



Single Zebra Mussel Discovered in Candlewood Lake

FirstLight Power has reported that a single juvenile zebra mussel was found in Candlewood Lake at a depth of 13 feet off the southern tip of Vaughn's Neck on May 22nd. This mussel was found by FirstLight's consultant who was hired to conduct their annual zebra mussel monitoring program. Ten sites are searched annually, with a diver looking for evidence of mussels at those specified locations. FirstLight has reported that the zebra mussel that was found was removed and it is not believed that the mussel was of reproductive age. No other zebra mussels were found at that site or any of the other nine sites on Candlewood Lake.

The Candlewood Lake Authority has long been an advocate for each of us doing our part to prevent the introduction of zebra mussels into Candlewood Lake. More than a decade ago, zebra mussels were discovered in the Housatonic River, believed to be coming from a source lake in Western Massachusetts where they had invaded. Over time, these mussels traveled in their larval form down the River and have established large populations throughout the Housatonic system, including Lakes Lillinonah, Zoar, and Housatonic. Candlewood is benefitted by the geographic fact that the water entering the lake from the Housatonic River must be pumped up from the river by the owners of the lake, in this case, FirstLight Power. Since the discovery of Zebra Mussels in the Lake, FirstLight has voluntarily decided that they will not pump water up from the river into Candlewood when the water reaches the temperature the mussels need to reproduce. This has been a major tool in the fight against Zebra Mussels in Candlewood.

While only one mussel was found this year, it is certainly at least a reminder of just how close to home these invaders are. We don't know yet whether this mussel was a solitary occurrence or if there might be more hiding in areas that haven't been searched yet. We are working with CT DEEP, FirstLight, and other organizations around the country to help answer that question. What we know now is that mussels can survive in Candlewood Lake, since one was found that was alive and well, and that they are on Candlewood's doorstep. We also know that this is not a time to let our guard down, and we must work together to prevent additional

zebra mussels and any other invasive plants and animals from entering Candlewood Lake. Zebra mussels can quickly take over ecosystems and change the dynamics of entire lakes, and we want to prevent that for Candlewood.

The CLA is currently working with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, FirstLight and the local community to expand our monitoring program for 2020 to include additional sampling locations for zebra mussel larvae and the continued deployment of underwater monitoring stations.

We must remember that keeping Zebra Mussels out of our lake is primarily under the control of the users of the lake. One of the major ways invasive species like zebra mussels enter the lake is attached to boats and other vessels that are regularly launched into the water. Therefore, it is *critical* that all boaters visiting other lakes and launching in Candlewood, **clean, drain and dry your boats, trailers and equipment to help prevent the introduction of invasive species like this one.** This means that everyone must wash their boat, trailer, outboard motor, car wheel wells, and anywhere else that these species might be hiding any time you take your boat out of a water body, including Candlewood, to move to a new water body. When you visit one of the many boat launches on Candlewood Lake, you might see a sign with the same message, or you might even be greeted by a DEEP “Boating Education Assistant” at a state boat launch who will inspect your boat and educate you on the best ways to help stop invasive species spread. Thank you for working with us to help make sure we keep Candlewood Lake safe and healthy into the future.