

Wright County Aquatic Invasive Species Report 2024

Report Prepared by:

Alicia O'Hare

Wright Soil and Water Conservation District

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Wright County Inspection Team for 2024



Inspection Program

In 2024, Wright County had another year of record high inspections per hour. We continued the priority hour system started in 2022. Over than 63%% of inspection hours occurred during priority hours. Which are: Sunday: dawn to dusk, Monday-: 12pm to dusk, Tuesday-Thursday: 4pm to dusk, Friday: 9am to dusk, Saturday: dawn to dusk.

The were two other significant changes that were site specific. The City of Buffalo decided to turn over inspections to Wright SWCD. The city contributed funding for inspections at Pulaski Lake and Buffalo Lake. Pulaski Lake was previously inspected from dawn to dusk but due to limited budget this level of coverage was not possible in 2024. Buffalo Lake saw an increase in coverage due to the added funding. The other site-specific change was that the southern Lake access was closed from May 28 through September 12 for construction. Most of the hours intended for Sugar South were shifted to the north access.

The majority of state-funded inspector time (88%) to only 15 accesses. At the same time the remaining 12% of state funded hours was spent on 32 other accesses (Figure 1). The goal was to visit as many accesses that allow motorized traffic as possible but to concentrate the majority of hours on accesses of lakes with known invasive species. Lake associations also contributed funds for inspections at particular accesses (Table 1)

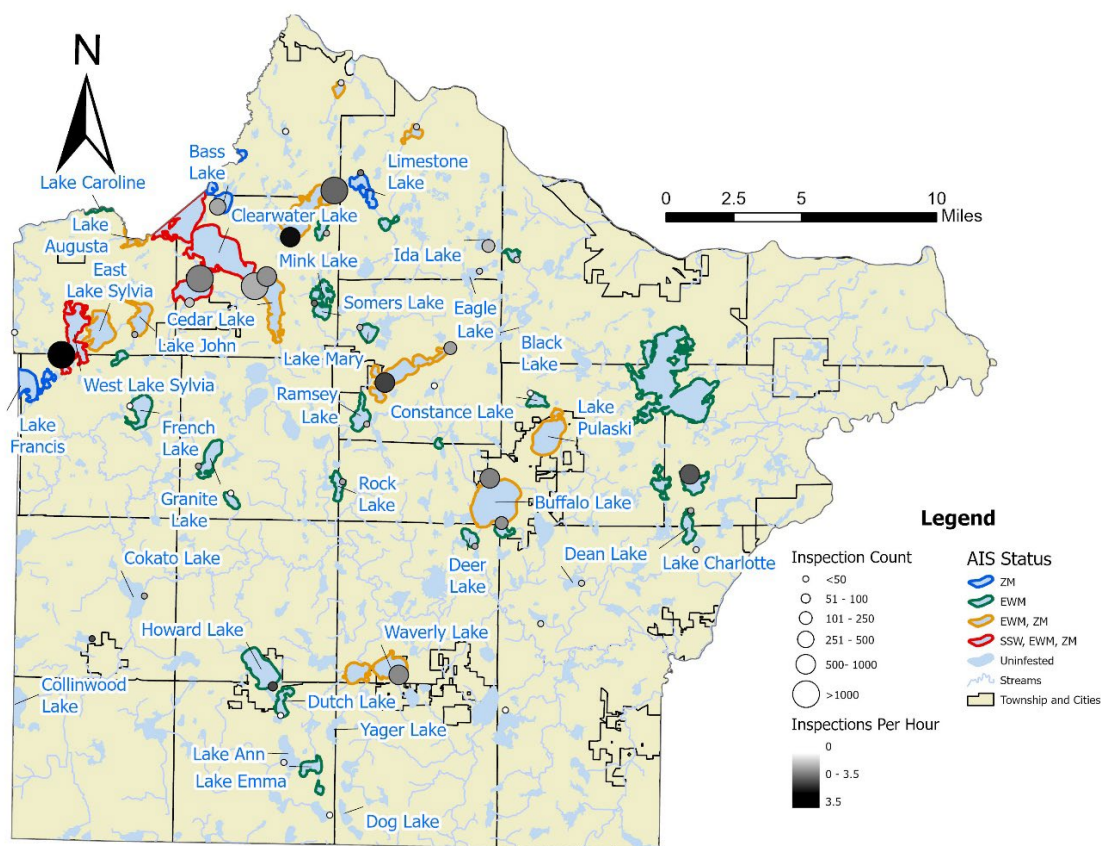


Figure 1. Locations of inspections by Wright SWCD in 2024. A large circle indicates more inspections were done; a darker circle indicates a higher number of inspections per hour. ZM = zebra mussels, EWM= Eurasian watermilfoil, SSW=starry stonewort

