

# Our biggest threat is actually **tiny**

Don't let invasive mussels sink our lakes.

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

Zebra and quagga mussels originate from freshwater lakes in Russia and Ukraine. Outside their natural habitat, and with few predators, they outcompete native species, encrust and corrode hard surfaces, and cause 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, Nev. there have been six to eight reproductive cycles a year!

The Okanagan's calcium-rich waters give it the beautiful colour. The warmth makes it a popular destination for water recreation. And together, they put the region at high-risk.

## How do they spread?

Invasive mussels use their byssal threads to swim and attach to watercraft, including boats, kayaks and paddleboards, hip waders, tackle boxes, life jackets – any hard surface that has spent time in infested waters.



And, they're stealthy! They can LIVE 30 DAYS OUT OF WATER in a damp space. At their smallest, they are the size of a grain of sand. At their largest, they are around the SIZE OF YOUR THUMBNAIL (1.5 to 2 cm).

## 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...

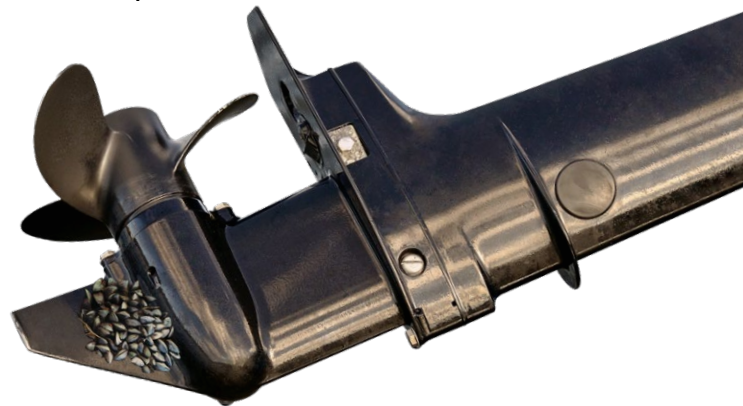
## Clean. Drain. Dry.

**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.

**AND...** If you have visitors who boat, fish or travel in and out of the valley with water-related gear, remind them to follow the "Clean, Drain, Dry" protocol, and to **STOP** at all watercraft inspection stations.



**DONTMOVEAMUSSEL.CA**



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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](http://dontmoveamussel.ca/have-the-talk). Helpful resources include:

- Fact Sheet
- Boat Checklist
- Rack Card with Boat Checklist & Fact Sheet
- Social Media Banner (Facebook cover photo)
- Post Cards
- Posters
- Web Badge

## 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:

- **DRINKING WATER INTAKES** and other in-lake infrastructure, including **DOCKS**, marinas, bridges, would be corroded and weighed down, requiring ongoing maintenance
- The **SAFETY OF OUR DRINKING WATER** with the promotion of toxic algae
- The **NATURAL ECOLOGY OF THE LAKE**, putting at risk native species including the local fishery
- Enjoyment of our **BEACHES** because of razor-sharp shells, and the smell of decaying mussels
- Motorized and non-motorized **WATERCRAFT** and water recreation equipment (including boats, sea-doods, kayaks, paddleboards, fishing gear, float planes, etc.), encrusted with mussels
- **REAL ESTATE VALUES**, especially waterfront property, would be affected
- **TOURIST ECONOMY**, with fewer visitors because of fouled beaches and harm to the local fishery
- Our **ECONOMY**, with the loss of tourism jobs and increased taxes to help manage the impact of mussels on local government infrastructure

## Learn more & help spread the message, not the mussel.

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