

Today's Home

News

Newsletter

VERNON MORNING STAR

Read more below

COVID-19 Travel National

Cannabis

Obituaries e-Editions Classifieds Video Marketplace

Jobs

Trending Now Business Good New

Expedia.

Autos

Contests

Take the trip of your life with Member Pricing Terms apply. See site for details

Book now



Shuswap water advocates push

Ottawa for more action against invasive mussels Letter sent to Minister of Fisheries calls for more funding and resources on the matter

BRENDAN SHYKORA / Jan. 18, 2022 6:00 p.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS





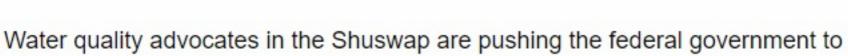












waters. A joint letter from the Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC), the Shuswap Waterfront Owners Association and the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species

take stronger action to prevent invasive mussel species from entering local

Society (CSISS) to Joyce Murray, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, describes how an infestation of Zebra and Quagga mussels would have costly impacts to water quality, beaches, fish populations and habitat, water utilities, hydro-electric facilities and property values. The letter requests more funding and resources from the ministry on the matter.

detection monitoring programs for mussels, and they are educating people

CSISS executive director Robyn Hooper says the organizations have early-

Zebra and Quagga mussels make their way into new water bodies primarily by latching onto watercraft. To avoid spreading these invasive species, boaters should clean, drain and dry their boats and other watercraft every time they

move from one water body to another. Another important step is to stop at watercraft inspection stations.

preventative efforts," he said.

Okanagan

lost revenues.

about how to prevent the spread.

In the letter, the groups say the federal government has not taken sufficient action or provided adequate funding to address the issue. They say a federal investment could go towards four objectives: expanding the watercraft

The letter to the ministry highlights a 2013 Okanagan Basin Water Board study

that estimated the annual cost of an infestation in the Okanagan at \$42 million in

transporting mussels; more early detection monitoring programs; and further education and outreach initiatives. "We recognize watersheds are under a lot of stress by various factors," said Erin

inspection program to allow for additional inspection stations and longer hours

of operation; new measures to ensure aircraft such as float planes aren't

Vieira, program manager for the SWC. "Our request to the Fisheries Minister is a matter of prevention. We don't currently have any Zebra and Quagga mussels in B.C.'s waters, but we are concerned that without stronger prevention

measures in place we are too vulnerable to a new invasion."

would be "enormous," and the environmental impacts devastating. "This affects everyone, and we all need to do our part to prevent an invasion and we need much more financial support from Ottawa to improve our

ADVERTISEMENT

Sponsored by Community Foundation North Okanagan

SWC chair Paul Demenok says the economic costs of a mussel infestation



Giving that feels good. Community Foundation North Community Foundation North Learn more

ministers to help bring more attention to the issue. In 2021 the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy reported that 75 water bodies in B.C. were monitored throughout the season by various

The SWC is now encouraging other organizations to send similar letters to their

Okanagan

Le

organizations including CSISS, collecting 900 plankton samples, all of which showed no evidence of invasive mussels. Plankton samples from Mara Lake tested positive for invasive clam larvae, a

different invasive species that's known to be already present in Shuswap Lake.