



Serving People and the Environment

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EBMUD PLANS TO KEEP MUSSELS OUT OF ITS WATER

Fast-breeding invasive species clogged pipes, damaged the ecological and was responsible for an estimated \$5 billion hit to the economy of the Great Lakes area

OAKLAND - The East Bay Municipal Utility District will severely restrict boating on its reservoirs this recreational season, which begins in February, to try to keep two tiny but destructive invasive mussel species from potentially shutting down the water delivery system.

These restrictions will impact boaters' access to Pardee and Camanche reservoirs in Amador and Calaveras counties and San Pablo, Lafayette, Chabot and Briones reservoirs locally.

The District will turn away all boats from outside of California, boats from southern California and those from nearby San Benito and Santa Clara counties. All boats coming in will be inspected before launch, and boaters who have recently had their boats in any newly identified high risk reservoirs will also be turned away. Any boats found to have mussels when inspected will not be allowed on the water and the removal of those mussels on boats will be in coordination with the state Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

These actions are only the beginning of a massive prevention effort by EBMUD, the state of California and many concerned utilities. The goal is to simply keep the tiny, fast-breeding quagga and zebra mussels out of the water, because once they arrive, they

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Mussels (2)

are extremely difficult to remove.

The mussels were discovered in Lake Mead a year ago, and tens of millions of dollars have already been spent to maintain affected pipes and waterways, with still no clear solution in sight. More recently, there have been mussel finds in six reservoirs in San Diego and Riverside counties, and closer to home in San Justo Reservoir in San Benito county two weeks ago.

Typically, the mussels -- which are native to the Ukraine and were first detected in the Great Lakes in 1989 -- are fingernail size but can grow up to 2 inches in length. A single mussel may release over 40,000 eggs in a reproductive cycle and up to 1 million in a spawning season. They attach to almost anything, including plants, boats, motors, trailers and recreational equipment or can be present in water.

Those mussels are a huge threat to watersheds as well, devouring food and nutrients in mass and starving native species.

U.S. Congressional researchers estimate an infestation of the zebra mussel in the Great Lakes area cost the power industry \$3.1 billion from 1993 to 1999, with overall economic impact on the area of more than \$5 billion.

State officials say the spread of the mussels threatens water delivery systems, hydroelectric facilities, agriculture, recreational boating and fishing, and the environment in general. When an infestation occurs, the hard to remove mussels clog pipes and screens and disrupt the functions of other infrastructure to a degree it can no longer function until it is shutdown and the mussels are scraped off surfaces. To limit the spread of the mussels in pipes, high doses of chlorine have been applied to the water.

State, federal and local agencies are working together on this rapidly emerging issue. The state Department of Fish and Game, Water Resources, Food and

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Mussels (3)

Agriculture, Boating and Waterways; U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service and Bureau of Reclamation are working with local agencies. Since last January, more than 74,000 boats have been inspected at state border protection stations, 8,208 were water drained and 70 were detained for cleaning.

EBMUD, which is hiring additional staff to confront the issue, has already earmarked nearly \$2 million for its prevention effort over the next two years. That amount could grow as the District implements its prevention plan, which entails education, outreach, research and vulnerability assessment, installation of chlorination facilities and boating controls.

This issue clearly indicates the need for cooperation among all agencies and communities.

"Our success depends on the cooperation of the boating public and similar preventive actions by operators of other recreation areas," said EBMUD General Manager Dennis Diemer. "It will take a coordinated, comprehensive effort by everyone involved to prevent the spread of these invasive mussels to EBMUD reservoirs and other water bodies. EBMUD alone cannot solve the problem."

EBMUD will host two training sessions on boat inspections and related issues. Representatives from other water districts are invited to participate at a training session on January 28 at EBMUD's Pardee Center near Valley Springs, CA. or a second session on February 5 at EBMUD's Watershed Headquarters in Orinda, 500 San Pablo Dam Road.

(See reverse for recommendations on how you can help from the state Department of Fish and Game and EBMUD.)

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QUAGGA AND ZEBRA MUSSEL PREVENTION

To prevent quagga and zebra mussels from infesting California waters as well as damaging their own boats and equipment, EBMUD is asking all boaters to follow the California Department of Fish and Game guidelines for mussel prevention.

How Boaters Can Help

Boaters should check their boat, trailer and vehicle every time a boat is taken out of the water.

- Inspect all exposed surfaces (vehicle, trailer, anchor, dock lines, live wells, bilge, motor, hull, trailer axle and rollers.) Small mussels feel like sandpaper and are invisible to the eye.
- Wash the hull of each watercraft thoroughly.
- Remove all plants and animal material.
- Drain all water and dry all areas.
- Drain and dry the lower outboard unit.
- Clean and dry all live-wells.
- Empty and dry any buckets.
- Dispose of all bait in the trash.
- Wait five days and keep watercraft dry between launches into different fresh waters.

EBMUD Staff Recommends:

- Learn about quagga mussels, zebra mussels and other invasive aquatic species and how to prevent their spread.
- Do not put your boat into waters that are inhabited or are at high risk of inhabitation. These areas include: Lake Mead, Lake Havasu, Lake Mojave, Lake Skinner, Copper Basin Reservoir, San Justo Reservoir, and generally waters of Santa Clara County, San Benito County, and California counties south of the Tehachapi Mountains, or any waters outside of California. Note that this list is growing as we learn more.
- Maintain a clean and dry boat inside and out! This includes all bilges, tanks, water pipes, trailers and accessories.
- Allow extra time when you visit EBMUD reservoirs to allow for staff to inspect all boats for invasive species and standing water.
- Boats failing inspection will be turned away.

EBMUD thanks you for your cooperation to keep our waters free of invasive mussels.