Table 1. Inspections, hours and inspections per hour (IPH) by ramp in 2024. *Ramps that were partially funded by local dollars

Ramp	Inspections	Hours	IPH	License Plates
Ann	6	20.00	0.3	5
Bass*	278	238.00	1.2	160
Beebe	685	299.75	2.3	455
Birch	7	10.00	0.7	5
Brooks	24	10.00	2.4	14
Buffalo N*	748	448.00	1.7	477
Buffalo S*	211	139.00	1.5	129
Camp	1	9.25	0.1	1
Cedar DNR*	1053	969.75	1.1	634
Cedar Schroeder*	724	495.25	1.5	462
Charlotte	5	5.25	1.0	4
Cokato	32	30.00	1.1	24
Constance	0	4.00	0.0	0
Crawford	2	5.00	0.4	2
Dean	3	5.00	0.6	2
Deer	10	9.00	1.1	8
Dutch	0	10.00	0.0	0
Eagle	17	23.25	0.7	12
Fish	2	5.00	0.4	2
Fountain	0	5.25	0.0	0
French	2	4.75	0.4	2
Granite	25	21.50	1.2	23
Howard	74	30.00	2.5	56
Ida	115	130.00	0.9	98
Indian	28	30.25	0.9	23
John	31	30.25	1.0	25
Limestone	48	24.75	1.9	33
Locke	8	12.00	0.7	7
Maple E	182	145.00	1.3	139
Maple W	591	225.50	2.6	391
Martha	2	5.00	0.4	2
Mary (Winsted)	497	351.00	1.4	273
Mary (Ney)	28	31.50	0.9	19
Mink	20	10.00	2.0	18
Moose	1	4.00	0.3	1
Nixon	2	10.00	0.2	2
Pleasant N	1012	608.25	1.7	544
Pleasant S	77	90.75	0.8	53
Pulaski	2092	593.5	3.5	1084
Ramsey	31	33.00	0.9	24
Rock	23	20.00	1.2	19
Sugar N	1608	783.25	2.1	893
Sugar S	821	251.25	3.3	529
Sullivan	0	5.00	0.0	0
Sylvia	6290	1800.25	3.5	2409
Union	1	5.00	0.2	1
Waverly	585	370.00	1.6	369
Total	18002	8366.50	2.2	8062

Inspection Budget

The Wright County Inspection Program is funded through the state Local AIS Aid Fund and contributions from individual lake associations. Lake associations pay for inspections on accesses for their respective lakes as well as a proportional amount to training and coaching. The remaining funds are from the state fund.

Table 2. Inspection program spending by category

Category	Cost
Contractor Admin	\$6,000.00
Coach	\$7,385.08
Training	\$5,305.98
Locally Funded Inspections	\$107,322.00
State Funded Inspections	\$96,240.00
Earned Sick and Safe Time	\$5,436.00
Other Agency Inspections	\$3,000.00
Equipment	\$46.16
Decon Labor	\$20,699.00
Decon Consumables/Maintenance	\$2,243.90
Decon Utilities	\$1,788.22
Total	\$255,466.34

