

## **EDITORIAL: Mussels require prompt action**

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Published: **February 09, 2014 01:00 AM**

Updated: **February 07, 2014 02:392 PM**

One has to wonder if federal and provincial officials check their e-mail or post office box?

Once again, the Okanagan Basin Water Board is demanding that Victoria and Ottawa take immediate action to prevent invasive zebra and quagga mussels from enter our watershed.

"We need them to come to the table," said director Juliette Cunningham.

But numerous calls for action have apparently fallen on deaf ears because nothing has been done.

These mussels 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.

It could cost a staggering \$43 million a year to manage the mussels if they arrive here.

And given how they have spread across North America, they could be here soon.

"It only takes one boat infested with the mussels, launching in our waters, to cause serious harm to our lakes," said Anna Warwick Sears, OBWB executive director.

The federal government needs to initiate legislation that prevents boats from entering Canada from the U.S. unless they have been inspected for mussels, while the provincial government must ensure there are monitoring stations along the U.S. and Alberta borders.

Examples of the devastation caused by mussels abound across North America so senior government officials must know what happen if they don't act.

But they continue to do nothing and that puts the Okanagan's environment, economy and lifestyle at risk.

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