



Zebra Mussel Bulletin – February 26, 2009

This could be the year Lake Minnetonka gets zebra mussels.

The LAKE MINNETONKA ASSOCIATION has been very concerned about the likelihood that Lake Minnetonka will be infested with zebra mussels for a long time. Until recently, however, we have not had clear, objective information to assess our risk. Now we have that information.

The results from two separate studies are now available – and taken together, they point to an imminent threat of Lake Minnetonka getting zebra mussel. In fact, these results have been available for a couple months and we are not aware any actions have been taken.

The first finding comes from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Annual Aquatic Invasive Species Report¹. The MN DNR reports that zebra mussel population in Mille Lacs Lake has exploded. Zebra mussels were first discovered in Mille Lacs Lake in 2005 and have been nearly undetectable through 2007. However, in 2008 the populations were widespread throughout the lake – 140 adults found in 2007 compared to 24,000 adults found in 2008 and at every site in the lake. As well, zebra mussel veligers (the immature form) were found in only a single water sample in 2007, but were found in every water sample in August and September 2008. The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District Executive Director was sent this report via email on January 23, 2009.

The second finding is from the MN DNR's Watercraft Inspection report for Lake Minnetonka². In this report, it is noted that 38% (the majority) of all boaters surveyed that had been in a zebra mussel infested water had most recently been in Mille Lacs Lake. In actual numbers, 99 boaters reported coming from Mille Lacs Lake, representing about 1% of all boaters coming to Lake Minnetonka. Assuming Lake Minnetonka welcomes 100,000 boaters per season (a number we believe to be conservative), then means 730 boaters come to Lake Minnetonka from Mille Lacs Lake. The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District received a written and verbal report on December 10, 2008.

Here is what is most troubling. The inspections that occur on each lake are 1) incomplete, only a fraction of the boaters entering or leaving the respective lake are inspected, and 2) the inspections are educational and the inspectors neither have the authority nor the ability to actually require boaters to empty their water reservoirs.

This is a time bomb – tick, tick, tick.

¹ Invasive Species Program. 2009. Invasive Species of Aquatic Plants and Wild Animals in Minnesota: Annual Report for 2008. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, MN.

² Draft 2008 Summary Report of Watercraft Inspection Results at Lake Minnetonka. Heidi Wolf. December 2, 2008.



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The LAKE MINNETONKA ASSOCIATION urges all the agencies with the authority and responsibility to quickly respond to this looming crisis. There are NO REMEDIES for zebra mussel once they get into the lake.