

**VERMONT AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

Monday August 6, 2007

Contact:

Brad Wright (802) 241-3609

Rich Langdon (802) 241-1379

A Small Amount of Didymo Found in Batten Kill River

Fishermen, boaters warned to disinfect all clothing and equipment coming into contact with a stream

Waterbury, Vt. – Vermont Agency of Natural Resources biologists spotted a small amount of didymo algae late last week in the Batten Kill in southern Vermont, near the New York border. This is the newest confirmed location of the insidious, invasive species also known as rock snot.

The discovery of Didymo in the Batten Kill is of particular concern because it is a renowned fishery with several outfitter organizations working in its watershed. It also features many forms of recreation including kayaking, canoeing and tubing.

Of seven locations in the main stem of the Batten Kill which were inspected by Vermont ANR scientists last week, only one contained suspicious growth which was later confirmed to be didymosphenia geminata.

It now appears that didymo has been in our region longer than first thought. Last year, the Batten Kill Conservancy's River Watch Program in New York State discovered an algae bloom in the river which extended about two miles beginning near the Route 22 bridge. As a result of Vermont and New Hampshire's education campaign, samples of this bloom have now been confirmed by scientists from Vermont ANR, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and a national didymo expert in Colorado as didymo. It should be noted that no such masses have been found this year.

International experts will be attending a conference on didymo algae later this month in Montreal. "Vermont's scientists will be requesting meetings with their New Hampshire and New York counterparts to develop a regional response plan," said George Crombie, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Small amounts of didymo have also been found in the upper Connecticut River and the White River.

Didymo is an invasive species of algae that threatens fish habitat as well as aquatic insect populations that fish depend on for food. It usually has cotton-like feel if you touch it. When water levels recede, didymo in dried masses can resemble rotting cardboard.

Anyone with fishing or boating gear that comes into contact with streams is strongly urged to disinfect it carefully. Hard surfaces such as boat bottoms should be thoroughly scrubbed and dried. Fishing gear and any soft material such as clothing should be soaked in hot, soapy water for at least 30 minutes. Felt soled waders are believed to be particularly efficient at spreading this type of algae and should be disinfected thoroughly and dried thoroughly before re-use.

For more information about didymo, including pictures of what it looks like, go to www.vtwaterquality.org