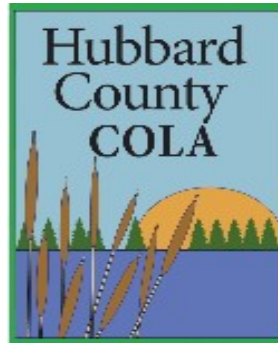


Inspect For Zebra Mussels



The COLA Call

By Steve Hall

Inspect for Zebra Mussels

I love Fall! It's the time of the year that nature paints some of the most beautiful colors and the time when I have the privilege to enjoy a little fishing and hunting. Unfortunately it is also the time of the year when we need to take our boats, docks and lifts out of the water

before Old Man Winter settles in. As we are doing this work it is the perfect time to check our equipment for Zebra Mussels. Zebra Mussels attach themselves to vegetation, metal or other hard surfaces like boats, dock legs or boat lift supports. As adults Zebra Mussels are very visible but in the early stages of their life cycle they may appear as "little bumps.. like sandpaper" on a surface. It is a known fact that our area lakes are surrounded by neighboring bodies of water that are infested with Zebra Mussels and other Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Because of this each of us must be vigilant and do everything we can to detect and prevent the spread of these unwanted organisms. AIS have several ways of spreading themselves from one body of water to another. Most of those pathways involve man and our activities in and on the water. As many of us here in lake country use lake service providers to move our boats, docks and lifts into the water in the Spring and then out of the water in the Fall, it is important to know that they have the potential to spread AIS as they do their work. While some providers are trained in preventing the spread of AIS some are not. The following are some suggested questions to ask your provider before they do work for you.

- 1.) Question them to determine if they are familiar with AIS and their pathways of spread. Ask them if they have participated in the DNR's training program for the prevention of the spread of AIS.
- 2.) Ask them if they inspect their equipment for vegetation or Zebra Mussels as they move from one body of water to the next.
- 3.) Ask them what body of water they were last doing work in.
- 4.) Ask them if they know if the last body of water they were in is infested with an AIS. Note that Leech Lake, 11th Crow Wing, Portage Lake, Twin Lakes and the Crow Wing River are all infested with an AIS.
- 5.) Ask your lake service provider if they clean their equipment – including their waders.
- 6.) Ask if they know the laws regarding equipment cleaning if they have done work in infested waters.
- 7.) Ask them if they know the laws regarding the transport of an AIS.

Lake property owners are encouraged to use AIS knowledgeable lake service providers so we can minimize the risk of unwanted infestations. If you or your provider detect or suspect an AIS in your lake or river please contact Darrin Hoverson – DNR Invasive Species Specialist at 218-699-7293 or email him at darrin.hoverson@state.mn.us .

