

News

Film highlights mussels threat

KEVIN PARNELL
Black Press

Imagine if we all woke up tomorrow and the forests of B.C. had been killed off and turned into a vast desert.

That's what a Vernon filmmaker says could happen to our lakes and rivers in a heart-beat should the invasive zebra and quagga mussels arrive in B.C. and infest our waterways.

Brynne Morrice, an actor and filmmaker who lives partly in New York and partly in Vernon, has released a six-minute documentary called *Mussel Threat*, spotlighting the potential dangers of the invasive mussels on B.C. water systems.

The \$5,000 project was funded through a Kickstarter campaign and released Wednesday.

"These mussels, when they get into a lake or river, they basically turn it into an aquatic desert," said Morrice.

"If tomorrow we woke up in B.C. and all of our beautiful green, lush forests had turned into deserts, that would be a pretty catastrophic change to our province. You have to think of these mussels like that. They turn the water into aquatic deserts. There is nothing left except these mussels. The communities that have experienced this...there is no going back. We would be facing a new status quo that we would never heal from and B.C. would be a far less wonderful



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Elidh Morrice-Ashdown and Brynne Morrice are the producers of a documentary about the threat quagga and zebra mussels pose to local lakes.

place to live and a far less wonderful place to visit."

For the past six months, Morrice, 30, travelled to areas of North America that have suffered from an infestation of zebra and quagga mussels.

The mussels have been found in the Great Lakes, in North Dakota and as close as Nevada, just a day and a half drive to the B.C. border. They can survive outside of water for 10 days or in wet carpet or the bilge area of a boat for up to 30 days. It wouldn't take much for a boat to pass through the border, into B.C. and zebra and quagga mussels would be infesting a local lake and devastating the ecosystem, killing off native species.

In fact it's nearly happened

already. In 2012 a boat launched into Shuswap Lake with a zebra mussel attached to it.

Luckily it was dead and did not infest the lake. Then last March a boat infected by the mussels was stopped at a border crossing at Osoyoos, heading for B.C. waters.

"People who really understand, who really get this, are up in arms," said Morrice, a W.L. Seaton Secondary graduate.

"This is a major issue. This is going to affect the entire province in a profound way. Our communities in B.C. are built on lakes and rivers and this could be devastating if we had an infestation."

To see the video, go to vimeo.com/protectourfreshwater.

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Electric scooter collides with pickup truck

ROGER KNOX
Morning Star Staff

Witnesses told Vernon RCMP she was "flying down the side-

walk" The operator herself told police she was going as fast as her motorized scooter could go.

A 49-year-old Vernon woman suffered a shoulder injury and was taken to Vernon Jubilee Hospital for

treatment after she was struck by a pickup truck shortly before 2 p.m.

"The woman was northbound on her scooter when she drove in front of an eastbound Chevy pickup that was exiting an alley between 28th and 29th Avenues," said Vernon RCMP

spokesperson Gord Molendyk.

Two witnesses told police the woman had been "flying down the sidewalk" shortly before being struck by the truck.

The driver of the truck told police he looked both ways before proceeding but did not see the woman on her scooter.

The truck's driver was not injured. The scooter operator, who told police she was travelling "at the fastest speed her scooter could go, 30 kilometres/hour," was issued a violation ticket for her actions in causing the collision.

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North Okanagan

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Saturday
Sunny
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Sunday
Mainly sunny
High 19°, Low 5°

Monday
Mainly sunny
High 21°, Low 6°