

BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program Status Report

Welcome to the first status report for the 2017 season of the BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program for the period of January 1 to July 30, 2017, with some additions for part of August. On March 30, 2017 it was announced that Program operations would be expanding with \$3 million in Provincial funding. This funding supports two new inspection stations, expanded inspection hours, and enhancement of the existing lake monitoring program. This brings the total program funding to \$4.5 million annually, with existing partner funding from BC Hydro, Columbia Power, Fortis BC, and Columbia Basin Trust.

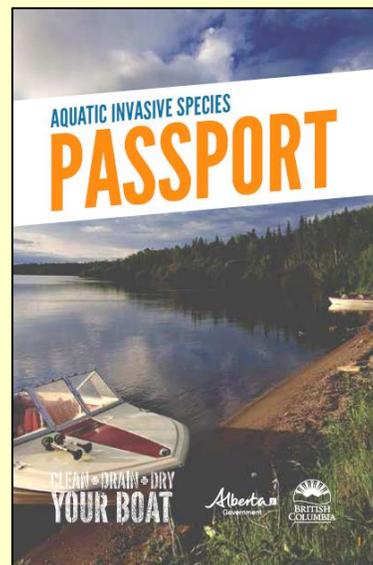
Program Operations

Watercraft Inspection Stations

Inspection stations opened on April 1, 2017. As of August 21, 2017 over 28,750 watercraft have been inspected and the crews have interacted with approximately 59,000 people to promote Clean, Drain, Dry.

Of the total watercraft inspected, 1,627 were identified as high risk, 184 Decontamination Orders have been issued, and 156 watercraft have been issued quarantine periods to meet the required 30-day drying time. Between June 11 and July 30, 78 watercraft were inspected at night (10 p.m. to 5 a.m.) at the Golden inspection station. Of those, three were identified as high risk (all from Saskatchewan). No mussel fouled watercraft have been intercepted during nighttime operations.

Of the more than 28,750 watercraft inspected, 17 were confirmed to have adult invasive mussels. These came from Ontario (9), Texas (2), Arizona (1), Ohio (1), Illinois (1), Michigan (1), New York (1) and Quebec (1), and were destined for the Lower Mainland (6), Okanagan (6), Kootenays (1), Thompson-Nicola (1), Vancouver Island (2) and Alaska (1). The Program received advanced notification on 15 of the 17 mussel fouled boats either from another jurisdiction (e.g., AB, MT, Idaho, WA) or by Canada Border Services Agents (CBSA). For two of the boats the owners actually contacted the program in advance to arrange for inspection when they arrived in BC.



BC-AB joint watercraft inspection passport.

	April 28 2016	April 30 2017	June 01 2016	June 05 2017	July 28 2016	July 30 2017	Aug 29 2016	Aug 21 2017
Total Watercraft Inspected	891	717	3294	3019	12,900	19,800	21,826	28,750
People Interacted With	1,500	1,100	5,561	5,350	25,900	40,000	44,064	59,000
High Risk Inspections	53	65	124	214	439	1,100	600	1,627
Decontamination Orders	7	15	18	27	67	166	82	184
Quarantine Periods	5	10	17	25	50	117	62	156
Mussel fouled watercraft	3	1	6	6	9	15	11	17

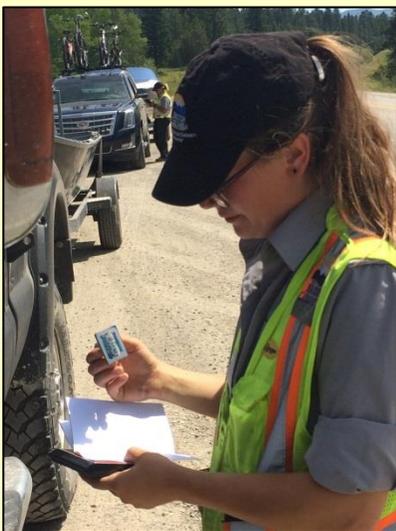
Watercraft inspection data between April and August for the 2016 and 2017 seasons. Note that the expanded program operations began on June 11, 2017.



Nighttime operations at the Golden inspection station.



Kilo the mussel detection dog is now touring inspection stations.



