

EDITORIAL

We must all stop mussels

Without a doubt, Okanagan Lake is our most precious resource, and protecting it from invasive species — be they milfoil, mussels or even Canada geese — is vital.

Heck, many of us boat, more of us swim and all of us love our views of pristine beaches and waterways.

That's why we're happy the B.C. government announced Tuesday it would earmark \$1.3 million more to help stop zebra mussels from entering the Okanagan.

The mussels are native to Russia and the Caspian and Black seas. They have likely migrated to North America in the ballast water aboard ocean-going ships.

The Great Lakes are fighting them, and so is Manitoba,

Why should we care here?

Because they can ruin beaches, choke our native species and clog our water intake pipes.

Researchers for the U.S. Congress estimated the mussels cost power companies \$3.1 billion between 1993 and 1999 and we hear of reports they are being found in lakes around B.C.

Native species here that may prey on them can't control them at all, or quickly enough.

They can stow away on boats coming into the Okanagan because they can live for days in humid conditions out of the water.

To prevent the issue from becoming dire, the province will employ six auxiliary conservation officers and three mobile decontamination units. Popular boat launches will be monitored.

Will this prevent the problem from flaring up here? It will help.

But this is a global phenomenon, and it's unlikely we'll be entirely safe. Jurisdictions need to work together, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes to Okanagan Lake.

What we can't do is throw endless amounts of money at the problem, and it's why we take issue with the idea of boat inspections along the Alberta border as suggested by the water board.

It seems impractical and needlessly expensive.

Awareness and co-operation appear to be our best solution.

As lake users, we should all share in the responsibility, too, of preventing our most treasured resource from outside threats.

MEANWHILE, IN ALBERTA...



NO - THE

What kids can learn from Harry

By LIANE BROUILLETTE
Special to The Daily Courier

Harry Potter, the main character in the wildly popular novels written by British writer J.K. Rowling, holds an undeniable fascination for children around the world.

The fundamental message of the books is one students seldom hear in public schools, where the competition for grades can be intense. Yet it is very much in accord with research done in recent years by Nobel laureate James Heckman and a diverse group of economists, psychologists, educators, and neuroscientists. Their work shows that it is non-cognitive skills—like the ability to think ahead, persist in tasks, and adapt to one's environment—that best predict real-world success.

What matters most is character, not I.Q.

When the reader first gets to know Harry, he is a scrawny, miserable, black-haired boy whose spectacles are held together by tape.

No sooner is he awake than Harry is put to work, cooking breakfast for his aunt, uncle, and cousin, Dudley. With his hand-me-down clothes and passive acceptance of his lot, Harry Potter has the appearance of a classic "nerd."