

2018-02 WATERCRAFT USE ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND ITS BACKWATERS

Whereas: Airboats, mudboats and Wilcraft* have led to an increase in motorized recreational use on the Mississippi River and backwaters during the last 10-15 years. All these craft are designed and purposed for use in shallow water. Their recent proliferation allows hunters, trappers, anglers and other recreational users access to shallow vegetated (emergent and submergent) aquatic areas that previously were accessed by hard work. They also provide opportunities (e.g. night bow fishing) that previously were limited and uncommon or rare.

Whereas: These craft are not harmless. Use of these watercraft may have the following effects:

1. Harassment of Waterfowl. Within the last two years, there have been documented accounts both night and day of hazing of waterfowl by persons using these watercraft. The incidents were reported to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR).
2. Destruction of aquatic vegetation. Aerial photos of Mississippi River backwaters show patterns of vegetation destruction attributed to operation of these watercraft.
3. Increased noise. Prop wash from airboats and exhaust from mudboats frequently exceed current maximum 84 decibel restrictions.
4. Disruption of shallow water habitats. These craft are designed to operate in shallow water that provides habitat for young fish, mammals, waterfowl, reptiles and invertebrates.
5. Increased spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). The design and intended use of these watercraft present another means for spreading AIS through water intake systems, mud on craft, moving vegetation and transport of water

Therefore, be it resolved that the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America in Convention on April 28, 2018 calls for a discussion between the Minnesota Division and the USFWS, MNDNR, and all other appropriate agencies. that result in restrictive use regulations for airboats, mudboats, Wilcraft, and similar watercraft by season, location and time of day.

*Water Ice Land Craft = Wilcraft

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Suggested distribution?

*USFWS – Winona District
MN DNR
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers*

Adopted Minnesota Izaak Walton League 2018