



IN VIDEO: Invasive mussels could cost millions of tourism dollars, group warns

Kathy Michaels



(KATHY MICHAELS / iNFOnews.ca)

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KELOWNA - Need a reminder of all there is to lose if invasive mussels get dragged into local bodies of water?

The Okanagan Basin Water Board released a video recently highlighting the bounty of summer life in the valley.

While it looked like a steamy tourism advert, the accompanying message offered a slightly more serious tone.

"Tourists come from around the world to play in the Okanagan; Zebra and quagga mussels put our tourism at risk. The potential annual loss to tourism revenue is estimated at between \$12 million and \$22 million. Help us stop the spread of aquatically transmitted species," the post reads.

WATCH: <https://www.facebook.com/OkWaterWise/videos/354607515223302/>



WHO'S YOUR CADDY?

The Okanagan has so far avoided the plague of mussels that have taken a grip on many lakes in eastern North America, according to the water board's Don't Move a Mussel website.

The invasive species of zebra and quagga mussels promote toxic algae, encrust and corrode hard surfaces, clog water intakes and cover beaches with sharp shells, and cause other serious harm to waters in which they become established.

Mussels were introduced to the waters of the Great Lakes in the 1980s after being discharged from European freighters' ballast tanks, and have since spread throughout most of Eastern North America and parts of the American midwest, causing millions of dollars in damage to infrastructure annually.

Inspection stations in B.C. were implemented in 2016.

Fines of \$375 can be levied against those ignoring inspection stations, and a fine of up to \$100,000 or a year in jail, or both, can be levied against someone failing to remove the invasive mussels from their watercraft.

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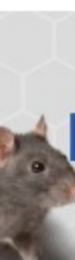
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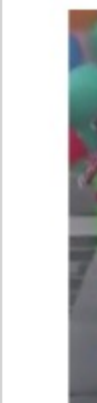
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