

Zebra mussels confirmed in Forest Lake in Washington County

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in Forest Lake, which will be designated as a zebra mussel infested water to limit further spread of the invasive species. A member of the public found a suspected zebra mussel on a rock on the east shore of Forest Lake last week and brought it to the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District office. DNR biologists inspected the lake and found 11 more zebra mussels along the eastern shore. Further searching by private consultants also found mussels along the south shore of the lake.

The number and distribution of the zebra mussels indicate a population is likely established and natural reproduction is occurring in Forest Lake. Because of these factors, treatment would not be effective and is not planned.

This is the fourth Minnesota lake in 2015 with a newly discovered zebra mussel population. Most new infestations are reported during the warm summer months, when more people are spending more time on the water.

The DNR is concerned about this and any new infestation because of potential environmental, recreational and economic impacts. Anglers and boaters need to be vigilant and do their part by following aquatic invasive species laws. Boaters are required to clean aquatic plants and debris from their boats, remove drain plugs and keep them out while traveling, and dispose of unused bait in the trash. The DNR also recommends letting boats and equipment dry for at least five days or washing them with high pressure or hot water before launching in other waters.

More information about aquatic invasive species laws and zebra mussels, how to inspect boats and other water-related equipment, and a current list of designated infested waters is available on the DNR website at www.mndnr.gov/ais.