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August Newsletter

2 messages

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Thu, Aug 13, 2020 at 1:27 PM

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Volume 14 Issue 6

Know Your Watershed

August 2020



Throwing veliger net into water to collect samples for eDNA testing

One of the most effective ways to act upon of an infestation is early detection and a rapid response to slow it down or stop it. Many water bodies in North America have become infested with invasive zebra mussels and to monitor for these mussels in our watershed, the Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards (SCCWS) has placed substrate samplers on docks in the lakes and reservoirs around our watershed. Thankfully no zebra mussels have been detected. However, this monitoring may not provide a full picture of the extent of zebra mussels in a waterbody as it may be too late to eradicate mussels from the waterbody by the time adult mussels are found.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment (MOE) has been studying many lakes and reservoirs in Saskatchewan for the larval stage of mussels. This sampling is called veliger sampling and uses eDNA testing to detect the presence of veligers in the water. To expand this testing, the SCCWS has been contracted to veliger sample at Lac Pelletier, Duncairn Reservoir, Cypress Lake, Eastend Reservoir, Saskatchewan Landing and Beaver Flat Resort Village. The SCCWS will conduct sampling three times over the summer at these six sites.

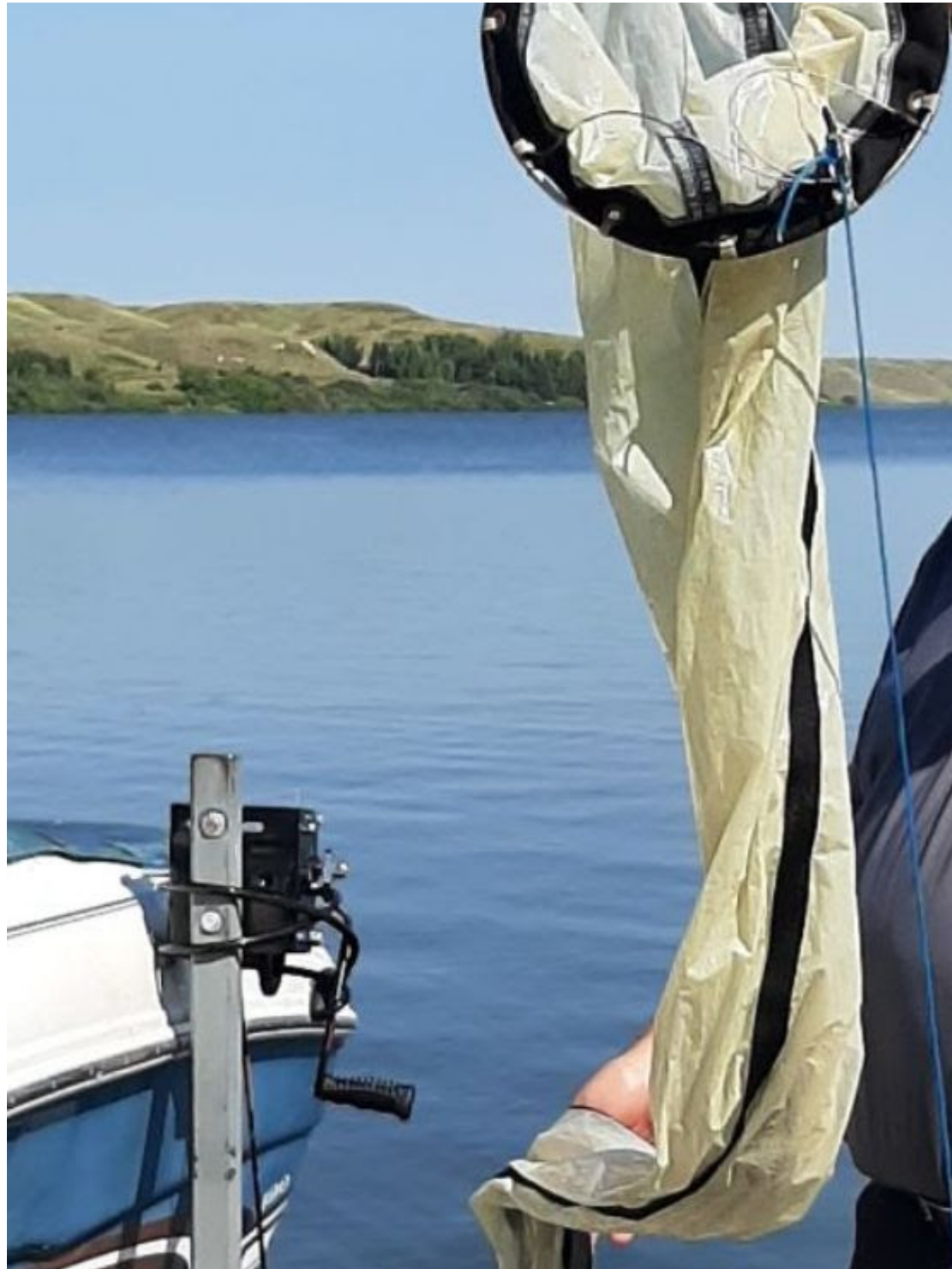
Samples are taken using a very fine mesh net with a cup at the end to collect water. The net is thrown into the water and pulled in to fill the cup. The net is thrown out a number of times until 1,000 liters of water pass through the net. The cup at the end of the net has a very fine screen which removes unwanted material but keeps the veligers in the water samples. After the samples have been filtered, they are preserved with alcohol and shipped to the MOE for testing.

