

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP ON INVASIVE SPECIES

GRAND COUNCIL TREATY #3, TERRITORIAL PLANNING UNIT (TPU)

Zebra Mussel Early Detection Program

About the Grand Council Treaty #3 and the Territorial Planning Unit (TPU)

Grand Council Treaty #3 is the traditional government of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 territory, which spans more than 140,000 sq km over present-day northwestern Ontario and south eastern Manitoba. Today, Grand Council Treaty #3 represents 28 First Nations communities with a combined population of approximately 25,000.

Through the implementation of Manito Aki Inakonigaawin (the Great Earth Law) of the Anishinaabe Nation—Grand Council Treaty #3's. The Territorial Planning Unit (TPU) works with Treaty #3 Leadership to protect the lands, waters, and resources

within the Treaty #3 territory. The TPU develops tools, resources, programs, and relationships that support effective decision-making and on-the-ground actions around issues that affect inherent Treaty #3 rights and jurisdiction.

Impacts of Invasive Species on Traditional Practices

Treaty #3 members and their communities have held close relationships with the lands and waters of their territory since time immemorial. Their traditional practices and way of life, including food sovereignty, depend on the health and stability of the ecosystems that they're a part of.



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In 2018, highly invasive zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) larvae were detected in two lakes within Treaty #3 territory – Lake of the Woods and Shoal Lake. Although established adult populations have yet to be identified, there is growing concern that the combined effects of zebra mussels and other already-established invasive species—including purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), rusty crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*), and spiny water fleas (*Bythotrephes longimanus*) – alongside fluctuating water levels in Treaty #3 lakes may further contribute to the decline of culturally important native species, such as wild rice and walleye.


Community Efforts to Combat Invasive Species Impacts

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Grand Council Treaty #3's Territorial Planning Unit (TPU) launched the Zebra Mussel Early Detection Program as a way of expanding its community led invasive species monitoring program while also abiding by public health and safety guidelines.

Using a \$1,000 microgrant to purchase supplies, the TPU engaged Treaty #3 community members, including youth and Elders, to help build zebra mussel settlement samplers at a low cost of \$10 to \$12 per unit. Through social media, advertising in band offices, and community engagement sessions, the TPU then invited community members to pick up a free sampler and hang it on their dock as an easy way for community members to visually monitor zebra mussel spread within Treaty #3 waterways.

Last year, the TPU distributed 32 zebra mussel settlement samplers. In 2022, they hope to further expand the program, with a goal of placing at least one sampler in each Treaty #3 community. By investing in early detection efforts and education at community-based environmental monitoring workshops, the TPU hopes that zebra mussel mitigation efforts can begin sooner, when needed, and ultimately be more effective at stopping their spread.

Learn more about the Grand Council Treaty #3's Territorial Planning Unit (TPU)

 <http://gct3.ca/land/territorial-planning-unit/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/gct3TPU/>

 <https://www.tiktok.com/@territorialplanningunit>

On behalf of the Canadian Council on Invasive Species (CCIS), Advocate Strategies engaged indigenous communities and organizations to construct a series of spotlights on Indigenous-led invasive species initiatives. The intention of these case studies is to inspire future projects and promote action-oriented collaborations that collectively address invasive species issues.