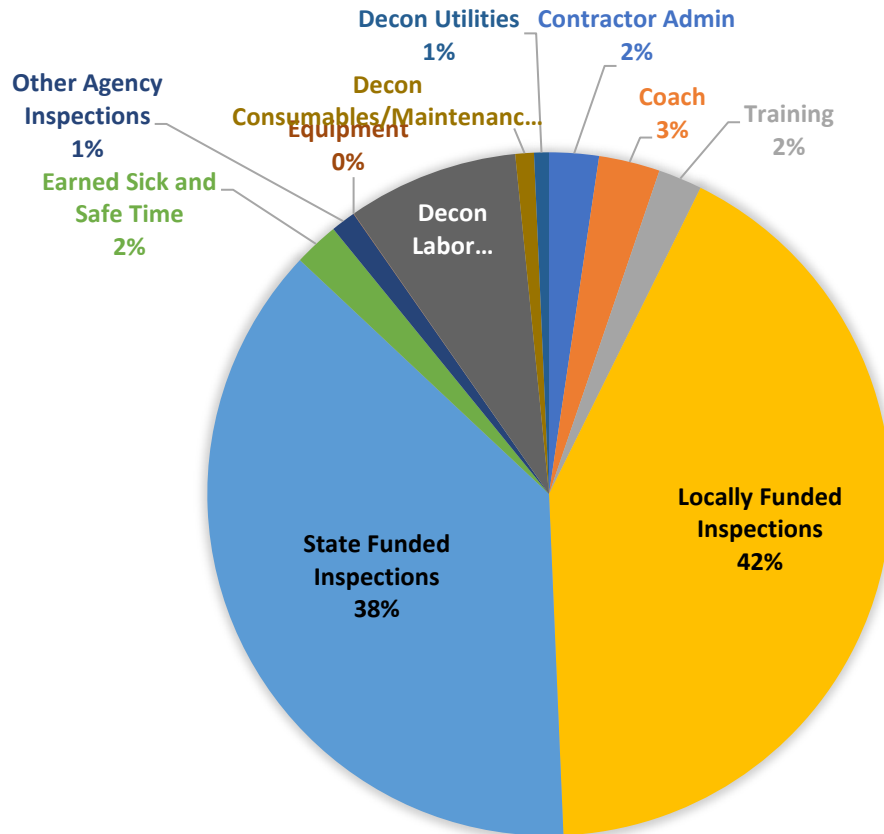


Figure 2. Inspection program spending by category in 2024

Inspection Count

Wright County's inspection season runs from early May to late September. The majority of inspections take place between Memorial Day and mid-August (Figure 3). Inspections in 2024 peaked in late June as is typical with the most inspections (465) occurring on June 23, 2024. Traffic tends to decrease later in the summer but staffing also gets more difficult as students return to school. The only accesses monitored after Labor Day are those that are funded by local entities.

