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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **City of Prior Lake To Host DNR Researcher Regarding Possible Zebra Mussel Infestation**

A recent discovery of zebra mussel shells in Prior Lake has Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff looking for live specimens of the nonnative, invasive species. The department will designate the lake infested if they are found. Although officials aren't certain whether the shells originally came from live zebra mussels in the lake or were brought to the area on equipment and fell off, they said it's likely the lake is infested.

The Prior Lake Lakes Advisory Committee is scheduled to discuss zebra mussels with DNR Research Scientist Gary Montz, an aquatic invertebrate biologist, at its meeting Tuesday, April 21 at 4:30 p.m. at City Hall.

The possible infestation means boaters and anglers should take extra precautions when using Prior Lake, according to DNR officials. "As one of the larger lakes in the Twin Cities metro area, Prior Lake has significant boat traffic, with people coming and going all the time," says DNR Invasive Species Unit Supervisor Luke Skinner. "Everyone is going to have to be extra vigilant to keep from spreading these pests to other waters."

According to the DNR, boaters can help prevent further spread of zebra mussels and other invasive species by taking a few simple extra precautions:

- Inspect and remove all visible aquatic plants, animals and mud from boats, trailers and equipment such as anchors before leaving a water access;
- Inspect and remove all visible aquatic plants, animals or mud from docks, boat lifts and swim rafts before transporting to another water;
- Drain all water from boats - including live wells, bilges and bait buckets - before leaving a water access;
- Spray or rinse boats with high pressure and/or hot water, or let them dry thoroughly for five days before transporting to another water.

Zebra mussels pose serious ecological and economic threats to Minnesota Lakes. Heavy infestations can kill native mussels, may impact fish populations, can interfere with recreation, and can increase costs for industry, including power and water supply facilities.

The DNR steps up inspections, enforcement and education around infested waters. Under Minnesota law it is a misdemeanor to transport water or prohibited invasive species from designated infested waters.