

oliver Daily news

Boat at border decontaminated

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On the evening of March 12th, a Canada Customs official notified the BC Conservation Officer service that they found what looked like zebra and/or quagga mussels on a large pleasure-craft boat being transported from the U.S., across the Osoyoos border into Canada.

Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) currently has no legislative authority to refuse entry, however, the commercial transporter was co-operative.

With only three conservation officers based in Penticton, CBSA called the Province's toll-free emergency response (RAPP) line. Conservation Officers were able to bring in a special unit to decontaminate the vessel the following day.

The boat, which originated from Texas, was headed to the Central Okanagan to be moored in Okanagan Lake.

As you may be aware, the Okanagan Basin Water Board has been urging the federal government to pass legislation, that is pending, that will allow border guards to stop and inspect watercraft and prohibit entry of contaminated vessels. It has also been urging the Province to follow-up on its legislation making it illegal to transport live or dead invasive mussels in B.C and implement an inspection program that will help prevent the spread of these mussels and other invasive species. Of concern to the Okanagan is the impact these mussels could have on our water quality, ecosystems and economy – estimated by the OBWB at \$40 million a year to just manage.