

Invasive species battle gains muscle



By Vernon Morning Star

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The fight against potential invaders has been given a boost.

The provincial government announced Tuesday it will pump \$1.3 million into early detection and rapid response for quagga and zebra mussels.

"In combination with what the federal government is doing, it sounds like everything OBWB wanted the province to do," said Bob Fleming, Okanagan Basin Water Board director. "It brings us closer to what Alberta has been doing."

The invasive mussel defence program begins operation in April for the 2015 boating season and consists of:

- n Three mobile decontamination units.
- n Six trained auxiliary conservation officers.
- n Highway signage throughout the province.
- n Expanded monitoring for zebra and quagga mussels.
- n Report All Poachers or Polluters response line coverage.
- n Increasing clean, drain, dry education and outreach activities.

Teams will inspect boats entering B.C. from Alberta and if needed, decontaminate them to ensure mussels aren't