

## Protecting Sandy Lake from Zebra Mussels

January 9, 2018

Presentation to Council of Harrison Park

### Sustainability of Sandy Lake

Sandy Lake is one of the two remaining commercial centres in the RM of Harrison Park. The economy and sustainability of Sandy Lake is based on tourism attracted by the lake:

- day-use tourists
- cottagers

Zebra mussels pose a unique significant threat to the sustainability of Sandy Lake as a commercial centre

### What are the Threats to Sandy Lake as a Commercial Centre?

A zebra mussel invasion of Sandy Lake would cause a long-term degradation of the economy of Sandy Lake starting with the immediate closure of the Lake by the Province.

### Examples of Lake Closures Due to Zebra Mussels

- Singush Lake was closed to day-use boaters by the Province after a single suspect sample of zebra mussels was collected from a substrate sampler placed in Singush Lake during the 2016 open water season.
- Whirlpool Lake was closed by Parks Canada in December 2017 after DNA evidence of zebra mussels was found in water samples taken this summer and fall.

### Stage 1 – Immediate Economic Impact – after the Province closes the Lake to day-use boaters

- The media would be all over this and Sandy Lake would receive a lot of bad publicity.
- Campground owners and other local businesses would see fewer visitors and their bottom line would be instantly impacted.

### Stage 2 – Progressive Economic Impact – degradation scenario for Property Owners

- Reduced quality of **sports fishing**
- Increased blooms of **toxic blue-green algae**
- Increased growth of aquatic vegetation poses a **challenges to fishers and motor boat operators**
- Smelly, **decaying zebra mussels** fouling the lakeshores
- Sharp zebra mussel shells in the shallows and on beaches that **pose a hazard to swimmers**
- Increased annual costly and labour intensive maintenance:
  - Cooling systems of boat motors that become clogged,
  - Docks, boats and boatlifts that become encrusted,
  - Pumps and water systems that draw water from the lake.

### Stage 2 – Progressive Economic Impact – reduced desire to be at the lake

- Impacts of zebra mussels would make it less desirable for cottage owners to spend time at the lake.

### Stage 2 – Progressive Economic Impact – reduced days of cottagers at the lake

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- Reduced local shopping and potential business closures
- Reduced goods & services for the community and local rural area
- Eventual de-population of the community
- Reduced cottage property values

### Impact on Municipality

- Reduced tax base and
- Eventually, maintenance costs to unclog:
  - Storm drain pipes and
  - Sewer pipes

**(If remaining tax base warrants it)**

### An infestation of zebra mussels in Sandy Lake would be:

- Not only, **ecologically destructive**, but
- **Economically devastating**, and
- **Would last forever.**

We need to act now while we have the chance of getting ahead of it.

#### **Council Resolution Passed December 12, 2017**

#### **Motion 301/2017: Lloyd Ewashko – Craig Atkinson**

**WHEREAS** Administration has begun to prepare a special service area plan for aquatic invasive species, specifically for the properties in and around Sandy Lake;

**AND WHEREAS** council has reviewed the information prepared to date;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the special service area plan for the aquatic invasive species, specifically for the properties in and around Sandy Lake, be tabled until such time as the Province of Manitoba commits to an effective AIS prevention strategy for western Manitoba.

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### Protecting Sandy Lake from Zebra Mussels

The Province **Will NOT Protect an Individual Lake.** Additional Provincial Inspection stations will slightly reduce the risk of a zebra mussel invasion but the community of Sandy Lake can significantly further reduce the risk.

Friends of Sandy Lake are requesting that Council re-consider the motion of December 12, 2017 to table the “special services area plan for aquatic invasive species” and proceed with implementing this plan that would:

1. Setup an inspection station at the main dock to be operational by the May 2018 long weekend.
2. Close or restrict access to all other public boat launches at Sandy Lake.
3. Setup lockable gates to prevent boats from launching without being inspected.

### Urgency – Time is of the Essence

We have to act now, well before the open water season begins. It is essential to:

1. Increase the awareness of the zebra mussel threat and
2. Raise money for startup costs of an Inspection Station at Sandy Lake.

### Please Help Us

We need the Municipality to:

- Immediately proceed with the Special Service Area Plan for aquatic invasive species (AIS) without waiting for the Province to commit to “an effective AIS prevention strategy for Western Manitoba”.
- Accept donations towards protecting Sandy Lake from aquatic invasive species and providing donors a tax deductible receipt.
- Work jointly with Friends of Sandy Lake, Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve and the Province to increase public awareness of AIS within the municipality for example; Printing and distributing AIS awareness literature.
- Paying for and installing updated signage at boat launches within the municipality.

**Allow Residents of Sandy Lake Protect Their Economy!**

**Considering the potential economic impact on the community of Sandy Lake,  
the community should be allowed to determine  
if they want to implement additional protective measures.**