

Tickets increase for invasive species

Legislation is being drafted within the Department of Natural Resources to more effectively manage and prevent aquatic invasive species.

Luke Skinner, DNR invasive species supervisor told the House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee that 95 percent of aquatic invasive species are moved from place to place because of human interaction, such as not draining ballast water or failing to remove plants from boats and trailers. The committee took no action.

The number of tickets issued for transporting invasive species increased from 57 in 2009 to 159 in 2010. Skinner said 350 warnings were issued last year to 17 percent of boaters who didn't know a new law required them to pull the drain plug.

Zebra mussels are a key management priority, although Asian carp, curly pondweed and Eurasian milfoil also pose ecological threats to water bodies. Zebra mussels can attach to any hard surface, clogging intake valves and removing the base of the aquatic food chain.

