

# BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program Status Report

Reporting Period April 29-May 26, 2016

## Program Operations

### *Watercraft Inspection Stations*

As of May 25th 2016 2,900 watercraft have been inspected and the crews have interacted with approximately 4,800 people to promote Clean, Drain, Dry. The watercraft inspected to date have been identified as traveling into B.C. from 33 different provinces and states.

Of the total watercraft inspected 107 have been identified as coming from a high risk province or state, 14 watercraft have been issued Decontamination Orders, and 12 watercraft have been issued quarantine periods to meet the required 30 day drying time. Of the total watercraft inspected, 5 were confirmed to have adult invasive mussels.

### *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.

BC was notified by the Vermillion inspection station in Alberta of a large commercially hauled watercraft traveling from Ontario that was destined for North Vancouver. Dead invasive mussels were found upon inspection. Additional inspectors were called in to assist with the decontamination due to the large size (39ft) and complex nature of the watercraft.

### *Lake Monitoring*

The Program is currently meeting with Provincial staff and regional invasive species committees to plan for the 2016 veliger monitoring season.



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*To date a total of 2,900 watercraft have been inspected, of which 107 have been from high risk locations.*

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## Program Effectiveness

It is estimated that inspection crews have interacted with approximately 4,800 people to date to promote the message of Clean, Drain and Dry.

Of the watercraft inspected to date, approximately 62% 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 79%. This represents an increase in compliance by 7% from the 2015 pilot season average of 72%, and is above the compliance rates for similar programs in other jurisdictions.

## Highlights

A vehicle transporting a watercraft from Ontario that failed to stop at an inspection station was reported to the local Conservation Officer who intercepted the vehicle and escorted it to the station for proper inspection. Invasive mussels were found during inspection and a complete decontamination of the watercraft was performed. The owner was issued a ticket for failing to stop at an inspection station. This case is an excellent example of the strong support and collaboration between the Program and the Conservation Officer Service.

The Victoria Day long weekend was the first holiday weekend of the 2016 inspection season. Between Friday May 20<sup>th</sup> and Monday May 23<sup>rd</sup> a total of 537 watercraft were inspected, of which 6 were identified as coming from a high risk province or state. It is estimated that inspection crews interacted with approximately 1,000 people over the long weekend to promote the message of Clean, Drain, Dry.

Public interest in the program is at a level that we had to add a category in our data forms to account for members of the public without boats, who are voluntarily stopping at stations to get more information about Aquatic Invasive Species. This is a very positive sign of the public support and interest of the program

The newly hired Invasive Mussel Program Co-ordinator Martina Beck presented at the Columbia River Basin Team meeting in Spokane on May 24-25<sup>th</sup>. The meetings take place bi-annually and provide an opportunity for jurisdictions across the Pacific Northwest to share information and research on watercraft inspection and decontamination programs and other aquatic invasive species.



*Decontamination of a large mussel fouled boat in North Vancouver.*



*To date, five mussel infested boats have been intercepted*

## Lessons Learned

With 107 high risk watercraft inspected to date this demonstrates the importance of starting program operations on April 1<sup>st</sup> to target snowbirds traveling from southern jurisdictions.

To date, of the people transporting watercraft and who failed to stop at an inspection station, 75% have been transporting non-motorized watercraft. This indicates a need for increased outreach to non-motorized boaters about the mandatory watercraft inspection stations. Non-motorized watercraft include canoes, kayaks, paddle boards and surf boards.



*Cranbrook inspection crew*

## Key Upcoming Dates

*June 16<sup>th</sup> – Bi-weekly data update*

*June 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> – Merges International Boating Competition in Okanagan Lake.* The Program is working with event organizers and participants to streamline inspections of watercraft entering BC from high risk jurisdictions.

*June 30<sup>th</sup> – Program Status Report 3*

*July 1<sup>st</sup> Canada Day –important holiday weekend*

*July 4<sup>th</sup> – US Independence Day – important holiday weekend*



*New Invasive Mussel Defence Program Decontamination Units.*