



Invasive mussels have encrusted this boat hull. (Photo courtesy of Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society)

Okanagan Basin Water Board continues call to protect B.C. waters from invasive mussels

The board is pushing for additional regulations from the government

MACKENZIE BRITTON / Jul. 18, 2019 10:25 a.m. / NEWS



The Okanagan Basin Water Board is continuing the fight against invasive mussels and is looking for more help from the provincial government.

In the most recent numbers from the OBWB, there were 384 high-risk watercraft that were intercepted coming into B.C. in between April 1 and July 5, and 35 of those were issued decontamination orders. Ten of those 35 were found to be carrying invasive mussels, with two of those were originally heading into the Okanagan.

Okanagan Basin Water Board chair Sue McKortoff said that more is needed to ensure the protection of B.C. waters.

“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,” McKortoff said.

“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.”

[READ MORE: K9 officer joins fight against invasive mussels in Okanagan lakes](#)

[READ MORE: RCMP conducting boat pre-checks on Okanagan Lake](#)

In particular, the OBWB is repeating its call for legislation requiring that all watercraft entering B.C. be inspected before being allowed to launch in provincial waters. They recommend the province implement “pull the plug,” legislation already implemented in Alberta and in Northwest states, requiring drain plugs be removed from watercraft before transport.

The board also recommends renewing a public-private partnership between the province and several partners including BC Hydro, FortisBC and others which has helped fund the inspection program and expires in early 2021. And finally, the OBWB is calling for the province to increase the program’s funding to at least 2017 levels of \$4.45 million to expand and strengthen the program.

Protecting B.C. waters are 64 inspectors, three full-status Conservation Officers and two service dogs that help sniff out invasive mussels.

“But 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. We need to tighten things up,” McKortoff said.

[READ MORE: Lake Country orchard left rigid after worst season in 11 years](#)

The OBWB estimates that a mussel infestation would cost the Okanagan at least \$42 million a year to manage, and since inspections stations were introduced in 2015, research suggests that the stations have saved more than \$168 million in the Okanagan.

More information on invasive mussels and the risk to the Okanagan can be found at dontmoveamussel.ca.

FASTER
THAN ANY OTHER



Black Press Media

You May Like

Promoted Links



The Reverse Mortgage Advice Canadians over 55 Should Read

CHIP Reverse Mortgage Quotes



Letter: Parent concerned for school safety - Penticton Western News

Black Press Media



If You're Over 40 And Own A Computer, This Game Is A Must-Have!

Throne: Free Online Games



Auntie says

with Faye Arcand

Auntie says: Life isn't fair, friends should be - Penticton Western News

Black Press Media