

For Immediate Release
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INSPECTION PROGRAM NOW IN EFFECT FOR 2012 BOATING SEASON

Heading to Lake Nacimiento or San Antonio? Boaters should allow extra time for inspectors who are protecting our local lakes by inspecting boats prior to launch for invasive species such as quagga or zebra mussels.

No vessel that has been on an infested lake in the last 10 days will be allowed on Lakes Nacimiento or San Antonio. All boats must be CLEAN, DRAIN, and DRY plus pass required inspections before being allowed to launch.

Quagga and zebra mussels wreak havoc on local lakes and have been spreading into Western U.S. waters over the past five years. Mussels spread by vessel transport (i.e. trailered watercraft) and direct water ways (i.e. pipeline and canals), bringing devastation to local aquatic ecosystems. Quagga and zebra mussels reproduce at incredible rates (1,000,000 eggs per female mussel per year) and are robust. They cluster and clog boat hulls, propellers, engines, and intakes; cover piers and pilings; clog water pipes and intakes; and ultimately coat water's edge with sharp, smelly shells. Worse yet, once mussels get a foothold, there is no known way to get them out of our lakes.

Boaters should allow extra time to get through the inspection process at the lakes and must carry a signed and stamped "Vessel Screening Permit" on board or run the risk of being fined up to \$2,000. Plus, permits must be renewed at least every 21 days.

Boaters unwittingly spread invasive mussels after boating in an infested lake. All it takes to infest a lake is one boat visiting any infested lake and inadvertently bringing these aquatic 'hitchhikers' to another lake. Twenty five locations in California including Lake Havasu and the Colorado River are infested with mussels. In neighboring San Benito County, San Justo Lake is infested.

The best way to prevent the spread is to stay off of infested waters and keep all watercraft CLEAN, DRAIN, and DRY. For more information about Monterey County's mussel prevention program, go to:

http://www.mcwra.co.monterey.ca.us/Mussels/AquaticHitchhikers_n.htm

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