

LAPA SURVEY OF **New York** ZEBRA MUSSEL EXPERIENCE

1. What agency in charge of ZM issues?
NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation (DEC) created Office of Invasive Species Coordination (OISC) to coordinate across nine state agencies involved (early 2008).
2. When were ZMs first discovered in your state? What lake? How were they discovered?
Around 1988 in the Great Lakes -- Hudson River and Lake Champlain around 1993.
3. What actions were taken at the infected lake upon the discovery?
Individual lakes did their own thing. No holistic state process other than educational campaign. Lake George started SCUBA eradication with private dollars.
4. What immediate actions were taken to prevent spread to other lakes?
Educational campaign and lots of publicity.
5. Do you target only water bodies susceptible to ZM growth?
No. Just general education.
6. What do you believe is the most probable transfer mechanism from lake to lake/
Definitely recreational boating. Not nature.
7. What actions are taken now upon discovery of a new infestation?
Publicity and public education to get people to wash their boats. Individual lake groups and associations do their own thing. NYS OISC is in process of building a GIS to track all invasives through their Natural Heritage Program
8. What is your states program now to attempt to prevent transfer from lake to lake? Do you have boat ramp monitoring program? If so, how many hours/day/week? Do you prohibit launching of boats known to be recently in infected waters? What enforcement powers do you have to prevent launching? Under what conditions? What financial penalties?
Basically dependent on educational program. Lake George has a separate agency and funding stream for a Boat Launch Steward Program - no regulatory / statutory authority. Basically still education and awareness effort.
OISC is working toward regional Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM)s involving public / private groups -- have 1 contract and hope to eventually have 8 such PRISM)s handling all invasives.
The Lake George Watershed Coalition receives state money and gives out grants for boat washing and ramp monitoring at Lake George – basically try to cover peak ramp use times. Again ramp monitors have no legal authority.
9. Have you been successful in preventing or reducing the spread?
Basically no
10. What has been the ecological change in the infected lakes? Over how many years? How has the change affected recreational useage of the lake?
They recognize ecological changes are taking place but no reportable definition of the changes. Only obvious one is need to wear booties when wading in infested waters.
11. Do you have a standardized, “certified” boat washing/decontamination process?
No

12. Do you issue permits for fishing tournaments/derbies? If so, do you place any special ZM restrictions or requirements on the permit?

No. OISC is thinking about ways to use such a process for education.

13. What is your boat registration policy? How much does it cost? Is any part of that registration fee set aside for lake preservation, invasive specie protection, boat ramp maintenance, etc?

All power boats. Don't know fees but all goes into general fund. OISC funding of 3-5M/yr comes from state Environmental Protection Fund (around \$200M total) which comes from real estate transfer tax.

Additional Information

NYS OISC is working on trying to get a "boat transfer" making it illegal to knowingly transport any invasive species on boats and trailers. In current climate, not much is expected near term.

Also basic effort is to reduce probability of new infestations while recognizing that the Zebra Mussel won't be prevented from infesting the rest of susceptible lakes.

OISC considers the Zebra Mussel as the "poster boy" for why the state has to do more to prevent introduction and transfer of other, newer, maybe-even-more problematic invasives!!!

RWR 11/18/09