

# AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION

## ZEBRA MUSSEL VELIGER & SPINY WATERFLEA MONITORING



Wild River Conservancy Staff Sampling for Zebra Mussels and Spiny waterfleas

In 2022, Chisago County partnered with the National Park Service and Wild Rivers Conservancy to monitor for zebra mussel veligers and spiny waterfleas in 14 county lakes and rivers. This was part of a larger St. Croix basin, regional Minnesota/Wisconsin program where 35 lakes and rivers were sampled. Veligers are microscopic, free living larvae that begin to form shells. After two to three weeks, the microscopic veligers settle and attach to any firm surface using tiny fibers called “byssal threads”.

Populations of zebra mussels are found in Bone, Comfort, Forest Lake, White Bear Lake, Mille Lacs Lake, and the St. Croix River. Zebra mussels can change water quality and lake biota. Once zebra mussels have been established in a lake there has never been a successful attempt to eradicate them. Managing an established population of zebra mussels is often unsuccessful.

Spiny waterfleas are predatory zooplankton. They eat zooplankton that small, native fish eat. They are tiny with spikes or “barbs” that form along the base of the spine or tail. They are translucent and form clumps on fishing lines, ropes and nets. They are a poor food source for native fish and can clog fishing lines. There are no known effective control methods for spiny waterfleas.

In the 2022 monitoring, no veligers were found at any of the other sites. No spiny waterfleas (sample photo below) were found at any of the monitoring sites sampled this year.



Spiny water fleas on Lake George 9/16/12

photo courtesy Emily DeBolt

Spiny waterfleas Attached to Fishing Line

### Partners:

- Chisago County Water Resources
- Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District
- National Park Service
- Wild Rivers Conservancy

### Chisago County Lakes & Rivers Monitored:

- Comfort
- Fish
- Horseshoe
- Kroon
- Little
- Little Green
- North Center
- North Goose
- Rush
- South Lindstrom
- Spider
- St. Croix River at Interstate Park and Indian Head Flowage
- Sunrise River at Kost Dam

