

Advisory Board

Aquatic Invasive Species Recommendations

The Advisory Board recommends that DCR not only target the current zebra/quagga mussel situation, but also the larger topic of AIS by undertaking the following four categories of actions:

Testing/Monitoring

It is important to know the effect of Aquatic Invasive Species on the MWRA reservoirs, and offer these recommendations:

1. DCR staff should fully inspect the MWRA reservoirs for all Aquatic Invasive Species or potential for Aquatic Invasive Species.
2. MWRA staff should further test and develop any additional protocols protecting the reservoirs from the potential introduction of any Aquatic Invasive Species.
3. MWRA staff should develop and conduct scientific analysis of the viability of any Aquatic Invasive Species for survival in the reservoir system, using where possible independent organizations, resources, and institutions such as the Water Environmental Research Foundation (WERF) and UMass.

Restricting Boating

The fundamental responsibility is to protect the drinking water; to this end, it is critical to restrict private boats at the Quabbin.

4. Because zebra/quagga mussels are a potentially imminent threat to the Quabbin, and because the likelihood immediately ban all private boats.

In the event that private boats are not banned:

5. Restrict the use of private boats to Quabbin-only boats after proper sanitizing protocols have been followed. Continue to investigate options for on-site storage of Quabbin-only private boats.
6. DCR should purchase and utilize additional rental boats to further support access of fishermen to the Quabbin.

Costs

Ratepayers should not bear the burden of the costs associated with decontamination procedures.

7. Moving forward, all costs associated with sanitation procedures for Quabbin-only private boats should be revenue-neutral to ratepayers.
8. Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement between the Commonwealth and the MWRA that in the event that zebra mussels do infiltrate the Quabbin that the Commonwealth will assume all costs and liabilities related to their removal.

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Understanding Consequences and Responsibilities

It is important to understand the scope of the potential problem and know what entity has the ultimate responsibility for the protection of the watershed.

9. MWRA should conduct a financial analysis and forecast on the damage to, and the cost to remediate, the MWRA Integrated Waterworks System should any of the Aquatic Invasive Species listed above be introduced to the system.
10. Within 60 days, MWRA should obtain a legal opinion that clearly delineates decision-making authority between DCR and MWRA to take actions protecting the reservoirs; additionally, the legal opinion should recommend necessary changes that would facilitate and strengthen the MWRA's ability to protect the reservoirs.