



## Public Meeting in Osoyoos on Threat of Problem Mussels in Okanagan Waters

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A special type of mussels presents an extremely dangerous threat to Osoyoos Lake and the rest of the waters of the Okanagan, according to the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB).

Zebra and quagga mussels are fouling beaches with sharp shells and are also encrusting boats, ruining sport fisheries and more. Given their potential dangers, the B.C. Government has brought in fines for moving these mussels, dead or alive. They're not in Okanagan waters yet, but they are spreading quickly through Canada and the U.S. from east to west.

"The Okanagan is ideal habitat for these tiny – sometimes invisible to the naked eye – rapidly-breeding mussels. An Okanagan invasion would have devastating economic and environmental impacts," said OBWB Executive Director Anna Warwick Sears.

The potential problem would also be extremely costly. An aquatic biologist estimates an infestation of Okanagan waters will cost \$43 million annually just to manage the impact.

As a result, a public meeting is being held in Osoyoos to discuss the potential of this problem and how to prevent the mussels from infesting Okanagan waters. The meeting may be of interest to a number of people including realtors, tourism operators, boaters, fishers, kayakers and other outdoor water enthusiasts. The meeting is from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Sonora Community Centre in Osoyoos.

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