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WATCH: Mussels Control

By Global News



A multi-million dollar threat is looming over the Okanagan in the form of a tiny little shellfish.

Zebra and Quagga mussels aren't here yet, but the Okanagan Basin Water Board is pressuring the province to take action to make sure the invasive mussels don't find their way to B.C. before it's too late.

The mussels made their way to North America on cargo ships. They've spread to waterways in the US and Canada, but so far haven't entered the Pacific Northwest.

These mussels take over waterways, decimating fish populations, and attaching themselves in droves to every surface possible. This clogs up water intakes, and leaves shorelines and infrastructure coated with sharp little shells.

The province of Alberta has teamed up with Montana on a pilot project, using trained dogs to sniff out the mussels at border crossings. They've also developed a system to inspect boats coming in from other provinces.

James Littley, Project Manager with the Okanagan Basin Water Board, says he'd like to see B.C. implement the same kind of system.

The provincial government isn't committing to the idea.

"We'll take a good look at what Alberta is doing," says Kelowna-Mission MLA Steve Thomson.

"We certainly share the concerns and we're monitoring the situation and we're working actively to ensure that a full awareness and education program is in place."

So far this summer, Alberta's inspection stations have intercepted eight mussel infected boats, all headed for the Calgary and Edmonton areas.

Watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hG-8saLLiFs&list=UUfIhNdwz3zJeDBb_fVgW5EQ