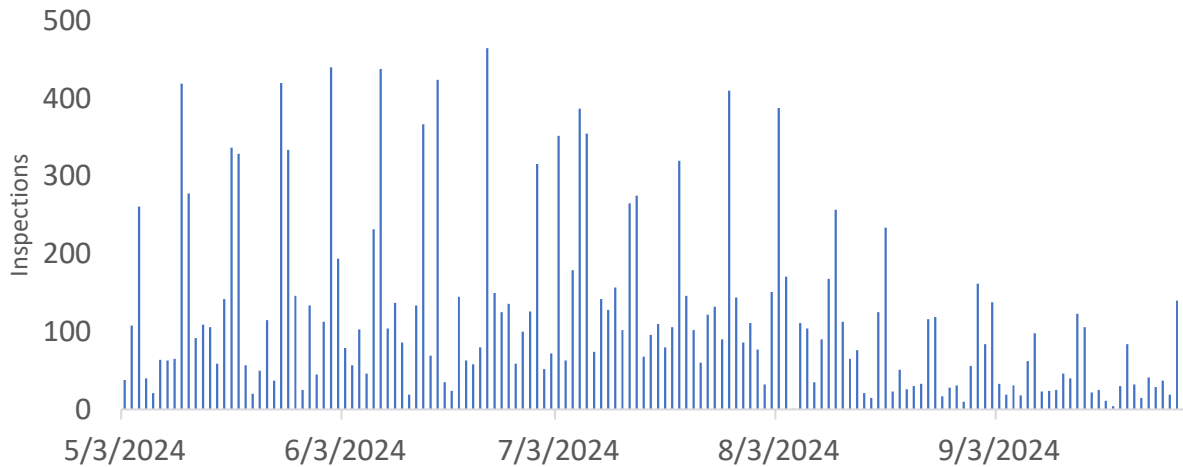


Figure 3. Inspections by date in 2024

The total number of inspections vary from year to year (Table 3 and Figure 4) based on a variety of reasons. Everything from weather, staffing levels, or the economy can affect inspections numbers. The closure of Sugar South does not seem to have decrease inspection as the total for both landings on the lake is similar to 2024. The addition of Lake Pulaski likely boosted inspections and inspections per hour as it is a busy lake. For 2024, we had 4.4% more hours and a 10% increase in inspections from 2023. This is our second highest inspection count. Only 2019 had a higher number of inspections and we had additional funding from the Initiative Foundation that year.

Table 3. Inspection count, hours, and inspections per hour (IPH) each year from 2016-2022

Year	Inspections	Hours	IPH
2016	13,157	n/a	n/a
2017	17,332	8971.00	1.9
2018	16,864	10,274.75	1.6
2019	20,576	12,333.50	1.7
2020	16,570	9,205.75	1.8
2021	12,539	8,216.25	1.5
2022	15,990	8,063.25	2.0
2023	16,584	8,008.00	2.1
2024	18,002	8,366.50	2.2

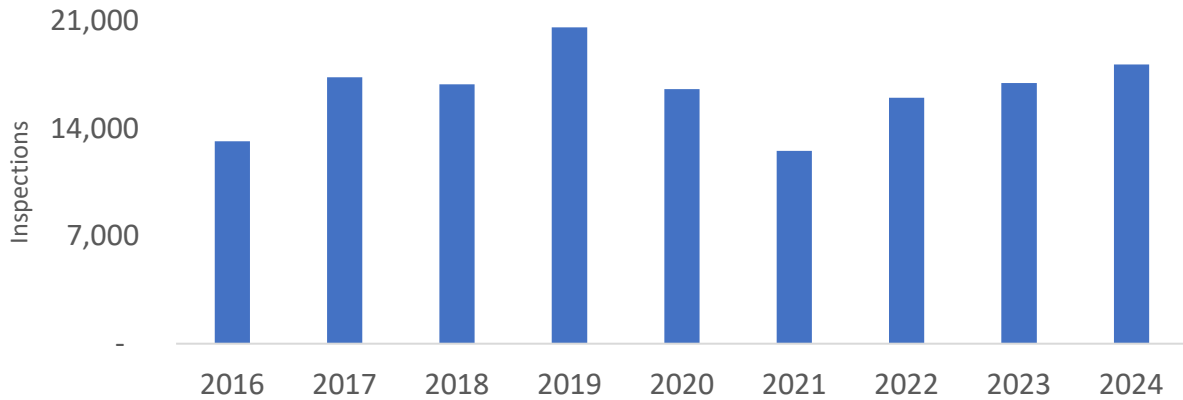


Figure 4. Inspection counts each year from 2016-2024

Inspector Placement

Placement of inspectors is an important aspect of this program. Certain accesses are very busy while others may not have any traffic depending on the day and the weather. Part of our strategy of concentrating the inspection time to just 15 accesses was to improve inspections per hour (IPH). The accesses chosen had a high degree of risk from either incoming boats and/or outgoing boats. These changes resulted in a 5% increase in IPH from 2023 to 2024 (Figure 5).

