

Our biggest threat is actually **tiny**

Don't let mussels sink our lakes.

What are invasive mussels? And why are they such an enormous threat?

Originating from freshwater lakes in Russia and the Ukraine, zebra and quagga mussels are invasive mollusks. While small, they encrust and corrode hard surfaces, causing serious harm to waters where they become established.

As far as we know, the Okanagan remains invasive-mussel free. It's up to all of us to keep it that way.

One mussel is too many.

It wouldn't take much for mussels to get established in the Okanagan. A single female zebra or quagga mussel can produce 1 million eggs a year. In warmer waters, like Lake Mead, there have been six to eight reproductive cycles a year.

How do they spread?

Invasive mussels are sneaky. They attach themselves to the watercraft of boaters, anglers and other nature lovers. At their smallest, they are the size of a grain of sand. At their largest? Around the size of your thumbnail (1.5 to 2 cm).

Mussels can attach themselves to hip waders, tackle boxes, life jackets and anything else that has spent time in infested waters.



How do we stop mussels from entering our beautiful waters?

A huge reason we all love the Okanagan is because of the lake that connects us. It's a destination for recreation, tourism and industry alike. But it's also our drinking water and supports a fragile ecosystem. And, we risk losing it all if we don't stay vigilant.

Here's how you can help.

If you have visitors who boat, fish or travel in and out of the valley, with water-related gear, make sure they follow the "Clean, Drain, Dry" protocol. Make sure they stop at all watercraft inspection stations.

Clean. Drain. Dry.

Clean off all plants, animals and mud from your watercraft and equipment (boots, waders, fishing gear, etc). If a power washing station is available, use it.

Drain (on dry land) any item that can hold water (buckets, wells, bilge and ballast).

Dry all items completely before launching into another body of water.



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It's awkward to bring this up. "The Talk Kit" can help.

There's a lot to consider when educating others about the risks to our waters. And it might feel uncomfortable to do it. We've got you covered.

Have "the talk" with family, friends, and neighbours. Download "The Talk Kit" at dontmoveamussel.ca/have-the-talk. Helpful resources include:

- Post Cards
- Posters (4 Risk + 1 Fact)
- Boat Checklist
- Web Badge
- Social Media Banner (Facebook cover photo)
- Rack Card
- Fact Sheet

We can do this.

While the threat of invasive mussels is big, there is hope. It's because of everyone working together in the Okanagan that we've been able to keep them out. With your help, we can continue to keep our beautiful water zebra and quagga mussel-free.



If we do nothing, we risk losing everything.

From declining property values to the loss of jobs and the destruction of our fragile ecology, the implications of zebra and quagga mussels in our valley are huge. Here is where they would hit us hardest:

- Our drinking water intakes and distribution systems
- Storm water and treated sewage system outfalls
- The safety of our drinking water with the promotion of toxic algae
- Aquatic infrastructure (e.g. marinas, public and private docks, Kelowna's WR Bennett Bridge)
- Motorized and non-motorized watercraft and water recreation equipment (including boats, sea-dos, kayaks, paddle-boards, fishing gear, float planes, etc.)
- The natural ecology of the lake, putting at risk native species and resulting in the collapse of our fishery
- Real estate values, especially waterfront property
- Enjoyment of our beaches because of razor-sharp shells, and the smell of decaying mussels
- Okanagan tourist economy—with fewer visitors because of our fouled beaches and loss of our fishery
- Our economy with the loss of tourism jobs and increased taxes to help manage the mussel infestation and its impact on local government infrastructure

CONTACT

Corinne Jackson
corinne.jackson@obwb.ca
250-469-6271



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