

2024 Lake Ripley Boat Inspection End of Year Report

Good morning,

My name is Tony Tobiasz. This is my third year as the Clean Boats Clean Water Inspector representing Lake Ripley and the Lake Ripley Management District. My duties are to provide information regarding the prevention of aquatic invasive species to the visitors of Lake Ripley via a location at the boat ramp on Island Road. I also inspect their boats, trailers, and other associated equipment for the presence of aquatic plants and animals. I collect and record data through the Department Of Natural Resources (DNR) SWIMS (Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System) system. In addition, I completed a boat census report for the Lake Ripley Management District each day I worked. It documented weather and lake conditions and included types and amounts of watercraft present on the lake.

This summer period was noticeable quieter than last year. There were a total of 1120 boaters that utilized the boat ramp facilities during the period from Memorial Day through the weekend BEFORE the Labor Day weekend. It should be noted that I did not work or record data for the Labor Day weekend, typically one of the busiest weekends of the summer, therefore, the numbers would be a little larger for this year. Nevertheless, compared to last year, there were 533 **LESS** boaters or a drop of 32% from last year. This may be attributed to the new Wake Enhancement Rules which were implemented this year. Ski/wake boats numbers (62) were down 60% from last year (156). Also, it should be noted, that ski/wake boaters usually come in larger groups vs fishing boats which typically have one or two occupants. Speaking of fishing, their numbers are down 12% from last year (436) to this year 386. Pontoon ramp usage was down 48% from last year (40) to this year (25). Other watercraft such as kayaks, jet skis and canoes were slightly down 24% from last year (56) to this year (43).

Outside of record keeping and the monitoring and educating of SWIMS principles, I assisted the boaters when needed. I have been familiar with boats for most of my life, so any knowledge or experience I could share with people to help them was appreciated and welcomed. I also kept the boat ramp clear of garbage and debris. Many folks commented on how clean the area was.

Fishing reports this year were extremely positive. I personally witnessed a 22-inch walleye and 19-inch small mouth bass that were caught on my tour. There were many times that the blue gill limits were met. It seemed like most folks that fished Lake Ripley were very happy with their experience.

The same bald eagles are nested in the same tall tree at the east end of the lake. There was a rumor that they had young ones in the nest, but I only saw the adults hunting fish over the waters.

I would like to thank the Lake Ripley Management District for providing me with the opportunity to monitor the Lake Ripley boat ramp and represent them as the Clean Boats Clean Waters inspector again this year. I tried to answer and educate the public to the best of my ability and training, and I hope I made a difference.

Thank you,

Anthony Tobiasz