

Stouffville prepares to battle mussels

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

A new breed of tiny water beasts are infesting the Great Lakes and could cause problems with Whitchurch-Stouffville's water supply.

Zebra mussels could make their way to inland lakes and streams which feed Whitchurch-Stouffville's community water supply, says Ministry of the Environment's water scientist Stephen Maude.

"They are mostly confined to Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie areas now but we predict they will make their way into Lake Ontario in the upcoming year," Dr. Maude says.

Zebra mussels, scientifically known as dreissena polymorpha, are small brown mollusks with stripes on their hard shells and could cause major environmental problems if they are not confined, Dr. Maude says.

Each female can produce

40,000 eggs - and as many as 15,000 babies can grow on an ordinary clam where they hitchhike and feed on tiny algae.

Billions of the one-inch mussels are expected to be making their way to Toronto.

"It's more a question of quantity (that they hinder) not quality. They actually make the water clearer because they feed on live algae but (zebra mussels) are fouling up pipes. They use threads to attach themselves and once stuck it's extremely hard to get them off a pipe," he explains.

The creatures like to attach themselves to small water pipes in massive clusters until they block off the water supply and corrode the pipes, he adds.

"They reduce the diameter of the pipe," the MOE biologist notes.

Officials are also afraid the tiny mussels will attach themselves to boats heading into cottage lakes, which would spread out the prob-

lem even more. Zebra mussels prefer small pipes to cluster together in the size of pipes small municipalities like Whitchurch-Stouffville have that draw water from larger lakes. Originally from the Black Sea area and discovered in Europe as far back as 1890, the zebra mussels were first seen near Samia in 1986.

In January, Whitchurch-Stouffville council was notified of the Lake Simcoe and Region Conservation Authority's concerns about "this potentially devastating problem in our area."

Council in turn requested staff to contact York-Durham MPP Bill Ballinger for his ministry's comments.

Mr. Ballinger wrote back and assured local officials he was "acutely aware that the appearance of zebra mussels threatens our resources not only in the Great Lakes but also in our inland lakes and streams."

Mr. Ballinger also stated at the Ministry of Natural Resources is heading up a strategy to combat the inedible mussels.

The (MNR) is currently assessing the appropriate method by which we can develop a substantial, integrated response to the zebra mussel infestation," he wrote Council.

The zebra mussels have already caused problems in municipal water systems in Monroe, Michigan. They invaded the U.S. city's water supply forcing residents to go without any water for three

days, officials confirm. There is a natural way to help confine the mussels.

"Their main predator is a duck called a Scaup and other diving duck species found here that feed on the zebra mussels. This could help control them," Dr. Maude says.

"We don't know yet if they will become a problem in Whitchurch-Stouffville."

"It depends on how rapidly they disperse and what their ecological requirements are," Dr. Maude concludes.

New phone book environment safe

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Bell Canada has introduced an environment-friendly phone book in Guelph and Waterloo and is spending thousands of dollars to establish new markets for recycled directories in other communities, local Council heard Tuesday evening.

The communications company wrote to local officials to advise

of the "very positive developments involving our 1990 directory."

Bell Canada's Guelph/Waterloo phone directory features vegetable oil-based ink derived from canola and soybeans, which will replace its old petroleum-based version.

In addition, Bell constructed the directory covers from biodegradable glue while the white pages have been printed on a lighter weight 20-lb. paper.

Fewer two-line listings will also assist in containing book size," writes Bell Canada's business office.

"Each of these changes will make our telephone books even more environmentally friendly and they will be incorporated in all other directories."

"We expect the Guelph pilot will prove to be a workable model and result in other communities launching similar initiatives."

The local councils in Guelph and Waterloo passed a resolution last April to accept the new books.

"The co-operation of the community, governments and recyclers can make a difference," the Bell office states.

Ward 6 Councillor Jim Sanders applauded the move and stressed this type of project "is greatly needed" to improve the environment.

Council took no action and received the letter.

Stouffville kids raise \$17,000

Three local elementary schools raised more than \$17,000 for the Heart & Stroke Foundation last month in their "Jump Rope for Heart" campaigns.

Orchard Park Public School, which has jumped for the cause longer than any other school in York Region, skipped to the tune of more than \$6,000; Goodwood Public School roped in more than \$5,800 and Dickson Hill Public School added another \$5,500 to the Heart & Stroke research coffers.

Local resident and foundation President Jim Rae said the community has also raised money through door-to-door canvassing and although the grand total was not available Monday, he said more than \$13,000 has been tallied so far.

"I'm expecting about four or five more people to bring in more this weekend," he said.

The schools start the active campaign every year during Heart & Stroke month to raise money for research to help combat Canada's number 1 killer.

All three schools raised more or met each of their last year's totals and Orchard Park received an extra pat on the back for its longstanding commitment to the cause.



photo: DAVE BARNETT

A taste o' the Irish

The Earl of Whitchurch provided the perfect setting on Saturday for St. Patrick's Day celebrations. A number of revellers turned out at the local night spot for the event. Above, Lynne Hood gets some dart-throwing tips from Wayne Glencross (left) and husband Brian.

Below, the patrons hoist mugs of green beer. Are you the person circled in the photograph. If so, you've won \$25 in our weekly Here's Looking At You contest. Drop into the Tribune office at 54 Main St. West in Stouffville to claim your prize. Last week's winner was Rev. Douglas Gray, of Stouffville.



Correction

A story which appeared in last Wednesday's Tribune incorrectly stated that an expansion project for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library will cost \$3.2 million. In fact, the figure is \$2.3 million. The Tribune regrets the error.

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