

Mobile quagga and zebra mussel prevention trailer takes to the road

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Lisa Houle, Okanagan WaterWise communications and outreach coordinator, brought the www.DontMoveAMussel.ca campaign to the Peachland Visitor Centre on June 25.

The Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) is taking to the road in their newly constructed, educational, trailer.

This highly visual addition to the existing aquatic invaders prevention program was made possible by the RDOS, who received a generous grant from the Royal Bank of Canada through the RBC Blue Water Project Fund. "The RDOS appreciates that the Royal Bank could see the benefits of

providing funding for a potentially devastating threat to our waterways – before it gets here. They recognize the astronomical cost implications and impact to our environment which will affect all residents and visitors to the Okanagan, if quagga or zebra mussels arrive," said Mark Pendergraft, Chair of the RDOS.

Collaboratively, the RDOS and OASISS worked to design, procure and customize the mobile unit as well as outreach materials for this program. The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB), through their Don't Move a Mussel Program, is also a significant and collaborative partner on this project. OBWB supplies annual funding to OASISS to assist with hiring three Aquatic Invasive Species focused Canada Summer Job students who conduct outreach throughout the valley and monitor the local waters for mussels. The OBWB has for the past three years developed and distributed outreach materials and conducts annual ad and social marketing campaigns. Together these integral partnerships will mean a stronger campaign with a broader reach for 2016 and beyond.

This regional program is complementary to the BC's Invasive Mussel Defence Program which includes eight trained inspection crews with mobile decontamination units. "The inspections crews identified 70 high risk boats in BC last year and 36 per cent were destined for the Okanagan. This is a really key finding as it emphasizes the importance of regional programs to compliment what is happening at a provincial level. We all know it would only take one boat to infest BC waters and there is no going back," said OASISS Program Manager Lisa Scott.

The mobile unit will be busy at many local events, at boat launches, yacht clubs, beaches and markets. Look for the hash tags emblazoned trailer #DontMoveaMussel, #StopAquaticHitchhikers, and #CleanDrainDry.

Contributed

REGIONAL NEWS

Medical Services Directory

Chiropractors

Dr. Peter Stapleton
Dr. Todd A. Penner

Massage Therapists

Catherine Ghius, RMT
Nick Berry, RMT

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