This sampling and testing for the veligers allows the MOE and other groups concerned about the spread of zebra mussels into Saskatchewan an opportunity to detect their presence before adult mussels are found. Detecting the veligers will allow for a plan to slow the infestation in Saskatchewan before it gets too large and adult mussels infest important lakes and reservoirs.

If you see us conducting sampling, stop by and say hello and we will gladly show you how the veliger sampling process works. The SCCWS has also placed substrate samplers at many locations at the lakes and reservoirs that we are veliger sampling at. Thank you to parks and cabin owners who agreed to have the samplers hang from their decks this summer.

The SCCWS would like to thank the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds, the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and Invasive Species Center for their funding of this project.







Veliger Net with collection cup on the end

Froghoppers Update

Most years, our Froghoppers program would be wrapping up having made 50 presentations to over 700 students in our watershed. However 2020 is not like most years and because of school and summer camp closures due of COVID-19 restrictions, the Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards did not hire a Summer Stewardship Coordinator to run the Froghoppers Program in 2020.

However, the SCCWS is not resting on the past achievements of the Froghopper Program and is using this summer as an opportunity to revamp and revitalize the Froghoppers Program. Funding from the Youth Employment Skills Program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada allowed the SCCWS hired an intern for the summer of 2020. The intern was responsible for re-designing and reinvigorating the Froghoppers Program. The intern also worked with with the Moose Jaw River Watershed Steward (MJRWS) to create a curriculum for their watershed based on the Froghoppers Program.

Kalen Senecal was hired to fill this internship. Kalen hails from a farm near Melfort and is entering his final year of Education at the University of Regina. Kalen has been busy creating a curriculum for the SCCWS that will continue the legacy of Froghoppers while revitalizing it. As part of this curriculum redesign Kalen has had the opportunity to test the new curriculum at four Parks Play Programs in Swift Current in July and August and also at Lac Pelletier in August. In addition to new information for students aged 6 to 12 who comprise the majority of the Froghoppers presentations, curriculum for older students and

adults is being developed as well. The development of information for these groups is an exciting part of this project and the work of SCCWS in the future.

The SCCWS looks forward to our Summer Stewardship Coordinator giving presentations using this new and improved curriculum to schools, camps and play programs for the summer of 2021 to educate students about Watershed Stewardship. Look for more information about the new and improved Froghoppers Program in the spring of 2021.

The SCCWS would like to thank the Youth Employment Skills Program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for funding this project, the MJRWS for working with us on this project and providing office space for Kalen this summer. Finally we would like to thank Kalen Senecal for his efforts on this project and wish him all the best as he moves forward in his education career.

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