



## **NCEL Information on Zebra Mussels - Possible Solutions to Invasive Species**

Zebra mussels are causing significant economic and ecological damage across the United States. While no “silver bullet” has been discovered yet to eradicate the invaders, a large amount of research is focused on mitigation and adaptation techniques. We’ve outlined some relevant stories below, and will continue to provide information as it becomes available.

### **Potential Uses:**

- Zebra mussels could serve as indicators for toxic algae levels in water. Researchers in Ohio are studying how the mussels identify the increased toxins, which could lead to better technology for human use.  
<http://www.wateronline.com/doc/new-approach-to-toxic-algae-detection-mimics-the-zebra-mussel-0001>
- The shells of zebra mussels are very beneficial for composting. Cornell researchers identified a specific formula to improve soil conditions for plant growth.  
<http://compost.css.cornell.edu/zebra.html>
- Composting should not be a pollution problem, as the mussels do not carry excess contaminants. Some guidelines do exist, however, such as not disposing of the organism near aquatic areas.  
[http://el.erdc.usace.army.mil/ansrp/ansis/mergedProjects/ZMIS/html/disposal\\_of\\_zebra\\_mussel\\_waste.htm](http://el.erdc.usace.army.mil/ansrp/ansis/mergedProjects/ZMIS/html/disposal_of_zebra_mussel_waste.htm)

### **Prevention and Eradication:**

- A researcher in Northern Texas is developing a coating agent that would be applied to infrastructure to prevent zebra mussels from adhering to the surface.  
<http://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/UNT-Researchers-Work-May-Offer-Solution-to-Zebra-Mussels-224151741.html>
- A chemical product called Zequanox was officially approved for use last year to fight the zebra mussel infestation. Zequanox was applied to a lake in Minnesota, but remains controversial. Research is ongoing about its effect on the mussels and the overall ecosystem. The chemical is intended for use early on before the mussels have become fully established.  
<http://www.startribune.com/local/west/274420131.html>

### **Legislative Action:**

- Washington and Oregon Legislatures have both introduced bills this session requesting that Congress expedite funding for invasive species monitoring and mitigation.
- Reduced budgets for boat checks and monitoring in McPhee Reservoir in Colorado is limiting protection against the invasion, and will likely result in certain boat ramps being closed early due to lack of staffing.  
<http://www.cortezjournal.com/article/20150226/NEWS01/150229913&template=mobileart>