

BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program Status Report

Reporting Period May 27-June 27, 2016

Program Operations

Watercraft Inspection Stations

As of June 27th 2016 over 6,100 watercraft have been inspected and the crews have interacted with approximately 10,000 people to promote Clean, Drain, Dry.

Of the total watercraft inspected 240 have been identified as coming from a high risk province or state and 45 watercraft have been issued Decontamination Orders, and 35 watercraft have been issued quarantine periods to meet the required 30 day drying time. Of the total watercraft inspected, 8 were confirmed to have adult invasive mussels, and were all coming from Ontario.

Collaboration

The Program continues to work with Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) staff with the delivery of Standard Operating Procedures for notifying provincial inspectors of any high risk boats intercepted at the southern border crossings. To date, Provincial inspectors have received several notifications of high risk watercraft from CBSA staff.

The Golden and Invermere inspection crews organized a watercraft inspection and decontamination training event in collaboration with Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) staff. The training took place in Salmon Arm and DFO staff provided the use of their boats for the training.

The Program has been working closely with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to get the message of "Stop Aquatic Invasive Species Clean, Drain, Dry Your Watercraft" displayed on overhead message boards on highways throughout the Province. Lookout for a sign in your area!

Lake Monitoring

Sampling of lakes throughout BC to monitor for the presence of invasive mussel larvae is underway for the summer and the Program is coordinating plankton tow sampling with several partnering organizations including; Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society, East Kootenay Invasive Species Council, Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society, Okanagan Similkameen Invasive Species Society, Northwest Invasive Plant Council, Christina Lake Stewardship Society. Sampling is also being conducted by regional Ministry of Environment (ENV) and Forest, Lands and Natural Resources (FLNR) biologists.



To date a total of 6,100 watercraft have been inspected, of which 240 have been from high risk locations.

Program Effectiveness

We estimate that inspection crews have interacted with approximately 10,000 people to date to promote the message of Clean, Drain, Dry.

Of the watercraft inspected to date, approximately 60% had previous knowledge of Clean, Drain, Dry and/or Aquatic Invasive Species.

The number of vehicles that fail to report at an inspection station is being recorded for every shift at each inspection station as a measure of compliance. To date, the average compliance rate for watercraft stopping at inspection stations for the 2016 season is 80%. This represents an increase in compliance by 8% from the 2015 pilot season average of 72%, and is above the compliance rates for similar programs in other jurisdictions.



To date, 8 mussel infested boats have been intercepted

Highlights

The Invasive Mussel Defence program worked closely with event organizers and participants of the Land Rover Kelowna Melges 24 Canadian National Championship which took place in Okanagan Lake from June 24th-26th. The Penticton inspection crew decontaminated several sailboats participating in the event that came from high risk jurisdictions.

On June 25th & 26th the Chilliwack inspection crew and the Conservation Officer Services (COS) attended the Cabela's grand opening in Abbotsford. It is estimated that the inspection crew and CO's interacted with approximately 1,500 people to promote the message of Clean, Drain, Dry and educate them on the threat of invasive mussels and other Aquatic Invasive Species.

Invasive mussel program staff recently presented to the Osoyoos Town Council and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) to highlight the program's successes to date and to recognize the continued support from the Okanagan-Similkameen regions.

A boat manufacturer in Arizona has stopped testing new boats in the local infested waters before transporting them to BC due to his awareness about the BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program and the Provincial legislation that would prevent the boats from being launched upon arrival in BC. The manufacturer will now be testing the boats in local BC waters upon arrival. This shows a positive step forward in raising awareness about the threat of invasive mussels to the boating industry.

Our new, mobile friendly invasive mussel website has now gone live. Check it out here: www.gov.bc.ca/invasivemussels



Decontamination of sailboat participating in the Land Rover Melges 24 Canadian National Championship in Kelowna, BC.

Lessons Learned

Feedback to date has identified the need for more detailed information on the Program website for bringing boats into BC. The program will work towards improving outreach and education to participants of international boating events on what they need to do when bringing their boat into BC.

Key Upcoming Dates

July 1st Canada Day –important holiday weekend

July 4th – US Holiday – important holiday weekend

July 7th/8th – International rowing regatta Elk Lake, Vancouver Island – The program is working with the event organizers to arrange for inspection and decontamination of any rowing skulls coming from a high risk jurisdiction.

August 1st – BC Day Long weekend



New overhead highway sign messaging located throughout the province.



Invasive Mussel Program and COS outreach display at the Cabela's grand opening event.