BC-AB Joint Passport being issued by one of the Cranbrook Inspectors.

Program Expansion

Watercraft Inspection Stations

Following the announcement on March 30, program staff worked through April and May to hire and train 35 new inspectors. Expanded program operations started in early June and included 24-hr operations at the Golden station, two new inspection stations (Yahk and Midway), and dawn to dusk operations at all stations. Kilo, the mussel detection dog, completed training in the spring and is now touring inspection stations with handler Sgt. Josh Lockwood from the Conservation Officer services.

Lake Monitoring

Program staff have begun discussions with the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation regarding the expanded lake monitoring grant. For the 2017 season, the Program is working with both new and existing partners to expand the number of lakes sampled for early detection monitoring. Sampling is currently underway and will continue into the fall.

Collaboration

The Program continues to work with CBSA to receive notifications of high-risk watercraft at the southern border crossings. Currently, the Program is receiving numerous daily notifications from CBSA and these watercraft are being directed to stations for inspection and decontamination, if necessary. High-risk watercraft are being cable sealed by CBSA staff so that Program inspectors can ensure boaters comply with the direction to report to the inspection station prior to launching.

Watercraft operators that fail to stop at an inspection station are being reported to the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) hotline and full time Conservation Officers are responding and following up.

On July 7, B.C. and Alberta launched a joint watercraft passport pilot program. The passport, pictured above, is aimed at watercraft that travel frequently through B.C. and Alberta. When passports are issued, boaters must sign a commitment to practice Clean, Drain, Dry and stop at all inspection stations. It is still mandatory for all passport holders to stop at inspection stations, but the inspection process is quicker. The passport is stamped each time a boater goes through an inspection station. The passport serves as a record of past watercraft inspections. The passport is available for boaters who travel between B.C. and Alberta and those who only travel within B.C. Both provinces are collecting data on boaters' overall experiences with the passport program to evaluate effectiveness of the pilot. To date 1,243 passports have been issued across the BC stations.

Program Effectiveness

To date, of the boaters whose watercraft were inspected, approximately 63% had previous knowledge of Clean, Drain, Dry and/or aquatic invasive species. The average compliance at inspection stations is around 81%. A total of 367 people without boats have voluntarily stopped at the watercraft inspection stations to get more information about invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Program staff also attended numerous outreach events during the winter and spring leading up to the start of the 2017 boating season, including:

- **2017 Vancouver International Boat Show (Vancouver, Jan 18-22):** Approximately 30,000 people attended the show. The Program shared a booth with the COS.
- **2017 BC Boat and Sportsman Show (Abbotsford, March 3-5):** Around 35,000 people attended the show; the Program shared booth with the COS.
- **2017 Castlegar Fly Fishing Symposium (March 25/26):** The Nelson crew attended and interacted with approximately 100 people over the two-day event.
- **2017 Gun and Sportsman Show (Dawson Creek, April 1/2):** The Program shared booth with the COS. This was the second year the Program attended this event.
- **2017 Cloverdale Rod and Gun Show (Lower Mainland, April 29/30):** Shared a booth with the COS; the Inspectors interacted with about 600 people over this two-day event.

In spring 2017, four workshops were delivered in partnership with the Invasive Species Council of B.C. These were targeted at local marinas and boating businesses to educate them about the Program and the notification process for boats being transported into B.C. The workshops were held in North Vancouver, Kelowna, Salmon Arm, and Cranbrook.

Highlight

On Friday June 30, a vehicle towing a trailered watercraft from Quebec failed to stop at the Golden inspection station. Sgt. Josh Lockwood of the COS/AIS K9 UNIT apprehended the vehicle and escorted it back to the inspection station. During the K9 inspection, Kilo detected mussels in several locations and Inspectors visually confirmed the presence of invasive mussels. The watercraft was decontaminated, and sealed with a 30-day quarantine period. The owner of the watercraft received a ticket for failing to stop at the inspection station and a ticket for possession of Dreissenid mussels. The watercraft had previously been in infested waters in Quebec one week prior and was destined for Shuswap Lake, BC.



Invasive mussels found on a watercraft intercepted at the Golden station coming from Ontario.



Kilo inspecting a commercially hauled watercraft from Ontario at the Golden inspection station.