**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Clean, Drain, Dry: Help Stop the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species**

*Montpelier, VT* – The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is urging lake visitors to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species. Aquatic invasive species are organisms such as zebra mussels or water chestnuts that have spread or been introduced beyond their native range. These organisms can harm the environment, economy, and human health. Currently over 100 lakes and ponds in Vermont are infested with aquatic invasive species, with three new infestations in 2022.

“When we visit Vermont’s lakes and ponds, we can all do a few simple things to help protect these vital natural resources,” said DEC Commissioner John Beling. “Anyone can report aquatic invasive species, learn from Public Access Greeters, and volunteer with our monitoring programs. For those moving boats between bodies of water, you can help stop the spread of invasive species by following Clean, Drain, Dry.”

To follow the Clean, Drain, Dry initiative, remember these three steps:

1. **CLEAN** off any mud, plants, and animals from boats, trailers, motors, and other equipment. Discard removed material in the trash or on high, dry ground where there is no danger of them washing into any water body.
2. **DRAIN** all water from boats, boat engines, and other equipment away from the water.
3. **DRY** anything that touches the water. Drying boats, trailers, and equipment in the sun for at least five days is advised if rinsing with hot, high-pressure water is not an option.

Lake visitors can also help by [reporting aquatic invasive species](https://bit.ly/Report-AIS). Visit the [gallery](https://bit.ly/AIS-Photos) to see photos of species currently found in Vermont.

At public boat launches, visitors may also see and talk with Public Access Greeters about aquatic invasive species. Greeters can also provide free boat inspections to stop invasive species from hitching a ride from one lake to another.

For those who would like to volunteer, the Lakes and Ponds Program has several [monitoring programs](https://bit.ly/Lakes-Volunteers) with two that focus on aquatic invasive species:

1. [Vermont Invasive Patrollers](https://bit.ly/VT-VIP-Program)
2. [Vermont Invasive Patrollers for Animals Program](https://bit.ly/VT-VIPA-Program)

Interested parties are welcome to [sign up online](https://bit.ly/2023-VIP-Form) to join [training sessions](https://bit.ly/2023-VIP) this June and July. With more than 800 lakes and ponds throughout the state, volunteers play a key role in identifying, monitoring, and reporting aquatic invasive species in Vermont.

The [Aquatic Invasive Species Program](https://bit.ly/AIS-Program) coordinates management activities, funding, education, and outreach to reduce the threat and spread of aquatic invasive species. If Oliver Pierson is not available, contact Kimberly Jensen at [Kimberly.Jensen@vermont.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Jensen@vermont.gov) or 802-490-6120.

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*The Department of Environmental Conservation is responsible for protecting Vermont's natural resources and safeguarding human health for the benefit of this and future generations. Visit* [*dec.vermont.gov*](https://dec.vermont.gov/) *and follow the Department of Environmental Conservation on* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/TheVermontDEC/) *and* [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/thevermontdec/)*.*

A group of people in kayaks on a lake

Description automatically generated

*Volunteers line up to complete a survey of aquatic invasive species on the Connecticut River; photo by K. Jensen.*

Read the [press release online](https://dec.vermont.gov/news/clean-drain-dry-help-stop-spread-aquatic-invasive-species).

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