

**NEWS**

## Region takes aim at mussels

by [Richard Rolke - Vernon Morning Star](#)  
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Local officials are continuing to urge senior counterparts to join the fight against invasive mussels.

The Regional District of North Okanagan board has been told the Okanagan Basin Water Board is lobbying the provincial and federal governments to inspect B.C.'s borders to prevent the spread of the invasive zebra and quagga mussels.

"There's been a lot of work done in the U.S. so we don't need to reinvent the wheel," said director Juliette Cunningham.

The mussels, which are from Europe originally and have spread across North America, clog water intake pipes, pumps and boat motors. They also deplete food sources for fish and produce toxins that kill fish and birds and contaminate drinking water.

There is also a recreational impact as the razor-sharp shells can spread across beaches.

OBWB has suggested it could cost \$43 million a year to manage the mussels if they arrive in the valley. A recent report suggests that 19 per cent of the infected boats stopped in Idaho in the last five years were on their way to B.C. and Alberta.

"It's a concrete direction and not just ringing alarm bells," said Cunningham of border inspections. "The longer we delay the potential of the mussels arriving in the Okanagan, the better potential we have to deal with it."