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Shane Woodford

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board says the Pacific Northwest Perimeter Defence against invasive mussels has been breached. The Board's Corinne Jackson says invasive mussels have been found in Eastern Montana and are now creeping closer the interior's pristine lakes.

"Mussel sniffing dogs have been deployed from Alberta to go and see if they can find any sign of adult mussels. At this point it seems to be the smallest, the baby, mussels that have been discovered. They are doing testing to determine if they are zebra or quagga mussels but because they are so small they don't know that at this point."

Jackson says there is a real threat that the mussels could arrive in the interior. Indeed, BC invasive mussel inspectors have reported snagging a number of watercraft this past summer that were carrying the mussels.

"They found 17 were confirmed with invasive mussels. Mostly from Ontario but also Manitoba, Michigan, and Nevada. We also provide support to the Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society to help us with our 'don't move a mussel' message. Their own boat intervention program this summer found there were a higher number of boats coming from Manitoba than ever. Of course Manitoba now has the mussel."

Jackson says also of concern are Canadian snowbirds.

"If you are buying any type of watercraft from a mussel infested region make sure you go through the clean, drain, dry process. Have it inspected and make sure it is free of the mussels before ever launching in our waters. If you know a snowbird who is taking their watercraft South of the border talk to them about invasive mussels and the need to keep their watercraft clean."

You can find more information at www.dontmoveamussel.ca



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DONTMOVEAMUSSEL.CA



Shane Woodford

16 days

Okanagan Basin Water Board's Corinne Jackson on the invasive mussels threat to the interior

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