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FEATURED

More mussel checks sought by board

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Anna Warwick Sears is executive director of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

File photo

The Okanagan Basin Water Board is repeating its call for stronger boat inspections to fight the spread of zebra and quagga mussels.

The board sent a letter this week to B.C. Environment Minister George Heyman calling for spot checks on boats, to go along with the inspection stations along various B.C. highways.

“Currently, if someone enters B.C. with any type of watercraft and it encounters an open inspection station on route, law requires that it must stop for inspection. However, this leaves a gap for watercraft that enter outside of inspection station hours, outside of the inspection season or through routes which are not monitored,” the board explained in a news release.

“The province will never be able to completely seal the border,” said OBWB executive director Anna Warwick Sears.

This change, she said, would allow inspectors at local boat launches to ask owners of out-of-province watercraft for proof of an inspection.

The mussels have not yet appeared in local lakes. They have the potential to clog aquatic infrastructure, upset marine ecosystems and make beaches unusable.