

NEWS

Don't move a mussel

Mussel inspection training turns real when infested boat shows up

VIEW STAFF

Those attending an intensive mussel inspection workshop this week got more than they expected when a boat carrying the concerning molluscs showed up for an actual inspection and decontamination.

The workshop held in Kelowna's Cook Street Boat Launch parking lot Monday, was organized by the Okanagan Basin Water Board and its WaterWare Program's "Don't Move A Mussel" initiative in partnership with the B.C. Ministry of Environment.

It was geared to marina and yacht club operators but included RCMP boat program and local government bylaw staff, as well as Okanagan Nation Alliance fisheries representatives.

"It was an incredible opportunity to view

the actual mussels on a boat first-hand and then discover just how hard it is to detect them," noted OBWB Operations and Project Manager James Gitley.

As it turns out, an Ontario couple owns the boat and is now moving to the Lower Mainland.

The boat was moored in Lake Simcoe-infested Rideau Canal for a couple months before being transported to its new home.

The other inspectors at the boat in Ontario before leaving that province.

The boat was then stopped this past weekend by Alberta inspectors and, when mussels were found, it was decontaminated. Alberta followed up and called the B.C. Conservation Officer (CO) in charge of inspection and decontamination in B.C. to tell them a boat was on its way.

The boater was then asked to come to Kelowna for a follow-up inspection.

The boat pulled into the parking lot where the training was taking place and within a few minutes, B.C. inspectors detected several sand-grained mussel shells around the boat's legs, trim tabs and props.

The boat had reportedly been out of water for 30 days and properly drained.

Still, not taking any chances, after the inspection in the parking lot and taking a sample, the boat was moved to a gravel location for decontamination.

The mussel samples have been sent to a lab to be tested to determine if they were alive or not. It is illegal in B.C. to transport the mussels dead or alive.

According to provincial staff, there have been at least 15 high-risk boats de-

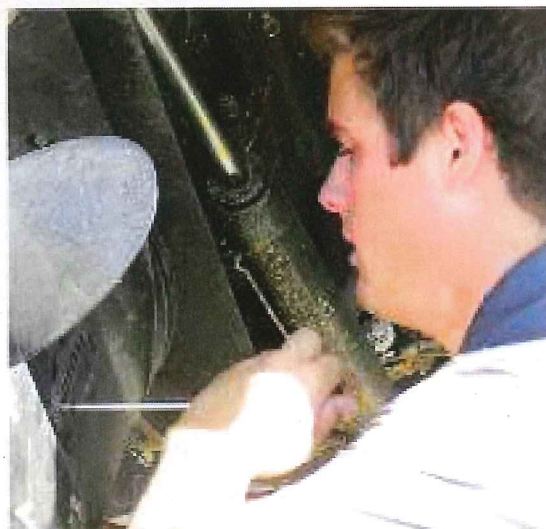
contaminated in B.C. so far this summer.

Further testing suggests more had live mussels. However, several fines have been issued, including for failure to stop at an inspection station. Some boats have also been quarantined to ensure they were out of the water and dry for 30 days.

News of this latest incident has left OBWB Chair Doug Finlayson shaking his head.

"While B.C.'s Conservation Officer team is conscientious and taking this seriously, we still don't have a lock down system in place," says Finlayson.

"The fact that this boat had to go through two inspections and decontaminations, shows how difficult it is to fight this. If we are going to be successful in keeping these mussels out of our waters, it will take serious vigilance."



A CONSERVATION OFFICER inspects a mussel-infested boat.

"We are still relying on others to let us know when an at-risk watercraft is coming into B.C. And we're relying on an honour system," added Finlayson. "This boater was asked to find their way to Kelowna to be checked and they did. That's great, but what if they hadn't, and what if they had live mussels and launched their boat in B.C.?"

Last March, the province announced \$270,000 in 2015-16 to help fight the mussels, with the majority of the funding going to three testing inspection crews (with two COs each).

Another three testing teams were

announced in July, thanks to funding from Columbia Basin Trust.

While the water board is supportive of testing inspection stations, it has been calling for permanent and mandatory stations, as has been done in Alberta and many other U.S. jurisdictions. In particular, the OBWB has called for stations at the five main highway entry points on the B.C.-Alberta border.

Last year, the province estimated an effective inspection program would be about \$2.4 million per year (15 stations at a cost of \$160,000

each per year). Research conducted by the OBWB estimates the cost of an infestation would be \$42 million to the Okanagan alone.

While boats remain the most common way the mussels hitchhike and infect new water bodies, they will attach to any hard surface including paddleboards, kayaks, fishing gear and life jackets.

The OBWB's annual meeting is Sept. 4. keynote speaker is Julia Lam, with the Southern Nevada Water Authority. Details can be found at www.obwb.ca/annual-meetings/sep-4-2015/.

Peachland

COLLISION & GLASS

767-2100



We Do it All...And We Do it Right!!

- Free Estimates • Courtesy Vehicles
- ICBC & Private Insurance Claims
- Lifetime Guarantee On All Collision Repairs
- From Small Dents to Large Collision Repair
- Windshield Replacement
- Certified Technicians

Committed To Quality For Our Customers



Owner/ Operator
• Laurie Fisher •

5465A McDougald Rd.
PH: 250-767-2100
FX: 250-767-2104

peachcollision.net




\$50 Off

Sedation Free Teeth Cleaning

(with this coupon)

Some benefits of Sedation Free Ultrasonic Teeth Cleaning

- Free consultation
- No poking or prodding
- No age limit
- "Doggie breath" gone right away
- Only all natural, herbal products used
- Non invasive
- No blood test or other tests needed

This technique is considered hygienic and will be performed with the highest protocol.

Pampered Pets



Ultrasonic

Now serving the Okanagan • 1-844-738-7645
www.pamperedpetsandcare.com