

# 2018 Update & Strategy

March 1, 2018

**Prevent the Spread of  
Invasive Species  
It's the law!**

**ALWAYS...**

- **INSPECT** your boat, trailer, and equipment.
- **REMOVE** any attached aquatic plants or animals.
- **DRAIN** all water from boats, motors, and equipment.
- **NEVER MOVE** plants or live fish away from a waterbody.

**Some counties may require decontamination, if available on site.**

If you find a suspected zebra mussel (adult, to scale, below) or other aquatic invasive species, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “report AIS” for step-by-step directions.



## Zebra Mussels Spread on the McKenzie Chain

In October 2016 a Big McKenzie Lake property owner found a zebra mussel on his dock and reported it to the DNR who confirmed the first inland zebra mussel population, consisting of 15 adult mussels, in the 12 northwestern Wisconsin counties.

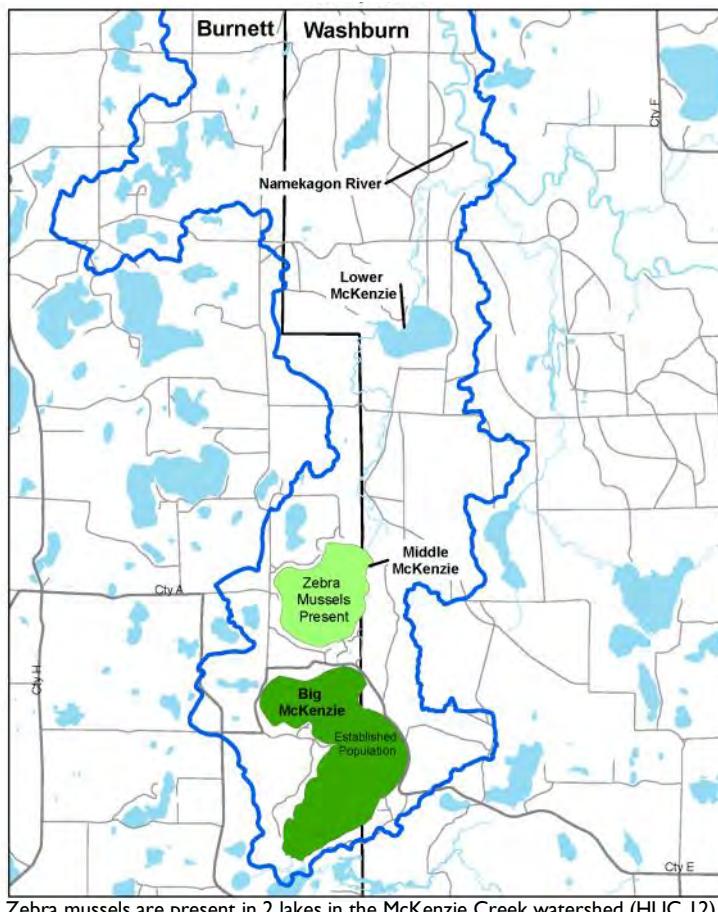
By fall 2017 zebra mussels increased on Big McKenzie to an estimated 20 individuals per square foot, and 2 adults were verified in downstream Middle McKenzie Lake.

Volunteers and professionals monitored 30 lakes in Burnett and Washburn Counties in 2017.

Fortunately, no lakes outside the McKenzie Creek watershed (below) had zebra mussels. Zebra mussels are in Lake Superior, St. Croix County, and the Twin Cities metro area.

Burnett and Washburn Counties have ordinance amendments requiring all watercraft to decontaminate before entering and after leaving a lake, if decontamination is available.

You can help prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) by establishing self-service decontamination stations at your boat landing, volunteering to monitor AIS, inspecting watercraft, or advocating for protection efforts.



Zebra mussels are present in 2 lakes in the McKenzie Creek watershed (HUC 12).

# STRATEGY

## Identify Pathways to Contain AIS and Prevent Further Spread



A watercraft inspector stands beside the Fish Lake, Burnett County, decontamination station.

- Pathways include stream connections and boats, trailers, and equipment moving between lakes. Landowners, tourists, businesses, agencies, and other stakeholders all have a role preventing the spread of AIS.
- The northwest 6 counties have at least 45 watercraft inspection projects covering 94 boat



Volunteers placed about 40 zebra mussel plate samplers in the McKenzie Chain in 2017.

landings. This effort accounts for 42% of statewide watercraft inspection funding.

