

ASK AN EXPERT

LOWDPOA OFTEN RECEIVES environment related questions from members on a wide range of topics. As well as responding to these individual queries, we decided to publish some of them with responses from our expert resources.

Thank you to Alison Kirkpatrick, Monitoring and Information Specialist Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters (OFAH), and Kelli Saunders, the International Watershed Coordinator for the International Joint Commission, for their input.

**What measures are being taken to ensure that invasive species (like zebra mussels) do not contaminate Lake of the Woods?**

Kelli Saunders, the International Watershed Coordinator for the International Joint Commission, says:

“In 2011, the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Task Force (International Joint Commission) identified that invasive species is a priority issue in this watershed. In response to this, the IJC is currently reviewing existing data and programs in order to make recommendations back to the two federal governments on ways to deal with invasive species in this area.”

LOWDPOA helps to address invasive species through our various education and outreach programs. We hire an invasive species summer student as part of our Lakesmart Team to help

spread the word on preventing invasive species. This summer we’ll be offering a **“Grow Me Instead” seminar July 10 in Kenora**, identifying area invasive plants and encouraging gardeners to plant non-invasive species instead. We have also begun to include a monthly “Grow Me Instead” feature in the *Area News* magazine highlighting alternative plants that are either native or non-invasive. On the LOWDPOA website, you will also find an abundance of information on invasive species: <http://lowdpoa.com/living-green-at-the-lake/wildlife/invasive-species/>.

The OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program recently introduced a new tool in the fight against invasive species. Alison Kirkpatrick, Monitoring and Information Specialist, says:

“EDDMapS is a fast and easy web-based mapping tool that allows users to identify, report and view invasive species distribution in real time. Users can make invasive species reports using both the online system and a mobile App. Users simply take a picture with any mobile device and report from wherever they are—it’s that simple!”

If you spot an invasive species, report it to [www.eddmaps.org/ontario](http://www.eddmaps.org/ontario) or contact the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711.

We should be aware that this area is surrounded by zebra mussels in both Lake Superior and now in Lake Winnipeg. Let’s all do our part to prevent this invader from being introduced locally by cleaning boats with a pressure washer or hot water, leaving them in the sun for at least 5 days to dry out (if feasible), and always cleaning mud and vegetation off of boats and boat trailers.

Let’s all do our part! ■

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