

News

Mussels revealed on boat

Morning Star Staff

Those attending an invasive mussel inspection workshop this week got more than 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 WaterWise 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," said OBWB operations and project manager James Littlely.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
A boat carrying invasive mussels showed up at a workshop on the concerning mollusc in Kelowna.

As it turns out, an Ontario couple owns the boat and is now moving to the Lower Mainland. The boat was moored in zebra mussel-infested Rideau Canal for a couple months before being transported to its new home. The owner inspected 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 Office (C.O.), in charge of inspection and decontamination in B.C., to tell them a boat was on its way. The boater was then ordered 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 grain-sized mussels 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 decontaminated in B.C. so far this summer. Further testing suggests none 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 Findlater 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," said Findlater.

"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. 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."

Last March, the province announced

\$575,000 in 2015-16 to help fight the mussels, with the majority of the funding going to three roving inspection crews (with two COs each).

Another three roving teams were announced in July, thanks to funding from Columbia Basin Trust.

While the Water Board is supportive of roving 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 \$60,000 - \$160,000 each per year). Research conducted for the OBWB estimates the cost of an infestation would be \$43 million to the Okanagan alone.

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

For more on the risks invasive mussels pose to the Okanagan and prevention tips visit www.DontMoveAMussel.ca.

CITY OF Vernon

August 17 | 22 Street, 43 Avenue to Harwood School Road and Utility Rehab

Please be advised construction on 22 Street between 43 Avenue and Harwood School is scheduled to start the week of August 17 and be completed the week of October 19.

The City of Vernon (COV) forces will be rehabilitating the Sanitary main and road works.

22 Street will be closed within the construction area, but access to homes will be possible. Although every reasonable effort will be made to minimize the impact of the construction on 22 Street and at the intersection of 43 Avenue, some disruption will be unavoidable. Traffic management and pedestrian access through and around the site will be the priority.

For more information on this project please call Resident Site Inspector Mike Danyluk, (MMM Group) at 250-808-9884

Mobile Coding for Android and iOS

Want to take your programming skills to the next level?

Looking to find work as a coder and want to specialize? Do you have a great idea for an app that you would like to develop and bring to the market? Then this could be the program for you.

Over the first four months of this program, you will learn to develop apps in Android and iOS, creating responsive and functional apps that can be converted from one platform to another. Then you will have a chance, during an immersive five-week practicum at a local tech company, to hone your skills, and learn new ones.

All students who successfully complete the program will be able to pitch their app ideas to Accelerate Okanagan and have a chance to win a scholarship to learn how to build a business around the app they are developing and get their app ready for market.



www.okanagan.bc.ca/coding



Theory: Oct. 1, 2015 - Jan. 30, 2016, Tue & Thu, 6 - 9 p.m. and Sat, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Practicum: Feb. 1 to Mar. 4, 2016 (days and times varied).

Cost: \$4800 +GST

For more information please contact Jill Panton in Continuing Studies at jpanton@okanagan.bc.ca

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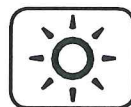
North Okanagan

WEATHER FORECAST

For the latest weather on-line, visit the Weather Office at www.theweathernetwork.com



Friday
Chance of a shower
High 23°, Low 11°



Saturday
Sunny
High 26°, Low 15°



Sunday
Mainly sunny
High 29°, Low 17°



Monday
Mainly sunny
High 27°, Low 12°