accesses. Dam access area will be under construction this year. Split the hours between the other two accesses. We can always adjust hours at each access during the season. Fishing lake, preference is inspectors for early morning hours or later afternoon hours.
- Hours between the two accesses for Lake Washington are flexible. Really dependent on whether the sheriff's department is at an access more than others. Will not exceed a total of 525 hours of inspections between the two accesses.
- Greenleaf, Sabre, Clear, Fish, and Roemhildts tend to be quieter. Focus hours on holidays and opening weekend for fishing. Additionally, Greenleaf lake is used for waterfowl hunting. Would like inspectors at this access during opening weekends for waterfowl hunting.
- Pepin has not been inspected in the last few years but it is likely quite similar to those listed above. Focus hours on holidays and opening weekend for fishing.

V. Hourly Rate

Hourly Rate for Inspections

- \$29.45/hour for Level I Inspectors.
- \$20.00/Training hours
- This rate includes employee's hourly pay, all payroll taxes, liability insurance, workers compensation insurance, on-going educational updates, and more.
- Other than limited DNR training, WaterGuards only charges for hours inspectors actually spend at the access unless agreed to by Le Sueur County.

VI. Our Value and Experience

Experience

100% Committed to Watercraft Inspection Services. We are 100% committed to lake access watercraft inspection and boater education services. This is all we do. We do not provide employees/inspectors for any other occupation or industry. This focus allows us to offer the best watercraft inspection services available. Our staff works closely with the Minnesota DNR and other counties and lake improvement districts in Minnesota and remains current on aquatic invasive species issues and best practices for watercraft inspection. All our management and staff are DNR trained and certified.

Inspecting Watercraft Since 2011. From its start in 2011, WaterGuards has focused on protecting Minnesota lakes. We now have 14 seasons of experience. We learn more and do better every year.

Significant Experience in Le Sueur County. WaterGuards knows and understands the waters and constituents in Le Sueur County. We successfully served Le Sueur County in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. Our inspectors have built good rapport with lake associations, area fishing tournament participants, lake service providers and frequent boaters. Our best inspectors would like to return again this year!

Significant Experience in Other Counties. The following are examples of past and/or present customers: Cass County (2022-2027), Isanti County and Isanti County LIDs (2015-2026), Waseca (2022-2026), Hennepin County (2020-2025), Sherburne County (2016-2025), Le Sueur County (2020-2025), Stearns County (2020-2028), North Fork Crow River Watershed District (2020-2026), and Todd County (2015-2025).

Good Reviews. We consistently receive good reviews from our customers, the DNR, and our employees.

On-Going Learning. Our President attends in-season and out-of-season DNR meetings and trainings to continuously improve knowledge of programs and findings throughout the state.

Professional Management. WaterGuards is led by a seasoned professional with a master's in business administration, a talent for technology, and a dedicated commitment to aquatic invasive species prevention. Our President and our area managers are always on call throughout the season. Our office never closes!

Variety of Experience. We have extensive experience (14+ years) with DNR Level I, Level II and the Ambassador program. We have worked with counties, lake associations, lake improvement districts and on inspection and education programs from 100 hours per season to over 14,000 hours per season. We are proud to boast an average hour fill rate of over 98%!

Training, Instruction and Work Standards

High Standards for Recruiting. WaterGuards uses a proprietary set of interview questions designed over many years to recruit and select the best inspectors possible. We also implement recruiting efforts through online employment websites, social media, colleges and universities, and word of mouth. We hire inspectors with good people skills that engage well with the public. We do not over recruit and over promise. We hire the right number of people and work with them to provide their optimum number of work hours per week. We will hire local people and will re-hire only the best of our previous inspectors. We work with professors around the state to recruit and create internships for graduate and undergraduate students studying lake ecology, biology, aquatic invasive species management, etc.

DNR Training. We work with our inspectors and the DNR to coordinate Level 1 training opportunities.

Employee Resources. We maintain an Employee Resources page on our website that provides employment policies, DNR resources, and survey instructions to ensure understanding and compliance of our work standards/expectations for our employees. We welcome and encourage feedback from our inspectors on boater responses, activity, scheduling, landing problems, etc.

On-Going Communications. We implement continuous email, text and in-person communications with inspectors to provide reminders of best practices and updates to DNR materials, resources, and findings.

Regular Spot Checks. We will regularly, randomly, and secretly spot-check our inspectors to monitor compliance with DNR inspection processes and procedures.

Best Value and Unique Services

GPS Attendance. We utilize GPS for shift "clock in and out" for the best employee accountability.

Quality Education. We believe the best defense against AIS is education! We make sure our inspectors are thoroughly educated on AIS so they may educate and effectively inform citizens and Le Sueur County lake users.

Flexibility. We have the flexibility to shuffle inspectors around to different landings with little notice to adapt to weather changes, boater activity, landing problems or closures, fishing tournaments, DNR projects, etc. Our scheduling software makes it easy to account for these changes.

Clear Focus. We've been involved in this business, and only this business, since 2011.

Thank you!

We would love the opportunity to work with Le Sueur County again in 2026! Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal.