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## **Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner Doubles Down on Invasive Species Prevention with Austin Lake Boat Wash Station**

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – The Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner’s Office and the Department of Natural Resources are proud to announce the second consecutive year of their partnership to install a boat washing station and bins. This year, the station is conveniently located at the Austin Lake Boating Access site.

Stations like this promote awareness of clean boats and other water equipment to prevent the spread of invasive species- species such as, Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), New Zealand Mudsnail (*potamopyrgus antipodarum*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillate*) (now found in Michigan), and European Frog-bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*). Hydrilla and European Frog-bit clog water ways, impacting the fish and other wildlife, and hinder public access to the water.

Following the success of last year’s station at Long Lake, the Drain Commissioner’s Office once again provided signage and equipment (grabber tool, brush, and boat drain plug) while the DNR provided the location, trash bins, and regular trash pick-ups.

Invasive species prevention yields greater results and requires much less time and resources than eradication. Once introduced, invasive species eradication becomes a costly and near impossible management task, especially for aquatic plants.

“We’re thrilled to continue this partnership with the DNR,” said Jason Wiersma, Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner. “Boat washing stations are a crucial tool in preventing the spread of invasive species, and we encourage all boaters to utilize this valuable resource.”

### **Tips for preventing the spread:**

- Inspect water equipment for any aquatic hitchhikers.
- Remove any plant matter and dispose of in trash.
- Wash off all boats, tubs, shoes, and any equipment or clothing.
- Allow equipment to dry fully.
- Properly dispose of bait (worms and fish).
- Take pictures and memories and leave only ripples!

To delve deeper into the activities of the Drain Commissioner's Office, visit [www.kalcounty.com/drain](http://www.kalcounty.com/drain). In addition, visitors to Austin Lake Boating Access Site can conveniently scan the QR code displayed on the sign using their smartphone. This feature enables immediate access to further information.

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