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LD 171

I want to voice my support for LD 171. I have seen numerous instances of boats/watercraft being loaded in and out of lakes, with the primary motivating factor being speed — getting out of the way so others can use the launch — and despite invasive plants being a known issue, I think it becomes a secondary consideration to the hustle and bustle of the immediate needs of moving your boat and returning home.

Additionally, the way invasive aquatic plants have been previously discussed in the public forum has primarily focused on visual inspections — which I believe creates a false sense of security for boat operators.

It's easy to assume that if you do not see a clump of invasive plant hanging from your prop, you are fine to move on. When in reality, there are many tiny fragments or organisms that could be clinging to the boat that require a thorough washing — which requires more time from boat operators — to fully address any potential problems of transport.

I do not know if Maine already operates these, but if not, I think the DEP/IFW should consider installing boat washing stations at both:

1) Lakes/ponds that are known to be infested with aquatic invasive species — to make it as easy as possible for a boat owner to clean their boat in the moment, before additional "to do" items or distractions deter them.

2) And lakes/ponds of significant habitat that are at risk of being infested — whether they are located near infested lakes, or they see significant traffic from out of state boat users. This would allow boat operators a chance to clean their boat before it enters the water. This could also be something of a mandate — with a dedicated lane for out of state vehicles/boats that includes a stop at the boat cleaning station before accessing the boat launch.

And lastly, I think there needs to be more consideration into how this info is communicated to the public to effectively motivate boat operators to invest time into cleaning their boats — removing the caveat of "inspecting it first" to ensure that trends move toward any/all boats being cleaned before moving to other bodies of water. Video content and storytelling should be considered over simple "how to" information to increase the adoption of these practices.