

**Commissioner's Office
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Water Recreationists Encouraged to Prevent Spread of Invasive Mussels

As Memorial Day weekend approaches, the Bureau of Reclamation and multiple federal, state, and local agencies are actively encouraging water recreationists to remain vigilant in preventing the transport and spread of harmful aquatic invasive species to un-infested water bodies by following the standard precautionary steps of "Clean, Drain, and Dry."

Zebra and quagga mussels are freshwater bivalve mollusks, typically less than an inch in size that can rapidly proliferate in dense clusters by adhering to hard surfaces with hair-like threads. Mussels spread from infested waters by attaching to the hard surfaces on watercraft and trailers or are transported as larvae in the water left in boat engines, bilges, live wells, buckets, or crevices that can remain wet.

"Once invasive mussels become established in a waterway, they cause significant damage to aquatic ecosystems and water system infrastructure," said Reclamation Commissioner Michael L. Connor. "Reclamation is working with our federal and state partners to prevent the further spread of mussels in western reservoirs and waterways. We are also actively developing and evaluating remedies to treat facilities already impacted by mussels."

Boaters and recreational watercraft users are the first line of defense in preventing the spread of these troublesome invasive species by making it a habit to practice "Clean, Drain, and Dry" when leaving any body of water. Inspect and remove all visible debris including plant material and mud, and wash with hot, high-pressure water if possible. Drain any space that can hold water by removing plugs and inclining watercraft. Ensure all areas are completely dry by waiting at least five days before launching into another body of water.

Following these steps will significantly reduce the likelihood of unintentional spreading of mussels between water bodies. In addition, many reservoirs have mandatory mussel inspection and cleaning stations operated by federal and state partners.

Please visit Reclamation's mussel web site to learn more about preventing the spread of mussels:
www.usbr.gov/mussels.

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