

Published: June 22, 2009 12:00 am, The Daily Star

Filters advised for zebra mussels

Cooperstown Bureau

Zebra mussels are in Otsego Lake, and filters to strain them are available at Ace Hardware and Bruce Hall in Cooperstown, according to Teresa Winchester of the Otsego County Conservation Association.

“We just wanted to get the word out that these products are available locally,” she said.

Sooner or later, people who draw water from Otsego Lake will need to cope with the rapidly reproducing spiny mollusks that can clog intakes, foul boat hulls and make beaches unwalkable.

They infested Canadarago Lake several years ago and were discovered in Otsego Lake last year. Otsego Lake, James Fenimore Cooper's "Glimmerglass," serves as a reservoir for the village of Cooperstown, which is studying options on how to deal with the pest.

Charles R. O'Neill, Jr., a zebra mussel expert with New York Sea Grant, advises waterside residents facing an invasion by this species to take action early, thus avoiding rather than trying to remedy the problem, Winchester said.

Zebra mussels can add a foul taste and smell to household water, clog pipes, obstruct foot-valves, and corrode steel, iron, and copper pipes. They also can shut down lawn sprinklers, she said.

There is no practical way to get rid of zebra mussels in a large body of water, but there are strategies to contain them, Winchester said. Some are employed in the water and some on land.

On land, people can use in-line filters, chlorine injectors, or construct cisterns or wells. And in the water, they can employ sand filters and other structures to keep their water intakes relatively clean.

More information is available online at www.occainfo.org.