



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Ottawa National Forest  
Watersmeet – Iron River  
Ranger Districts

E23979 US 2 East  
Watersmeet, MI 49969  
(906) 358-4551  
(906) 358-4000 (FAX)  
(906) 358-4006 (TTY)

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**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** January 18, 2012

Waltraud Brinkmann  
Friends of Sylvania  
PO Box 697  
Watersmeet, MI 49969

Dear Ms. Brinkmann,

This letter is to inform you of my decision to modify the Crooked Lake boat landing to a carry down only facility for the launching of boats in Crooked Lake on the Watersmeet Ranger District. The boat landing is located in the Sylvania Perimeter Area in Section 34, Township 35 North, Range 40 West, Watersmeet Township, Gogebic County, Michigan.

The purpose of this action is to reduce the threat of introducing and spreading aquatic invasive species (AIS) in Crooked Lake. Requiring the launching of boats by carrying them to the lakes edge will not eliminate the potential for introducing AIS into Crooked Lake and thus there will be continued efforts to survey for and control any invasive species that are found. Control efforts will continue as needed and may include hand-pulling, chemical treatments or other methods as authorized in the Ottawa National Forest Non-native Invasive Plant Control Environmental Assessment, January 2005.

Another critically important prevention method is to provide information to the boating public and to seek their assistance in inspecting all water craft and accessories for AIS. Encouraging the use of best practices to prevent the introduction and spread of AIS will further assist in preventing the introduction and spread of AIS. Modification of the boat landing is an action which is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement and which does not require the development of a Decision Memo.

A meeting on September 30, 2011, at the Watersmeet Ranger Station, presented options for reducing the threat of AIS being introduced into Crooked Lake. This meeting also provided an opportunity to hear from the Crooked Lake Riparian Owners and others about their concerns and to learn about other possible means of reducing the threat of introducing AIS into Crooked Lake. Several ideas were offered including the installation of a permanent boat washing station near the Sylvania Entrance Station, mandatory inspection of all watercraft before launching into Crooked Lake, and the installation of a gate to restrict access at times when the Sylvania Entrance Station is closed. Discussions with and input from other interested citizens and tribes, as well as letters from interested citizens, were also considered in my decision.

I have decided not to implement these options for a variety of reasons. Installation of a permanent boat washing station would not provide assurances that it would be used unless it was staffed continuously during the boating season. Mandatory inspection of all watercraft is a

