

## Don't Move a Mussel campaign gets a helping hand

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Published: **July 28, 2015 03:00 PM**

Updated: **July 29, 2015 01:341 PM**

As part of their ongoing effort to get those who use the Okanagan's lakes and rivers onboard with behaviours that will stave off the invasion of zebra and quagga mussels, the Okanagan Basin Water Board has enlisted the help of a Formula 1 Tunnel Boat Racing Team driver.

Racer Mike McLellan, of Kelowna, has joined the "Don't Move A Mussel" initiative to extend the reach of the educational program.

His boat is now plastered with the Don't Move a Mussel logo and he'll be speaking with everyone he can about the fingernail-sized, freshwater mollusks that have become infamous for clogging the pipes of water treatment and power plants and negatively disrupting ecosystems.

"It's something we all have to be aware of and be concerned about," McLellan said. "This is a really big issue. There is so much at stake. Okanagan Lake is so beautiful, and as far as we know it's mussel-free, but we have to stay on top of this."

A recent Okanagan based poll by the water basin board indicated that around 70 per cent of area residents are aware of the campaign. The campaign's success beyond local borders, remains to be seen.

McLellan says that there is an increasing level of awareness at the Formula 1 boat racing events he attends about the mussels and the risks they pose, but more could be used.

He also pointed out that he sees more inspection vehicles at boating events.

Increased inspection is something that members of the water board advocate for, with their focus being particularly keyed in on government funding.

OBWB chair Doug Findlater said there are five routes into B.C. from Alberta. and he'd like to see those fitted with mussel inspection units.

B.C. is among only a few provinces and U.S. states that are still considered mussel-free, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Wyoming.

Findlater said that it's believed that if the mussels move into Okanagan Lake, the cost to keeping the lake maintained —with the floating ridge clear and water amenities usable— would be in the area of \$43 million.

For more information go to [www.DontMoveAMussel.ca](http://www.DontMoveAMussel.ca).

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