



*MEDIA RELEASE—For Immediate Release—August 6, 2008*

## **Clams dead in secluded lake near logging operations in Whiteshell Provincial Park**

The Wilderness Committee is investigating a mass die-off of freshwater clams near a logging operation in Whiteshell Provincial Park. Meditation Lake is only accessible by hiking, and appears to have suffered a large toxic algae bloom in July, which may have killed off many of the freshwater clams.

The forest near Meditation Lake has been extensively logged in the last few months, following a windstorm blow-down in 2007. The Manitoba government claims the logging is needed to reduce the risk of forest fires.

A theory about the algae is that the nutrients in the lake increased due to logging operations nearby, and this caused the formation of a large and deadly bloom. Recent water studies in eastern Manitoba showed logging operations increase the amount of phosphorus in nearby waterways. It is understood that excess phosphorus is a main cause of algae blooms.

"What we know right now is that this lake is in trouble," said Eric Reder, Campaign Director for the Wilderness Committee. "We don't have an exact cause for this problem. We know there shouldn't be commercial logging in our parks. We know that the government's excuse of fire suppression is wrong. And now we have a species die-off that the professors I've spoken to say is extremely rare, if not unique. We need to do a better job of protecting our wilderness."

Contradicting the Manitoba government's stance on logging and fires, the government of Ontario released a 160-page report in 2006, explaining that fire suppression in parks was a failed experiment, and often caused more intense fires in the future.

The Wilderness Committee has sent in water samples for analysis.

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Quality **b-roll footage** and **photographs** are available.

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