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REDUCING SPREAD OF INVASIVE MUSSELS THE TOPIC OF FREE SUMMIT ON NOVEMBER 14 IN HARRISBURG

Ecological and Economic Impacts of Zebra Mussels in PA's Rivers and Lakes to Be Discussed

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) and Pennsylvania Sea Grant today announced they are conducting a free summit, *Stemming the Tide: Zebra and Quagga Mussel Summit*, for water resource managers and scientists, water utilities, recreational and commercial users, conservation and environmental organizations and others interested in the potential impacts of invasive mussels in Pennsylvania and how to monitor and control their spread. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is also a prime summit sponsor.

The summit will take place on Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at Dixon University Center in Harrisburg from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration forms and more information about the summit are available on Pennsylvania Sea Grant's Zebra and Quagga Mussel Monitoring Network web site at www.pserie.psu.edu/seagrants/zm/news/news.htm. The program is free, but pre-registration is required. The registration deadline is November 9. For more information, contact Ann Faulds at PA Sea Grant at (215) 806-0894, amf12@psu.edu.

Zebra mussels and other invasive mussel species can impact the operations of industrial facilities and public water suppliers that have intakes in waterways where the invasive species have populated. They can also damage boat hulls and engines and cause operation problems at locks and dams on rivers. Zebra and Quagga mussels also threaten aquatic ecosystems through their aggressive filtering capacity that removes large amounts of plankton, a vital source of food for many native aquatic species.

Ann Faulds, Associate Director of Pennsylvania Sea Grant, said, "Only a few of the 12,000 lakes and 84,000 miles of streams in Pennsylvania are infested with invasive mussels. That leaves thousands of unaffected waterways worth protecting! Right now education is our best weapon to alert people who use those lakes, rivers and streams about ways to prevent the spread of invasive mussels. We also need people who care about protecting Pennsylvania's waterways to join the volunteer monitoring effort."

"With zebra mussel populations confirmed this year on the mainstem Susquehanna River and Tioughnioga River in New York and Cowanesque Lake in Pennsylvania, it is critical that water users like dam operators, water utilities and boaters in the Susquehanna watershed be armed with as much information as possible regarding the potential serious threats from this invasive species," said Paul Swartz, SRBC Executive Director. "The Commission is pleased to join Pennsylvania Sea Grant and the Department of Environmental Protection as partners on this important summit."

The summit will include speakers, a panel session, breakout sessions and a training session for those wishing to join the volunteer Pennsylvania Zebra and Quagga Mussel Monitoring Network. The topics will include:

- how the invasive mussels are changing North America's freshwater lake ecosystems;
- where zebra mussels are currently located and their ecological and economic implications;
- what are the monitoring priorities and how will gaps be filled;

- what are the methods and costs of controlling invasive mussel species;
- can water users prevent settlement of zebra mussels; and
- what are the current outreach initiatives and what more is needed in the future.

Speakers will include:

- **Ann Faulds**, Associate Director, Pennsylvania Sea Grant, Pennsylvania State University;
- **James Grazio**, Water Pollution Biologist, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection;
- **Thomas Horvath**, Associate Professor of Biology, State University of New York College at Oneonta;
- **Edward Mills**, Director, Cornell Biological Field Station at Shackelton Point; and
- **Charles O'Neill, Jr.**, Coastal Resources Specialist, New York Sea Grant.

About Zebra Mussels: The zebra mussel is native to the Black and Caspian seas region of Eastern Europe. They were introduced to this country around 1986 when ocean-going ships released infested ballast water into the lower Great Lakes. Zebra mussels are prolific breeders and have few predators. Controlling and removing them is extremely difficult, very expensive and generally unsuccessful. Cleaning boats and equipment before and after use is the best known method for limiting the spread of zebra mussels. For more information on zebra mussels, visit the Pennsylvania Sea Grant invasive species web site at <http://www.pserie.psu.edu/seagrant/publications/ais.htm>.

About Pennsylvania Sea Grant: With offices in Erie and Chester, Pa., Pennsylvania Sea Grant promotes the ecological and economic sustainability of Pennsylvania's coastal resources through research and outreach, including science-based extension, education, applied research. The organization's goals are to: enhance coastal tourism and sustainable land-use practices; improve the knowledge and understanding of Pennsylvania's coastlines among teachers and students of all ages; support applied research on issues critical to coastal resources and management; and disseminate information about services available through NOAA and other partner organizations.

About Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC): Headquartered in Harrisburg, Pa., SRBC is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on December 24, 1970, by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay. SRBC web site is www.srbc.net.

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