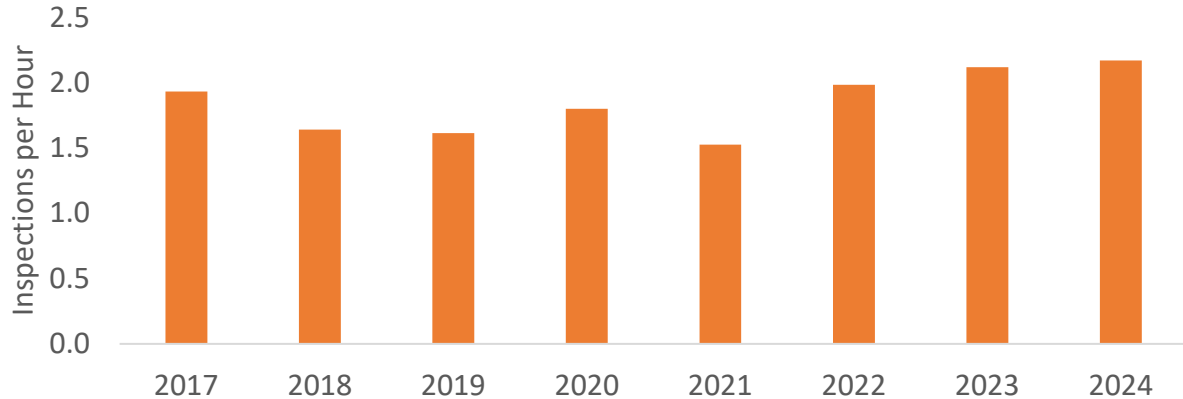


Figure 5. Inspections per hour each year from 2017-2024

In 2022, changed the time of day that our inspectors were scheduled expanding hours to the early morning to until dusk. In 2023, we decreased the hours in the morning and increased the hours in the evening especially during the week. This resulted in the highest inspections per hour in the history of the Wright County inspection program (Table 4). We continued this pattern for 2024.

Table 4. Inspections per hour by the hour of the day for each day of the week.

IPH	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
6 AM	2.2	0.0	2.4	2.0	0.3	1.6	4.0	2.4
7 AM	2.0	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.8	1.3	2.5	1.4
8 AM	1.8	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.5	2.1	1.4
9 AM	2.2	1.6	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.3	2.3	1.6
10 AM	3.7	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.4	3.0	1.9
11 AM	4.1	1.7	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.8	3.7	2.3
12 PM	4.1	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.1	1.8	3.9	2.3
1 PM	4.2	1.6	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.7	3.4	2.3
2 PM	4.0	1.8	1.2	1.6	1.2	1.9	3.7	2.4
3 PM	3.8	1.4	1.2	1.5	1.1	2.1	3.9	2.3
4 PM	4.0	1.7	1.3	1.9	1.4	2.3	3.5	2.5
5 PM	4.0	2.1	1.5	2.8	2.3	2.4	3.5	2.8
6 PM	3.5	1.4	1.1	1.8	1.2	2.7	3.5	2.2
7 PM	2.9	1.1	1.0	1.7	1.2	2.8	3.0	1.9
8 PM	3.5	1.9	2.0	1.5	1.1	2.5	2.2	2.1
Total	3.6	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.2	1.9	3.3	2.2

Encounters

The number of unique license plates is used as a proxy for the number of individuals encountered by the inspectors (Table 5 and Figure 6). Our goal is to maximize the number of license plates encountered so we are reaching as many boaters as possible during each season. In 2024, we observed 9% more plates compared to 2023.

Table 5. License plates encountered by year from 2016-2023

Year	License Plates	Plates per Hour
2016	7,471	N/A
2017	8,404	0.93
2018	7,433	0.72
2019	10,688	0.87
2020	7,957	0.86
2021	6,445	0.78
2022	7,089	0.88
2023	7,442	0.95
2024	8,062	0.97

