

## **ZEBRA MUSSELS**

First of all, Council met on August 13<sup>th</sup> and had an extensive discussion about the situation of the zebra mussels which continue to be a huge problem at beaches on the Lake Winnipeg side.. from Hillside Beach to Lester Beach, on many of the beaches at Victoria Beach and along the west shores as well.. Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Dunnottar etc. are all suffering. Some things that came out of our discussion at Council may be of interest to your association:

- This is the first year we have had to deal with them.. although we were aware they were in some water systems, the only time the subject came up at Council was to promote water safety and wash your boats.. but no thought had been given as to what would be done when they got here because naively we thought we could prevent them. (I kind of feel like the first time I got on Council and we were hit with the weather bomb and everybody wanted their land protected and their stairs to the beach and life back to where it was - NOW).. this time it's zebra mussels. We are inundated and we want them gone – NOW.
- Other areas in Canada have been through this, and before we re-invent the wheel, let's see what has been done. First of all, the City of Toronto will be contacted to find what their most effective tool was in cleaning up Lake Ontario. An investigation via the internet will be done and hopefully we will find a combination of things that will apply here.
- Our Public Works department will undertake to find a machine that will be versatile enough to approach most of our beaches to clean up as much as possible.
- The RM will consider grants to those associations who are willing to find the people to clean up the beaches. Of course, this is something that I know the Associations will be happy to do, however.. BUT – and this is the big thing.. what do we do with the shells once they are gathered up?

- So that is one of the biggest hurdles to overcome and that is why we feel that finding out what other areas did will be helpful. A portable incinerator has been suggested.. and although that sounds great I just see a bunch of big red flags.
- Meaningful conversations with the Provincial government will have to be held once we have more information to bypass permitting processes that are very time consuming and expensive, and find a way to dispose of the shells that will suit everyone. Perhaps Toronto came up with a solution that we can implement.

As far as I know, our CAO Don Dowle will be posting a communication up on our web page to let people know we are not ignoring the problem and we are working towards a solution. Between the blue-green algae and the zebra mussels, the Lake will be forever changed.. and I certainly hope that change will end up being a positive one. I understand that Lake Ontario, which was inundated 10 years ago is now healthy and thriving with renewed life. The mussels come in droves, overpopulate until they have run out of food, then back off.. although they never go away completely, they clear and clean up the water allowing many fish species to return and repopulate. It's the onset that is scary and once we have that under control, it should get a lot easier.

### **BLUE-GREEN ALGAE**

As you know, there was a meeting at Lester Beach regarding the blue-green algae and what could be done about it. Lake Winnipeg Foundation representatives were there along with reps from both the East and West side of the lake. Our Reeve, Jack Brisco attended and brought a lot of information to Council which I'd like to share with you if you would like to post it on your website:

Lake Winnipeg is suffering from some very serious health problems: Along with the zebra mussels, there is the "blue-green algae". This is not really algae but a toxin producing bacteria called Cyanobacterium and it has appeared earlier than usual and persisted. The future of Lake Winnipeg and the health and safety of residents both permanent and

seasonal who live and play along her shores, is at risk. It should be noted that **the algal blooms that are present in Lake Winnipeg are toxic to both humans and animals.** *The following links from the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control provide you with more information about the Cyanobacteria that may be present in the algal blooms.* [https://www.cdc.gov/habs/pdf/cyanobacteria\\_faq.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/habs/pdf/cyanobacteria_faq.pdf) and [https://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/diseases-risks/diseases/cyanobacteria/en/](https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/diseases-risks/diseases/cyanobacteria/en/)

You should be aware that disease due to cyanobacterial toxins varies according to the type of toxin and the type of water or water-related exposure (drinking, skin contact, etc.). Humans are affected with a range of symptoms including skin irritation, stomach cramps, vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea, fever, sore throat, headache, muscle and joint pain, blisters of the mouth and liver damage. Swimmers in water containing cyanobacterial toxins may suffer allergic reactions, such as asthma, eye irritation, rashes, and blisters around the mouth and nose. Animals, birds, and fish can also be poisoned by high levels of toxin-producing cyanobacteria.

**There is no single solution, no magic bullet, that will solve Lake Winnipeg's health crisis. However, through reduction of phosphorus loading from the North End Sewage Treatment Plant and effective regulations for protecting the threatened wetlands which filter phosphorus from runoff, the process of healing Lake Winnipeg can begin. Our elected governments have the power and authority to make these changes.**

**Winnipeg City Council, Manitoba Provincial Government and the Canadian Federal Government,** have the capacity to work together for strong solutions to change the trend of Lake Winnipeg's health, but currently are not. As we approach both Provincial and Federal elections, we can put Lake Winnipeg on the election agenda by asking our candidates (provincial / federal) and City officials what they plan to do and how they plan to work together. Attached are easy form letters you can send to your City Councillor, Provincial Member of Legislative

Assembly and your Member of Parliament. Be sure to copy Ministers and Party leaders. This link will take you to a sample letter to city council: <https://www.lakewinnipegfoundation.org/news/update-winnipeg-sewage-treatment> Simply copy and paste and personalize your letter by adding your personal concerns and contact information.

**THIS IS AN ELECTION YEAR!!** The Lake Winnipeg Foundation has created a digital document with 3 questions for candidates. This document is also attached. Keep this list of questions in your mailbox or other handy place by your front door. Be sure to ask your candidates the questions about their commitment for the health of Lake Winnipeg when they come to canvas for your support.

**Finally, please share this information with friends and neighbours to increase awareness of the need for strong solutions and Government collaboration to SAVE OUR LAKE. Encourage them to participate with you by writing letters to their own candidates and all the party leaders. If enough people write, this will become an election issue.**

**Working together, we can influence change and Save Our Lake!**  
The following link provides the list of candidates seeking election in the Province of Manitoba: <https://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/en/Voting/Candidates/1>

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