- Many groups are partnering to provide watercraft inspection coverage on the McKenzie Chain with an emphasis at Big McKenzie. Partners include: other lake group volunteers, McKenzie Lakes Association, Burnett and Washburn Counties, DNR, and private businesses.
- Burnett and Washburn Counties have established an outreach network with local lake service providers to train and/or provide decontamination equipment. Some contractors have their own power washers, while others have equipment dedicated for Big McKenzie.
- These counties also have illegal-to-transport ordinances with 2018 amendments requiring decontamination, if available, when entering or leaving a lake.
- McKenzie Lakes Association installed decontamination stations at its 3 public boat landings, and some other area lakes have them.

## Assess Risk and Continue to Monitor

- Many area lakes are at suitable (i.e. at risk) or borderline suitable for establishing zebra mussel populations. Suitability is based on measured or inferred calcium, which zebra mussels need to grow shells.
- Professional and volunteer early detection monitoring on at least 30 lakes , including the McKenzie Chain and nearby lakes determined

to be suitable for establishing zebra mussels, occurred in 2017.

- Big and Middle McKenzie Lakes are the only current lakes with known zebra mussels.
- Volunteers are welcome to monitor AIS on their lakes as part of DNR's Citizen Lake Monitoring Network, or they can assist professionals when they monitor.

## What about Control

- Zebra mussel chemical control remains experimental in most situations. The primary criteria for experimental control are an isolated population in a small area.
- Even upon initial discovery, the Big McKenzie Lake zebra mussels were present at opposite ends of an 1185 acre lake, precluding control. The futility of chemical control in Middle McKenzie is limited by the constant exposure of zebra mussels via McKenzie Creek.

- Some lakes have had positive results with SCUBA manual control. While labor-intensive, it can reduce nuisance conditions and overall population abundance.
- We are partnering with other states and technical experts to better understand control options, including developing a rapid response plan defining criteria where control may be viable.

## We Need Your Help

## COMMUNICATION

- Washburn County and Burnett County Lakes & Rivers Associations are working with local communities to form lake groups and town committees, like the Town of Chicog who formed an AIS Committee in 2017.
- Annual lake group meetings are a great opportunity to get the word out on AIS and strategies to prevent the spread with existing educational materials.
- There are no additional management team public meetings currently planned for 2018, but you are encouraged to attend events like the Wisconsin Lake Partnership Convention April 18-20 in Stevens Point and the Northwest Lakes Conference on June 22 in Spooner.
- Volunteer to monitor for AIS, inspect watercraft, and advance lake protection strategies in your communities.



DNR hosted a December 1, 2016, public meeting about the recent zebra mussel discovery in Northwest Wisconsin.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can we close boat landings?** No, Wisconsin's lakes are held in trust for the public so existing public access cannot be removed or altered to prevent use.
- **Can we prevent people who have AIS on their boat or have not decontaminated from launching?** No, while there is a state law making it illegal to transport aquatic plants and animals, and Burnett and Washburn County ordinances requiring decontamination, if available, you cannot physically prevent someone from launching. Instead call 1-800-TIP-WDNR for state violations or the county sheriff's department for decontamination violations.
- **Are all lakes at risk?** Some lakes are more suitable for certain AIS than others, but people should always take the same precautions to prevent the spread of AIS: inspect, remove, drain, and never move plants or animals and even better if you can decontaminate your boat, trailer, and equipment.



Boaters decontaminate their equipment at Big McKenzie Lake in 2017.

**What is the difference  
between professional and  
volunteer monitoring?**

Volunteers often use simpler methods than professionals, but the main difference is volunteers are donating their time.

