



STATE OF IDAHO



C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR
CELIA R. GOULD
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tom Woolf, ISDA
Aquatic Plant Program
Manager
208-608-3404

April 3, 2012

State Seeks Public's Help in Preventing Introduction of Invasive Mussels ***Invasive Species inspections stations to open this weekend***

Boise - The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) announced that two additional mandatory watercraft inspection stations will open in northern Idaho on Friday, April 6th. One station is located on eastbound Highway 53 near the Idaho state line and the second station is located on eastbound Interstate 90 at the Huetter rest area. The stations will be open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. A station near Fourth of July Pass has been open since February 3rd and so far has detained and decontaminated three mussel-fouled watercraft. This station is open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m., seven days a week.

Boaters should expect inspections! The purpose of these stations is to inspect watercraft coming from outside Idaho. Watercraft inspectors will be looking for high-risk boats that have been in quagga mussel- and zebra mussel-impacted states. Boats will be inspected for any attached mussels and/or standing water. Owners also will be asked where they have boated in the previous 30 days. **It is important that boaters arrive in Idaho with a clean, drained and dry watercraft.**

"If these mussels are allowed to become established in Idaho, treatment options are severely limited, which further underscores the importance of prevention," Agriculture Director Celia Gould said. "If introduced, these mussels could impact Idaho's waterbodies and recreation and likely impose a heavy maintenance burden on irrigated agriculture, power generation and water suppliers."

Zebra mussels and quagga mussels are invasive species. They are European in origin and range in size from microscopic to the size of a fingernail, depending on the life stage. They are prolific breeders and attach themselves to hard and soft surfaces, fouling freshwater ecosystems and clogging intake pipes that draw water from infested waterbodies. They cause significant maintenance challenges for raw-water systems, requiring millions of dollars annually to treat. Although populations have been widespread in the Great Lakes for almost two decades, these mussels were found for the first time west of the Continental Divide in the past three years, specifically in regions of Nevada, California, Arizona, Colorado and Utah.

The state is seeking the public's help to prevent the introduction of this invasive species. Boats are the primary transporters of zebra mussels and quagga mussels. Mussels attached to watercraft or trailers can easily be transported to other waterbodies. Water in boat engines, bilges, live wells and buckets can carry microscopic mussel larvae (veligers) to other water bodies. Multiple state and federal agencies are urging boaters and watercraft users to clean, drain and dry boats and equipment before entering Idaho.

[Continued]

ISDA urges all boaters to take the following steps to prevent the introduction of the mussels to Idaho:

- Inspect all exposed surfaces - small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch
- Wash the hull thoroughly, preferably with hot water
- Remove all plant 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

For more information contact Tom Woolf at 208-608-3404 or email at Thomas.woolf@agri.idaho.gov

###