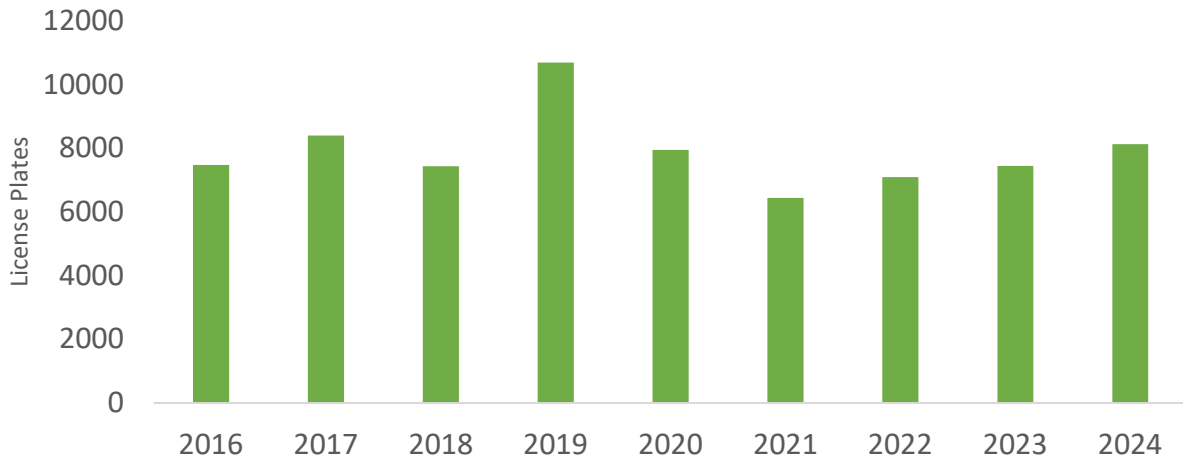


Figure 6. License plates encountered by year from 2016-2024

Each boater has different habits. We want to make sure inspectors are available in all cases to maximize the number of license plates encountered. Some take their boat out on weekends, others go out weekdays after work, lake service providers sometime operate six or seven days a week. Out of the total 8,062 license plates we encountered, 4,101 (51%) were weekend only boaters, 2,758 (34%) were weekday boaters and 1,203 (15%) were encountered both during the weekdays and weekends (Figure 7).

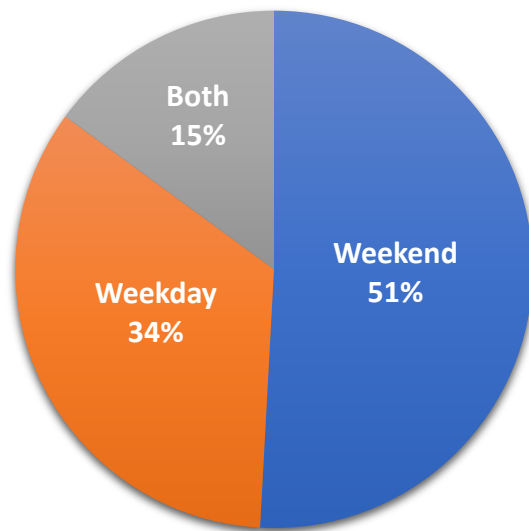


Figure 7. Timeframes of boater encounters in 2024 based on license plates.

Repetition is important to help reinforce the educational aspect of the inspection program. Inspectors are not only trying to find AIS on water-related equipment, but also to teach boaters what actions to take and some of the common places that AIS hide on equipment. In some cases, one person is inspected twice in the same day both upon entering and exiting a lake. Other times they are encountered during several trips throughout the boating season.

However, if we are only encountering the same boater over and over again, the message may lose value. One plate was encountered 145 times, likely belonging to a lake service provider vehicle who is constantly moving equipment around. Therefore, we consider how many license plates we continually interact with and how many of our inspections those interactions account for (Table 6).

Table 6. License plates encountered multiple times and the percent of inspections they account for in 2024.

Number of Encounters	Total Plates	Percent of Plates	Percent of Inspections
>25	16	0.2%	3.8%
>10	107	1.3%	11.8%
>5	482	6.0%	27.0%
>2	1749	21.7%	52.8%
>1	3930	48.7%	77.0%
Total	8,067		

Entering vs Exiting

There are several different inspection types. An entering or exiting inspection occurs when the boat is coming or going from the water. Lifts are inspected slightly differently so they are given a different category. A courtesy inspection occurs when the equipment will not enter or exit the water. The majority of courtesy inspections occur at the decontamination site.

Table 7. Inspections by type in 2024

Inspection Type	Count
Courtesy	10
Entering	10,167
Exiting	7,862
Lift	46
Total	18,002

Violations

During an entering inspection the equipment is checked for water, mud, plants, animal, etc. Inspectors also check if the drain plug is in. Table 8 has the percentage of equipment that didn't comply with regulations. It is worth noting that lake users often put the drain plug in during staging but prior to the inspection, these instances are recorded as the drain plug being in. Zebra mussels (zm) were found on equipment a few times, usually on equipment from an infested lake returning to the same lake following storage. There were no instances of zebra mussels being found on equipment attempting to enter an uninfested lake.

