

Bylaws coming for water source lake

By Nate Smelle

In an effort to protect the town's water supply, Bancroft council recently announced they are moving forward with imposing restrictions to prevent boat access to Clark Lake.

As the primary source of drinking water for many residents of Bancroft, Clark Lake was identified in the new draft of the County of Hastings official plan as a Source Water Protection Area. Taking into consideration the significant role this specific lake plays in maintaining the health of the community, town staff have acquired permission from the appropriate government ministries, as well as legal counsel, to implement these restrictions. In light of its potential to support the growth and spread of zebra mussels, Councillor Mary Kavanagh put forth a notice of motion demanding to restrict boat access to the lake. She believes the introduction of this invasive species to Clark Lake could have a catastrophic impact on the town's water treatment plant and water infrastructure. It is believed that zebra mussels were first introduced into the Great Lakes in 1988; transported to North America in the ballast water of cargo vessels from Europe. They have since spread from the Great Lakes to connecting waterways throughout Canada and the United States. These tiny invasive mollusks are known to attach themselves to intake pipes, filtration screens and virtually any surface they can cling to ? sometimes congregating in colonies eight inches thick.

Not only do they disrupt the balance of the natural ecosystem, they also pose a threat to water infrastructure. Between 1989 and 1991, the city of Monroe, Michigan in the U.S. was faced with frequent water shortages when zebra mussels began clogging the water intake pipes for the city's water supply on a regular basis. By preventing boat access to Clark Lake, the town hopes to avoid a similar problem occurring here. CAO Hazel Lambe indicated that these restrictions were a strictly preventative measure, confirming that there is no evidence of zebra mussels existing in Clark Lake at this time.

On Dec. 4, the town plans to host a public meeting regarding the proposed restrictions at the Club 580 beginning at 6:30 p.m. According to Lambe, the meeting is intended to help educate the public about why the town considers these measures necessary. She said it will also give community members an opportunity to share any input or concerns they might have. Lambe also indicated that council would not make its final decision on the matter at the meeting.