

Formula 1 tunnel boat race team joins fight against mussel infestation

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Okanagan Basin Water Board chair Doug Findlater and Formula 1 Tunnel Boat racer Mike McLellan announced Tuesday, July 28, 2015, they would join forces to fight the spread of invasive mussels.

Image Credit: Okanagan Basin Water Board

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KELOWNA – The Okanagan Basin Water Board is teaming up with Formula 1 Tunnel Boat racer Mike McLellan to raise awareness for their Don't Move a Mussel campaign.

The announcement was made Tuesday, July 28, at the Water Street boat launch in downtown Kelowna.

The Don't Move A Mussel campaign is attempting to raise awareness of the problem of highly invasive zebra and quagga mussels.

McLellan is a high-profile Formula 1 boat racer in Canada and the U.S. who water board chair Doug Findlater says offered to help after visiting their website.

"After reading about the issue, I knew it was a concern for everyone who uses our lakes, paddleboarders, anyone who pulls an inner-tube off the back of their boat, anglers, beachgoers, just everyone."

His boat, and the truck he uses to haul it, will feature decals with the Don't Move a Mussel message and he will be handing out information cards to anyone interested in the issue.

"This is a really big 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. We, as part of the U.S. F1 Tour in 2015, have a unique ability to promote the message and that's why we reached out to help spread the word."

A release from the water board says B.C. is among the few provinces and U.S. states that are still considered mussel-free, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Wyoming.

"In addition to understanding the damage the mussels can cause, McLellan is a great ambassador for the 'Clean-Drain-Dry' message," Findlater says. "The burden falls heaviest on boaters to prevent the spread and Mike gets this. In fact, he partially disassembles his boat motor when he travels so it's ready for inspection. He also has a video camera available with ready-access to the boat's hull to allow inspectors to ensure his boat is clean of mussels."

According to research conducted for the water board, a mussel infestation would cost the Okanagan roughly \$43 million a year.

Learn more about the mussels and the campaign visit the [Don't Move A Mussel website](#).

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