Table 8. Findings during entering inspections

Entering n	Drain plug In	Species Found	ZM Found
10,167	5.5%	3.3%	0.1%

Lake Connections

During entering inspections, lake users reported they came from 596 different Minnesota lakes and 17 different states (and Canada) in addition to Minnesota and 53 lakes in Wright County. Just over 2.5% of inspections came from lakes they did not know or preferred not the answer the last lake the equipment was used.

Decontaminations

Due to decreasing decontaminations over the last few years the number of available hours for the decontamination from 1082 hours in 2023 to 721 hours in 2024, a decrease of 33%. In 2024, the decontamination unit did not open until just before Memorial Day. It was open 7 days a week in June and July. It was open Monday through Friday in August and then closed after Labor Day.

The number of decontaminations decreased by 24% in 2024. Users reported coming from 38 different lakes (including 15 different Wright County lakes). Prior to decontamination 32% of equipment had visible water, plants, animals, etc.

Table 9. Decontaminations by years in Wright County

Year	Decons
2016	155
2017	340
2018	242
2019	221
2020	140
2021	176
2022	190
2023	141
2024	107



Figure 8. A level 2 inspector decontaminating a barge with high pressure

CD3-Waterless Cleaning Stations

CD3 waterless cleaning stations are self-service tools for boaters to remove water, plants, and mud from their equipment at the access. The units are solar powered and equipped with lights, so they are available 24/7 during the boating season. Other tools available include a wet/dry vacuum, compressed air, brush, drain plug wrench, and a reach grabber. There are five CD3 units in Wright County including Sugar South, Cedar-DNR, Pleasant North, Pleasant South, and Cedar Schroeder.

In 2024, the Sugar South unit was removed at the end of May due to construction occurring at the access. Additionally, at the end of season we discovered the vacuums at Pleasant North and Cedar-DNR units require repair. The air hose at Pleasant North also requires some repair. These repairs will be made in early 2025.

The tools are connected to the internet and track which tools are used and when. The most commonly used tools are the air compressors and the vacuums. The brush was the least commonly used tool (Figure 9). Tool use also peaked in July and tapered off through the remainder of the boating season.

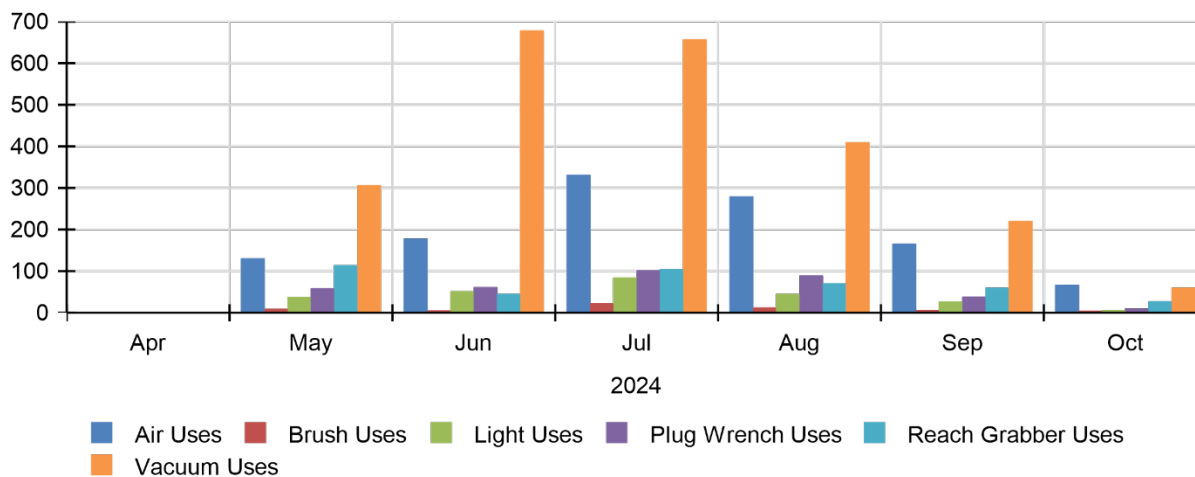


Figure 9. Tool uses across all CD3 stations by month in 2024. Image credit CD3 Systems.