

Kelowna NEWS

Fighting tiny mussels

by [Jennifer Zielinski](#) | Story: 144986 - Jul 28, 2015 / 5:00 pm



Dead or alive, zebra mussels aren't welcome in B.C.

The invasive zebra and/or quagga mussels also carry a fine of \$100,000 if they are found aboard a vessel in this province, and there is a crackdown to ensure they stay out of B.C.

The mussels put drinking water at risk with toxic algae and can ruin beaches, making sand unbearable to walk on because of razor-sharp shells. The mussels would devastate native salmon and ruin Okanagan Lake's ecology.

Over 3 years, the provincial government will spend about \$1.3 million in its fight against invasive quagga and zebra mussels, however, that's still not enough. West Kelowna Mayor Doug Findlater, who serves as chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, says inspection stations are needed at all major roadways into British Columbia.

Currently, B.C. is relying on phone calls from neighbouring jurisdictions that have inspection stations to notify the province that a vessel is approaching that might be carrying invasive mussels.

That's when B.C.'s inspection stations spring into action and prepare for decontamination, says Corrine Jackson with the water board.

"We would rather have the inspection stations so we can stop them and then we are not relying on neighbours to phone us from Alberta or even Nevada."

If the mussels got into Okanagan Lake, it's estimated \$43 million a year would be spent by local governments on maintenance.

In order for this not to happen, word needs to spread far and wide that those who use the water must clean, drain and dry their boats, fishing gear or any other recreation water vessels. It also helps that local Formula 1 Tunnel Boat Racing Team driver Mike McLellan has jumped on board the 'Don't Move a Mussel' campaign to roll out the message.

"It is something we all have to be aware of and be concerned about," he says. "This is a real issue. There is so much at stake. Okanagan Lake is so beautiful, and as far as we know it's mussel free, but we have to stay on top of this."

McLellan hopes to promote the message, Clean. Drain. Dry. through the U.S. F1 Tour this year.

- **CLEAN** off all plants, animals and mud from your boat and related equipment (e.g. boots, waders, fishing gear). If a power washing station is available, use it.
- **DRAIN** (on dry land) any item that can hold water (e.g. buckets, wells, bilge and ballast).
- **DRY** all items completely before launching the watercraft into another body of water.

The driver also wants the public to know that inspections at borders in Canada and the U.S. are easy and don't take a long time.

"We've found the inspectors to be professional and very knowledgeable."

To find out more about these invasive species check out dontmoveamussel.ca

Story & video link: <http://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/144986/Fighting-tiny-mussels>