

Alien species in the Great Lakes

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is expected to be spent by shipping, pleasure boating and fishing interests for cleanup and controls. Recreational boaters, anglers and others using the lakes can help in controlling the spread of the mussel by washing all boats or equipment used in one of the Great Lakes before entering inland waterways.

The mussel filters water as it feeds, consuming valuable phytoplankton -- alga and other small aquatic plants -- that are the normal food sources for the ecosystem's larger species. Thus, the invader's eating habits could short circuit a food chain that has evolved over thousands of years, especially since only one fish species (freshwater drum fish) and the

scaup or diving duck are the mussel's only known North American predators.

With the alterations to the Great Lakes environment from these exotic species becoming more obvious, the GLFC and the International Joint Commission, a treaty organization between Canada and the United States focusing on boundary water issues, issued a strongly worded report last fall urging both countries to immediate action to prevent additional exotic species from entering the Great Lakes ecosystem.

The Commissions recommended that all oceangoing ships be required to exchange ballast waters in mid-ocean before entering the Great Lakes or their connected waters. Such an exchange lessens the chance of entry and survival by exotic species, since there are mid-ocean areas that are virtually devoid of life and species from salt water are less likely to survive in fresh water and vice versa.

In cases where this is not an option, all ballast water must be treated so exotic species are either removed or destroyed before being discharged into the lakes. If a ship does not comply with these provisions, it should be prevented from entering the waterways to the Great Lakes. The Commissions also recommended that research programs be developed to further define options for virtually eliminating the introduction of exotic species into the ecosystem.

Canada initiated voluntary ballast water guidelines similar to the Commissions' recommendation in May 1989. Four out of five ships have complied with these voluntary provisions, but that still means that at least 100 ships are discharging 100 million gallons of water and organisms into the system each year.

In the U.S., Congress passed the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act last November, which provides \$150 million over the next five years for programs on aquatic species in the Great Lakes. The act mandates ballast water exchange begin in 1993 but does not specifically address waters connected to the Great Lakes. Voluntary compliance similar to the Canadian guidelines is required until then. The act also specifically earmarks \$13 million for zebra mussel research and control.

Both Commissions believe controlling the zebra mussel population alone will cost "hundreds of millions of dollars" each year for the next decade. Preventing new species from entering the Great Lakes will cost less in the long run, they believe, than trying to control the mussel, lamprey and other nuisance species that drastically affect the Great Lakes ecosystem's fragile food chain. One thing is certain: until major routes of entry for exotic species are eliminated, more invasions are inevitable. Eradication of aliens, once arrived, will be impossible.

Notice

Dr. Alice Newman - Office Hours

Terrace Bay (825-9133)	Monday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Tuesday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Wednesday	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Schreiber (824-2935)	Wednesday	2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Thursday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Friday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Vic Dua - Office Hours

Schreiber (824-2935)	Monday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Tuesday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Wednesday	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Terrace Bay (825-9133)	Wednesday	2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Thursday	10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
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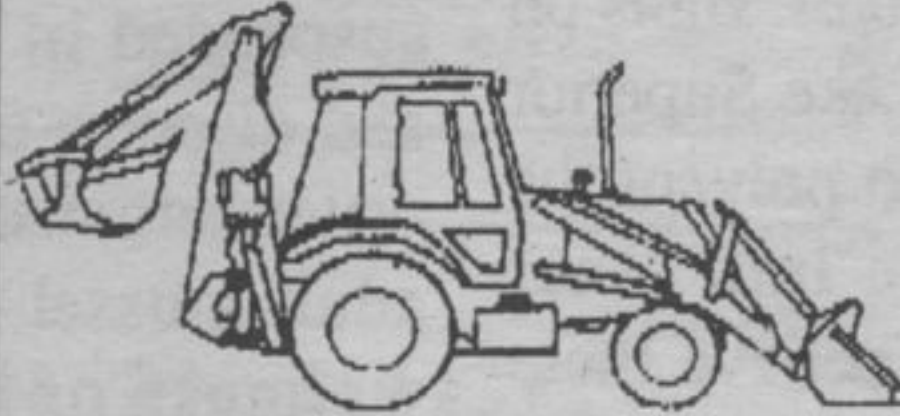
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Northern Insights

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Despite the differences in approach evident in NAN, Toronto, Ottawa, and the non-native interest groups, I remain optimistic about all this.

I firmly believe that by the end of this century, there will be another level of government in northern Ontario - called the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation - one complete with its own system of laws and institutions. Since the negotiations with NAN are further advanced than with other regional aboriginal

groups, the NAN discussions will no doubt set the precedents that others can follow.

These new regional governments will have disputes, both internal and external, just like the governments we have now. But if everyone involved in these negotiations sticks to the principles they've outlined, we should see governments unlike any other - ones based on new understandings of how to live together, as First Nations, and as Canadians.

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