

PERCEPTIONS OF INVASIVE SPECIES & THEIR CONTROL AMONG THE MN TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Background

Nature-based recreation & tourism contribute to MN's \$12 billion tourism industry. In 2012, outdoor recreation generated \$11.6 billion in direct consumer spending & \$815 million in state & local tax revenues (Outdoor Industry Association, 2013). Brand research suggests a positive image of MN based on its natural beauty & 'stunning scenery' (Ipsos Reid, 2011).

Invasive species impact the natural resources & scenery that nature-based tourism depends on. Invasive species include an alien (or non-native) species whose introduction does, or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Given the significant impact that invasive species can have on tourism destinations, as well as the power that organizations & destinations have to mitigate invasive species, understanding tourism entities' perceptions about invasive species is needed. **This project sought baseline information on perceptions of invasive species & their control among the Minnesota tourism industry.**



Zebra Mussels

Methods

Questionnaire Online, spring 2013
Sample Explore MN Tourism database (n=3550)
Response rate 16% completed (n=585)
Analysis Descriptive in SPSS

Respondents

Respondents represented lodging & events most frequently & a range of industry experience (Figures 1 & 2).

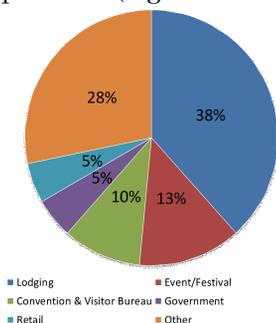


Figure 1. Sector representation (n=426)

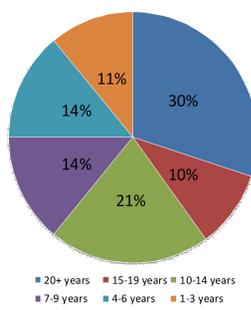


Figure 2. Years in tourism industry (n=343)

The majority of respondents agreed that both invasive plant & aquatic invasives were harmful to Minnesota's environment, economy & society (in that order; icons below). Similarly, the majority of respondents indicated all 7 control methods presented in the questionnaire would be effective to control invasive species.

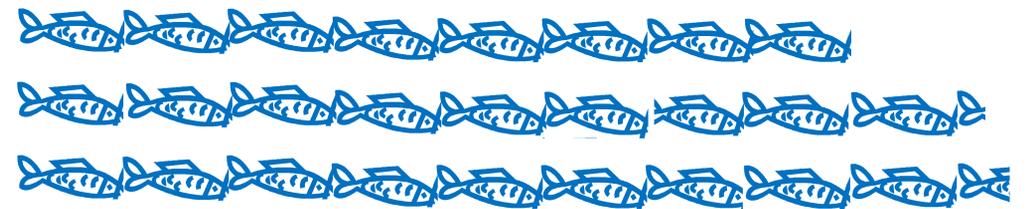
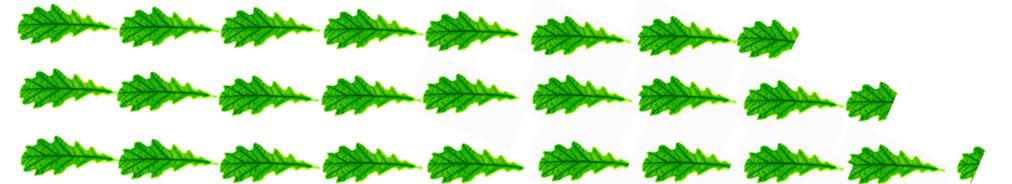
Invasive plants are ...

- harmful to Minnesota's society.
- harmful to Minnesota's economy.
- harmful to Minnesota's environment.

Aquatic invasive species are...

- harmful to Minnesota's society.
- harmful to Minnesota's economy.
- harmful to Minnesota's environment.

Results



Each icon represents 10% of respondents who agree/strongly agree

60%+

RESPONDENTS AGREED THESE METHODS ARE EFFECTIVE TO



Control methods (% control plants/% control aquatics/or not applicable (NA))

- ◇ Cleaning equipment (86%/90%)
- ◇ Encouraging nurseries to avoid invasive non-native plants (84%/NA)
- ◇ Not collecting & planting unidentified seeds (82%/NA)
- ◇ Reporting invasive plants/aquatics (80%/85%).
- ◇ Talking to other people about the threats of invasive plants/aquatics (76%/85%)
- ◇ Volunteering to help maintain parks & nature trails (74%/NA)
- ◇ Killing invasive plants/aquatic species on my property (67%/63%).
- ◇ Not displacing aquatic invasive species (NA/70%).

Future research

- Needs & actions organizations could or should take remain unknown.
- Identify & track willingness to act & actions taken either through observations or self-reporting of actions.
- Compare industry sector intentions
- Consider use of 7 or 9 point scale to differentiate perceptions of harm & control

Limitations

- Initial effort, limited questions
- Completion rate



Emerald Ash Borer

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