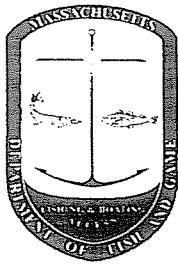


Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Fish & Game



Office of
Fishing & Boating Access

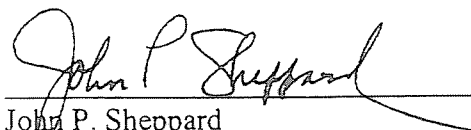
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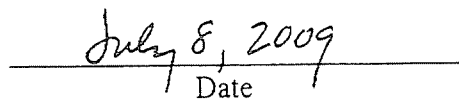
**Emergency Closure of the Boat Ramp
at Laurel Lake in Lee, MA**

In keeping with its role to provide technical assistance under the Rapid Response Plan for the Zebra Mussel, the Department of Conservation and Recreation ("DCR") has confirmed the presence of Zebra Mussels, an aquatic invasive species, in Laurel Lake in Lee, MA. This is the first time that Zebra Mussels have been definitively documented to be present in a MA lake. This invasive species can significantly alter the lake ecology and cause other adverse impacts. Moreover, there is a risk that Zebra Mussels will be unknowingly transported from one lake to another by boaters. For these reasons, I am exercising my authority as the Director of the Department of Fish and Game's Office of Fishing and Boating Access ("OFBA") pursuant to the OFBA Regulations at 320 CMR 2.00 ("Public Access Facilities") to close the public access facility (a boat ramp) at Laurel Lake in Lee, MA, on an emergency basis.

More specifically, under 320 CMR 2.02(2)(c) the Director may establish management measures prohibiting the use of a public access facility. Under 320 CMR 2.02(4), if the Director finds that the immediate establishment of management measures is necessary for the public health, safety or general welfare, the Director may establish management measures on an emergency basis for a period of no longer than 45 days without notice to the public and an opportunity for public comment. This emergency closure of the boat ramp at Laurel Lake will allow OFBA, DCR and other interested parties an opportunity to determine more definitively the scope and severity of the Zebra Mussel infestation in Laurel Lake, the risk of transport of Zebra Mussels to other MA water bodies, and the appropriate management measures for the Lake on a going forward basis. OFBA will comply with the procedures for public notice and public comment in 320 CMR 2.02(3) if the closure of the boat ramp at Laurel Lake extends beyond 45 days.



John P. Sheppard
Director



Date