

Clean, Drain, and (Temagami) Dry

By Diane Green

This year the Ontario government passed a new regulation to prohibit the transfer of invasive species into lakes from watercraft. The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) has provided further information for cottagers on how this can be accomplished, and TLA members will begin to see more postings of the "Clean + Drain + Dry" graphic as a reminder that it is now the law to prevent introduction of prohibited, invasive species into waterbodies.

What invasive species could threaten Lake Temagami?

There are numerous species that could be introduced into Lake Temagami, including plant, animal, fish, and snail species, and others. Zebra mussels are one well-known example, and Eurasian Milfoil is another.

Cottagers are fortunate that Lake Temagami is relatively undisturbed. One species that has been found in the Lake, however, is the Spiny Waterflea – a small crustacean that can attach to fishing lines and be transported between lakes or within Lake Temagami itself. Another concern is invasive *Phragmites*, which has been spotted in a few locations (particularly along Highway 11). It is far easier to prevent the spread of invasive species than to deal with the problem after the fact.

What are the responsibilities of boat owners?

FOCA recommends that boat owners ensure their vessels are "Clean, Drained, and Dry" before being placed into waterbodies. Note that the regulation covers watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, rowboats, and rafts, as well as associated equipment (e.g., ropes, fenders, and anchors). Failure to abide by the regulation can result in fines, starting at several hundred dollars.

When arriving at Lake Temagami from down south, owners should ensure that before their watercraft and trailers are placed into the water, they are both "Dry" and "Cleaned" of any attached organisms. Owners may find that these steps are most easily carried out at home (if their watercraft are

stored near their winter residences), where there is access to hot water and electricity. Homeowners can use high-pressure washers and hot water at home in their driveways, or take their watercraft to manual car washes for cleaning. Studies have shown effective decontamination with hot-water sprays of over 54 °C (129 °F), steam at 100 °C (212 °F), and high-pressure washing at 900 to 1200 psi.

Air drying of watercraft for several days can also assist in the destruction of organisms through exposure to UV radiation and heat. Five days may be sufficient for the decimation of Spiny Waterflea, but it is insufficient for Zebra Mussels. Combinations of methods, such as hot water followed by air drying, can be more effective than those methods used alone. This is why multiple methods of “Clean, Drain, and Dry” should be used to ensure that all species are destroyed.

When removing a boat from lakes in the Temagami region (or anywhere else in Ontario), the Province requires that any water on the boat must be “Drained” before the boat is transported. This includes removing the drain plugs, and draining bilge water, live wells, and bait buckets. In addition, owners should take reasonable precautions to remove any attached organisms from their boats and trailers. This prevents the transportation of eggs, seeds, and/or live organisms to other locations in Ontario, as residual water and humidity have been shown to facilitate the survival of invasive species.

What else can Temagami cottagers do about aquatic invasive species?

Drying watercraft, fishing lines, and rope in the sun for at least five days has been shown to limit the viability of Spiny Waterflea adults and eggs. This crustacean tends to collect on materials dragged through the water – and, in particular, fishing lines. Therefore, one step that can be taken is to simply wipe down lines with a rag as they are being reeled in at the end of a fishing day. This can help prevent the further expansion of this species, both within Lake Temagami and in other regional lakes.

Invasive *Phragmites* is a reed that many cottagers have seen down south, as it has become a dominant sight along ditches and shorelines in some areas. One of the most important contributions of visitors to Temagami is to both recognize and document the location of this species. Several locations are already known, including at Wasaksina Lake and near Jumping Cariboo Lake. iNaturalist

(www.inaturalist.org) is an easy-to-use web application that can provide tentative identifications of uploaded photos through artificial intelligence using geo-mapping (i.e., the process of taking location-based data and using it to create a map). EDDMapS (www.eddmaps.org) is another, more-structured, web application that is specifically designed to track and document in detail the location of invasive species in Ontario.

If TLA members have any further questions or are interested in assisting with the “Clean + Drain + Dry” initiative, please contact us at tla@onlink.net.