



MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

ZEBRA MUSSELS IN LAKE MINNETONKA

Aquatic invasive species **found** in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed include:

- Eurasian watermilfoil
- curly-leaf pondweed
- purple loosestrife
- zebra mussel
- flowering rush

Aquatic invasive **species of concern** (not yet known to exist in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed) include:

- spiny water flea
- bighead carp
- hydrilla
- rusty crayfish



In an effort to limit transport of aquatic invasive species on boats and trailers, The MCWD partners with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to offer annual training for local law enforcement officers on the laws surrounding this topic.

WHAT ARE ZEBRA MUSSELS?

Zebra mussels are an invasive species that are small, fingernail-sized animals that attach to solid surfaces in water. Adults are 1/4 to 1-1/2 inches long and have D-shaped shells with alternating yellow and brownish colored stripes. They are now found in parts of Lake Minnetonka. Populations of these animals often increase rapidly, and once established, they can rarely be eliminated. Zebra mussels can limit recreational activities and alter aquatic ecosystems by displacing native species.

Currently there are no environmentally safe control methods to kill zebra mussels once they become established in a natural system. Because of this, the DNR does not try to eliminate zebra mussels if they become established in a lake or river. This is why it is important to prevent their spread, since once they arrive in a water body there is no way to eliminate them.

PREVENT THE SPREAD

We need to work together to stop the spread of zebra mussels to other lakes and rivers. Zebra mussels attach to boats, nets, docks, swim platforms, boat lifts, and can be moved on any of these objects. They also can attach to aquatic plants, making it critical to remove all aquatic vegetation before leaving a lake. Microscopic larvae may be carried in water contained in bait buckets, bilges or any other water moved from an infested lake or river.

1. Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment
2. Eliminate water from equipment before transporting
3. Clean and dry anything that came in contact with water (Boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.)
4. Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.



MINNESOTA ZEBRA MUSSEL LAWS

It is illegal to travel on a public road with zebra mussels attached to a boat or trailer, or to have live zebra mussels in your possession. It is also illegal to launch or place a watercraft or trailer into uninfested waters of the state with attached visible zebra mussels. It is also illegal to travel on a public road with aquatic vegetation on your boat or trailer, due in part to the fact that zebra mussels can attach to vegetation. You are also required to drain any water from your boat (live wells, bilges and bait buckets) when leaving zebra mussel infested waters.

Find out more: mndnr.gov/minnetonka_zebra_mussels

Photo: Zebra mussels with the byssal threads used to attach to hard surfaces.

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MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT



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WHAT SHOULD LAKESHORE AND BOAT OWNERS DO?

Zebra mussels will encrust hard surfaces – boat hulls, mooring buoys, inside mechanisms, water toys, docks and lifts. There are several precautions boat owners may take.

1. When swimming or wading, wear protective footwear to minimize cutting your feet, as zebra mussel shells are razor-sharp.
2. Remove your irrigation intakes from the water when not in use.
3. If possible, keep your boat and motor out of water (when not in use) to minimize the encrustation of zebra mussels.
4. If it is not possible to store your boat out of water, contact a marina to inquire about protective paints and annual maintenance.
5. Run your boats long enough to reach operating temperatures. The immature zebra mussels are very sensitive to heat, so a hot engine will kill them as they are flushed through the cooling system. Drain all water reservoirs after each use.
6. If you take your boat out of Lake Minnetonka to visit another lake or river, thoroughly clean your boat and trailer inside and out and let it dry for at least five days. Scrape off any encrustations, wash with high pressure, hot water, drain and dry all water reservoirs.
7. If you sell used docks, structures or water toys, be sure they are decontaminated and cleaned before they leave the area.
8. Join the DNR zebra mussel citizen monitoring program. Learn more on the DNR website.