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MAR 16 2018

MUNICIPALITY OF HARRISON PARK



**MINISTER OF  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Legislative Building  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA  
R3C 0V8

**MAR 12 2018**

Mr. Lloyd Ewashko  
Reeve  
Rural Municipality of Harrison Park  
Box 190  
43 Gateway Street  
Onanole MB R0J 1N0

Dear Mr. Ewashko:

Thank you for your letter dated December 29, 2017 expressing your concerns and the need for additional education efforts, enforcement, as well as more decontamination units within southwestern Manitoba to prevent the spread of zebra mussels.

Protecting our water bodies from aquatic invasive species such as zebra mussels is of great importance to the Government of Manitoba. I appreciate your concerns and suggestions to improve protection for Manitoba from aquatic invasive species. I have shared these suggestions with the Wildlife and Fisheries Branch's Aquatic Invasive Species unit. The Government of Manitoba continues to work to protect all water bodies from aquatic invasive species. However, this objective is only achievable with the collective action of all water users and by recognizing this is a shared responsibility of all levels of government.

The department believes communication targeting water users is essential. In the fall of 2016, the Province of Manitoba increased public communication, including initiating the "Stop the Spread" campaign with a focus on raising awareness of zebra mussels. Additional communication efforts occurred over the 2017 open water season to boost awareness of zebra mussels and the steps required to prevent their spread. In 2018, we plan to increase both awareness and "how-to" signage to help inform water users of these steps. It is important to note that if all water users incorporate these simple steps "clean, drain, dry, dispose and decontaminate if necessary", the threat of spreading aquatic invasive species – even on watercraft originating from invaded waterbodies - can be greatly reduced. More information is available on our web site at [www.manitoba.ca/stopais](http://www.manitoba.ca/stopais).

Additionally, unit staff continue to work with provincial and federal enforcement to increase awareness of aquatic invasive species legislation. In fact, unit staff have conducted targeted aquatic invasive species training with all of Manitoba's Conservation Officers. This training will ensure officers are updated and knowledgeable regarding enforcing the Aquatic Invasive Species Regulation. Furthermore, collaboration with federal Canadian Border Services Agency provides an additional level of protection from aquatic invasive species coming over the international border to Manitoba.

Several Manitobans from southwestern Manitoba have expressed the need to have additional watercraft inspection stations closer to specific lakes. However, a review of the 2017 watercraft inspection station data show that the current watercraft inspection station locations are situated at strategic key pinch points, between waters with aquatic invasive species and those without. Further review of the 2017 water inspection stations results confirm the Watercraft Inspection program's six stations inspected nearly 10,000 watercraft with 11% requiring decontamination.

Decontamination is a step that is not required for most day-use or transient boaters. You may also be interested to know that the branch's Aquatic Invasive Species unit is developing a Certified Service Provider program. This program will provide additional capacity to conduct watercraft decontaminations throughout Manitoba.

The department and Aquatic Invasive Species unit staff recognize and support the prevention needs of waterbodies in western Manitoba. Collectively, the initiatives outlined above form a baseline strategic approach to protecting all of Manitoba from aquatic invasive species. I encourage you and others to work with the Aquatic Invasive Species unit to develop practical, localized, and effective ways to ensure all water users and levels of government are part of the solution to protect Manitoba's water bodies. For more information, please contact Jeff Long, Aquatic Invasive Species Director at 204-945-7792 or [Jeff.Long@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Jeff.Long@gov.mb.ca).

Yours sincerely,



Rochelle Squires  
Minister

cc. Jeff Long