

# JUST SAY "NO!" TO DIDYMO

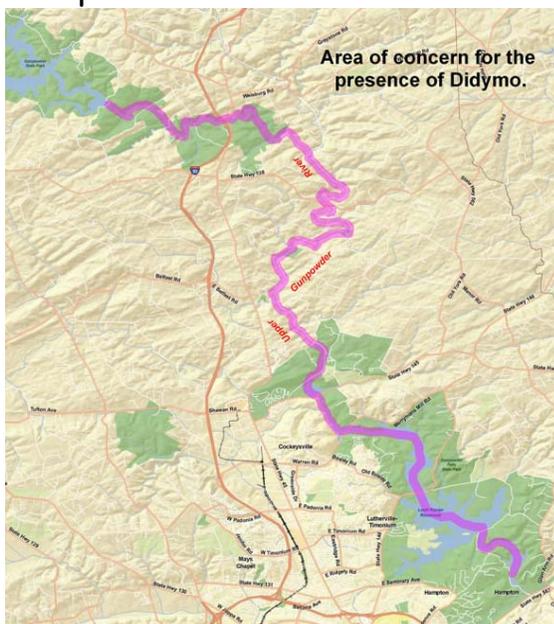
(a message from Ron Klauda, MD/DNR, 11/29/08)

**The Bad News:** The diatom *Didymosphenia geminata*, a single-celled alga, is still present in the middle section of the Gunpowder Falls between Prettyboy and Loch Raven reservoirs. First noticed there in January 2008, Didymo (aka, 'rock snot') could reach nuisance densities and adversely affect the diversity, abundance, and productivity of other aquatic organisms.



If you want to see a horror story, Google "Didymo in New Zealand."

**The Good News:** Maryland DNR and Baltimore County DEPRM staff have been collaborating on monthly surveys at nine stations in the middle Gunpowder since June 2008. So far, Didymo hasn't become a nuisance there,



nor has it appeared in the upper or lower sections of this river. I'm also pleased to report that it hasn't been reported in any other Maryland waters. DNR built and set up six wader wash stations along the middle Gunpowder this past summer. Not only have anglers been using these stations, they have also volunteered to help DNR and DEPRM staff maintain them. DNR has also received help from angler organizations on several western Maryland streams where wader stations have been set up.

**How Can the Water Monitoring Community Help?** If you're monitoring freshwaters in Maryland, DNR needs your help in containing Didymo to the Gunpowder and preventing its spread to other water bodies. Please practice and promote disinfection protocols for boots and sampling gear. Clean off

mud/plant materials/debris, then soak and scrub footwear and gear in either a 10% household bleach or 5% salt solution for one full minute between sampling sites. If you use a bleach solution, disinfect at least 50 yards from a water body, rinse the disinfected items with clean water, and dispose of exhausted bleach solutions properly. If you cannot disinfect foot wear and gear in bleach or salt solutions, use the drying method to kill Didymo cells (and any other problematic animals or plants that should not be transported between water bodies). After your footwear and gear are dry to the touch, wait an additional 48 hours before using these items. Also, DNR strongly recommends that felt-soled boots NOT be used. This porous material is nearly impossible to completely disinfect.

Thanks for your cooperation and assistance in preventing the introduction and controlling the spread of Didymo and other harmful aquatic organisms in Maryland waters. If you think you see Didymo in a stream, river, lake, or pond, collect a sample from the center of the colony (matt) or a couple of strands, put the material in a plastic zip-lock bag, add a paper label with sample location/collection date written in pencil, seal the bag, keep it on ice or in a refrigerator (not frozen), and call or email:

Katherine Laycock  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
[klaycock@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:klaycock@dnr.state.md.us)  
(410-260-8606).

She'll make arrangements to get your sample(s) of suspected Didymo to Walt Butler at DNR's Field Office in Annapolis who will confirm Didymo presence or absence.

### **Where Can I Find More Information on Didymo?**

Ask an Expert: What is Didymo?

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/mydnr/askanexpert/didymo.asp>

Didymo Fact Sheet

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives/didymofactsheet6-2-08.pdf>

Invasive Algae found in Maryland

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/dnrnews/pressrelease2008/050608c.html>