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More needs to be done to stop invasive mussel infested boats: Okanagan Basin Water Board

Rob Munro


A boat propeller engulfed with quagga mussels.
 Image Credit: US National Parks Service

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KELOWNA - Inspectors have intercepted nine boats and one kayak carrying invasive mussels into B.C. as of July 5, and of those, two were headed for the Okanagan.

Decontamination orders were issued for 35 boats that may have been carrying mussels along with 92 orders for boats suspected of carrying other invasive species, according to a news release from the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

"Until we know we are in the clear and there is no chance of invasive mussels making their way into our waters, we are going to be pushing for senior government to do all they can to protect our waters," water board chair Sue McKortoff said in the release. "We only have one of 12 provincial inspection stations that are open 24-hours a day and there is no requirement to get an inspection when a station is closed."

"Our lakes are not only an important tourist destination, they are important as a source of drinking water, to our fishery and the Okanagan's delicate ecosystem, and much more," McKortoff said.

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The water board wants the province to require all boats entering B.C. to be inspected before going into the water and that drain plugs have to be pulled before boats are transported, as is required in Alberta and northwestern states.

Of the 10 boats carrying the mussels, six were from Ontario, two from Utah and one each from North Carolina and Michigan.

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