

Feds To Look At Help Prevent Invasive Mussels

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Some optimism is being expressed that Ottawa appears positive towards helping in the fight against invasive mussels in BC.

Tracy Gray, chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, says she and other board members had a productive meeting with staff from the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans in Ottawa.

"We've been communicating with them for a few years now and getting more specific as the invasive mussel issue becomes more relevant now with them being in

Manitoba and Montana. So they are getting closer."

Gray says the feds will consider funding to prevent the spread of mussels — will participate in an upcoming conference on the issue — and will look into gaps in border inspections.

"Where there's inspections happening but there's not really, what we've heard not really enforced and not everyone is trained, so we've asked for further commitment."

She says they were seeking funding — similar to what the province provides — and enhanced border inspections.

"They did agree in principle that this isn't really just a regional issue for us in the Okanagan because it does affect a wider area and that prevention is considerably less costly than dealing with it in the long run."

Gray says the feds are still putting plans together for their 43 million dollar budget for invasive species in Canada.