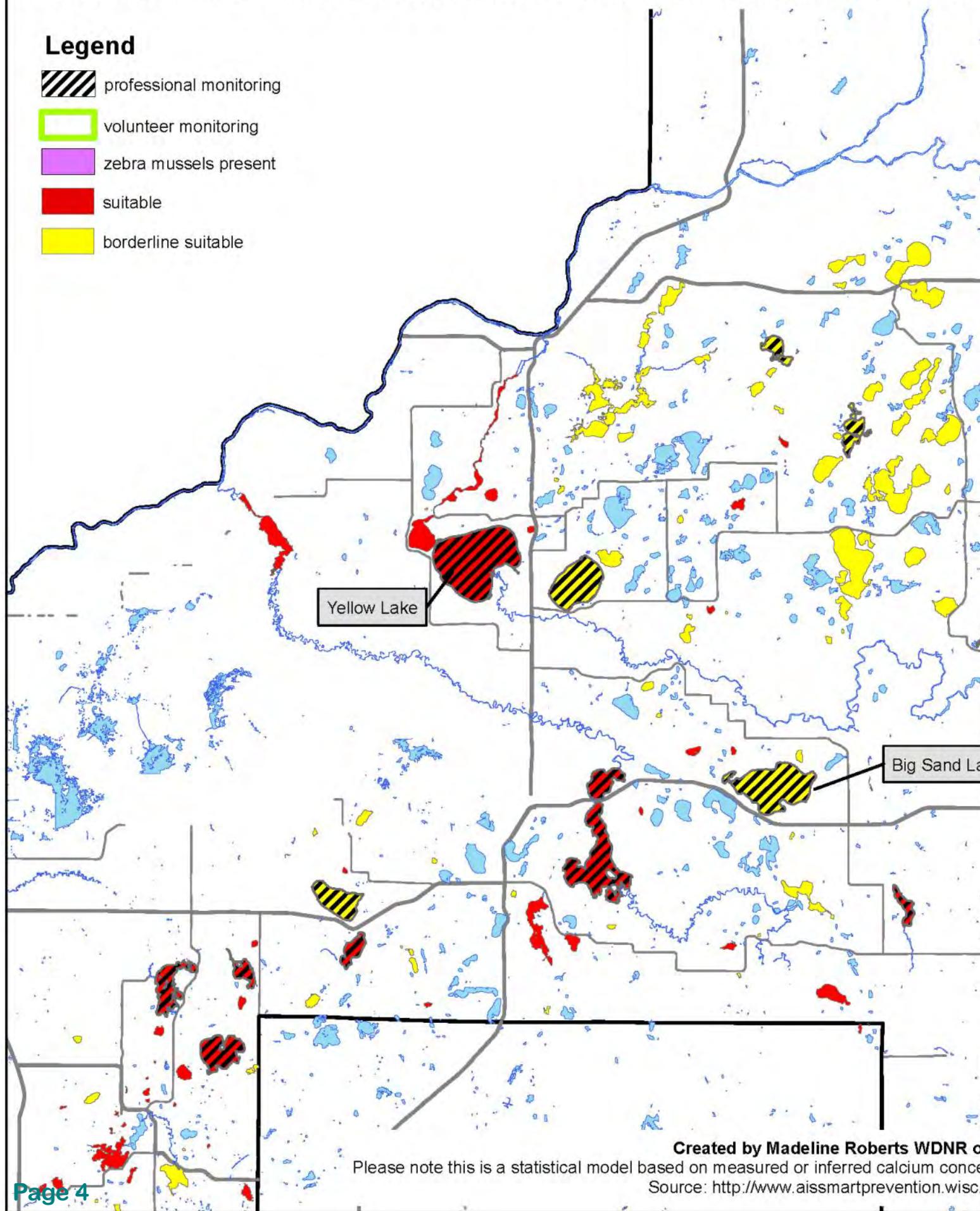
WE ❤️ VOLUNTEERS.



# Lakes Monitored in Burnett and Washburn Counties for Zebra Mussels

## Legend

- professional monitoring
- volunteer monitoring
- zebra mussels present
- suitable
- borderline suitable

