

# Response to Zebra Mussel Confirmation at Shawnee's Twin Lakes

**Shawnee, Oklahoma, April 20, 2022** – On April 15, 2022, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) issued a statement that invasive zebra mussels have been confirmed to be present in Shawnee's Twin Lakes.

Important information shared by ODWC includes:

“The zebra mussel is a small mussel named for the striped pattern of its shell. They typically are found attached to surfaces, objects, or other mussels. Zebra mussels affect ecosystems that they invade by damaging boat engines, threatening native mussels, fish and wildlife by consuming available food, and costing taxpayers millions of dollars by clogging water intakes and pipes.

ODWC's Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) program has confirmed invasive zebra mussels in 24 different water bodies throughout Oklahoma, including Kaw, Sooner, Hefner, Keystone, Robert S. Kerr, Grand, Skiatook, Eufaula, Oologah, Claremore, Greenleaf and Texoma lakes, as well as in the lower Canadian, Cimarron, Arkansas, Verdigris, Washita and North Canadian rivers.”

Twin Lakes are a primary water source for the City of Shawnee. The water system infrastructure will continue to be monitored and additional focus will be given to the intake systems in order to minimize any potential damage or blockages by zebra mussels. Additionally, the City of Shawnee will also continue to ensure that water taken from Twin Lakes is treated in compliance with all regulations of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality to provide the community with safe drinking water.

Although the zebra mussels cannot be eradicated, the City of Shawnee is initiating an education campaign to inform all lake users of the importance of preventing the spread of the invasive mussel.

The ODWC recommends the following actions be taken by lake users to reduce the spread of zebra mussels:

- Drain the bilge water, live wells and bait buckets before leaving.
- Inspect the boat and trailer immediately upon leaving the water.
- Scrape off any zebra mussels or aquatic vegetation found. Do not return them to the water.
- If possible, dry the boat and trailer for at least a week before entering another waterway.
- Wash boat parts and accessories that contact the water using hot water (at least 140 degrees F.), or spray with high pressure water.

Additional information and resources can be found at <https://stopaquatic hitchhikers.org/>



To maximize public awareness the City of Shawnee's education campaign will include:

- Informational signage at various boat entry locations to Twin Lakes.
- Notification to all permit holders for boats and recreational activity at Twin Lakes.
- Utilization of newspapers and social media platforms.