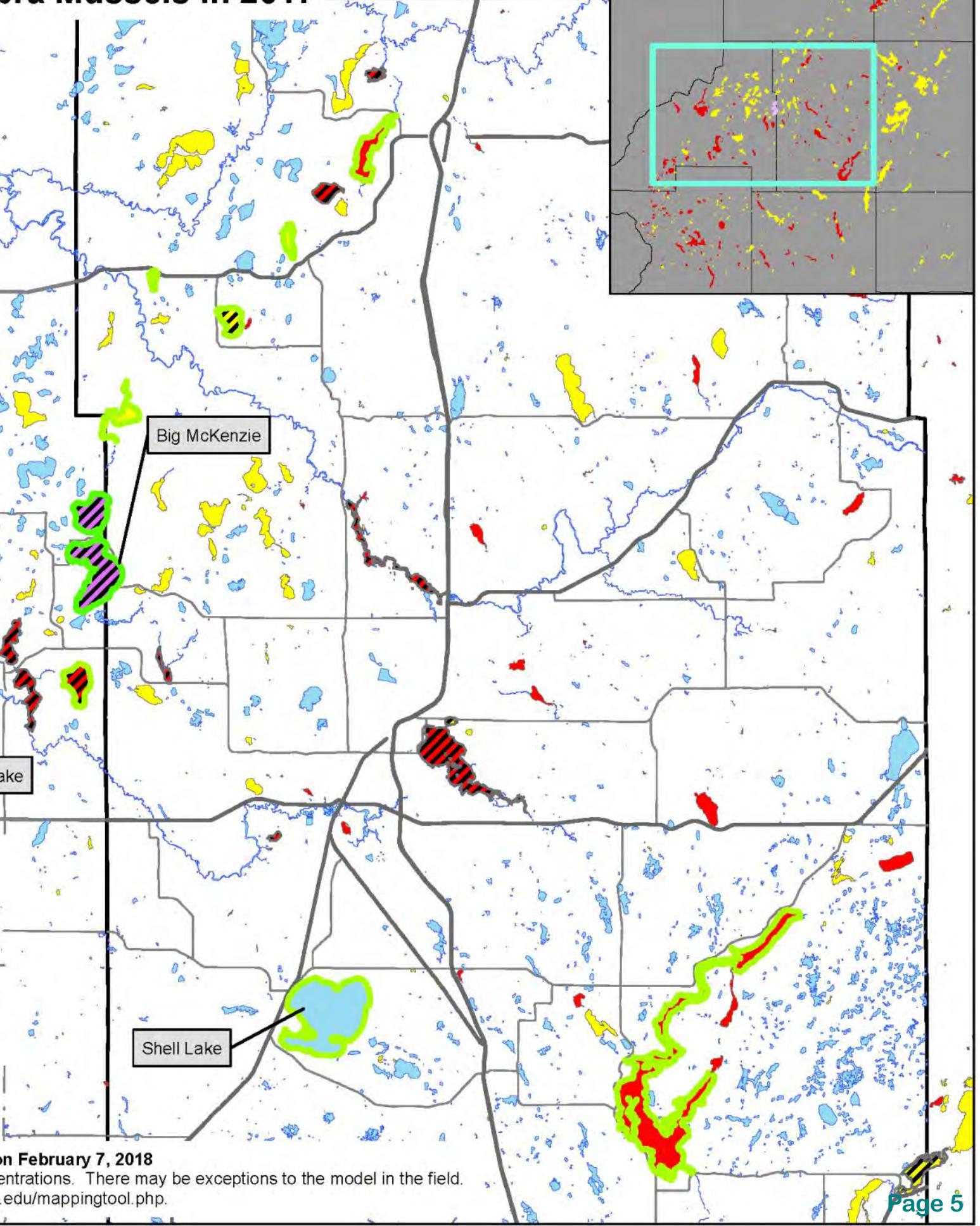


Created by Madeline Roberts WDNR

Please note this is a statistical model based on measured or inferred calcium concentration.

Source: <http://www.aissmartprevention.wisc.edu>

# Zebra Mussels in 2017 —



on February 7, 2018

concentrations. There may be exceptions to the model in the field.  
[www.dnr.state.mn.us/mappingtool.php](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mappingtool.php)

The Northwest Wisconsin Zebra Mussel Management Team includes community organization and government partners trying their best to cooperatively respond to a public concern. The Team uses the tools at hand, including Wisconsin's Rapid Response Framework for Invasive Species, AIS grant funding, and existing laws.



Stay tuned to  
[www.wclra.org](http://www.wclra.org) more info.

#### Contacts

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## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Decontamination is a realistic solution to preventing zebra mussel spread to area lakes, but it is not required by law in Wisconsin. Some boaters opted out of decontamination at Big McKenzie Lake.



Local towns and counties and some legislators may support laws requiring decontamination. Volunteers worked with Burnett and Washburn Counties to pass ordinance amendments requiring boaters to decontaminate, when available, and are communicating with state legislators about introducing a drain plug removal law similar to surrounding states.

The team may partner on social science research to better understand what messaging, prompts, and/or incentives increase boater decontamination practices.

Businesses like dock and boat lift installers, marinas, and shoreline contractors often use the same equipment on multiple lakes, sometimes in a single day.

Burnett and Washburn Counties began a lake service provider outreach effort notifying these businesses of area AIS threats and providing decontamination equipment and training. Several businesses have positively responded with dedicated trailers, hot water power washers, and other decontamination tools.

Zebra mussel control is difficult without effective options at this time. Control feasibility depends on zebra mussel distribution, time since discovery/establishment, lake size and type, and native plant and animal communities present.

The team is working with zebra mussel researchers to better understand control, develop a zebra mussel rapid response plan, and identify under which, if any, circumstances experimental control would be feasible.