

County of Santa Clara



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boat Inspections to Start at Lexington Reservoir and Continue at Four Santa Clara County Reservoirs

County to Share Cost 50/50 with Santa Clara Valley Water District

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF. – The County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors has approved continuation of a mandatory vessel inspection and quarantine program at four boating reservoirs in County Parks (Coyote, Anderson, Calero and Stevens Creek), and the addition of a vessel inspection and quarantine program at Lexington Reservoir, beginning July 1, 2011. The Board approved the program on the basis of sharing the \$750,000 program costs equally with the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The program will continue through June 30, 2012 with an option to renew for an additional year.

Boating at all 10 county reservoirs was suspended by the Santa Clara Valley Water District on May 13, 2008 in response to the emerging threat of infestation from Quagga and Zebra mussels. Mussel infestation in reservoirs can occur through multiple avenues including boating and water importation. While mussels have not been sighted in Santa Clara County, the vessel inspection program will address introduction of mussel infestation by boating in reservoirs.

“There is a delicate balance between protecting our water system and ensuring recreational boating activities continue on our waterways,” said Supervisor Mike Wasserman, Chair of the Board’s Housing Land Use, Environment and Transportation Committee. “Inspections for mussels have become a reality for county reservoirs and the Water District has agreed to share the cost.”

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Santa Clara County Parks provides recreational services at the reservoirs under a lease from the Water District and will continue the inspection program seven days a week (April 15 through October 14), from 8 a.m. to an hour before sunset, at three power boating reservoirs including Anderson, Calero and Coyote and two non-power boating reservoirs at Stevens Creek and Lexington. All other reservoirs will remain closed under the District's moratorium.

As part of the program, all vessels must undergo inspection prior to launching. Boats connected to trailers will have the option to be banded. The tamper-resistant band goes between the boat and the trailer. If the band is intact when the vessel returns to a Santa Clara County reservoir it will be allowed to launch without an additional inspection. If the band has been broken or tampered with the vessel will be required to undergo another inspection prior to launching and pay an additional inspection fee. Once a vessel has left the water for that day a band will be attached to the vessel between the winch hook of the trailer and the eyebolt of the bow of the boat. If this band is broken upon reentry into the reservoir, that vessel will have to be re-inspected before entering county reservoirs and an inspection fee will be collected.

Out of state vessels, and vessels registered in any county south of the Tehachapi Mountains will continue to be banned from Santa Clara County reservoirs. Any boat registered in Santa Clara County that has been recently launched in infested waters will be quarantined for 30 days and must be and re-inspected.

The Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department will collect a \$7 fee per inspection with the option to purchase a \$35 annual inspection pass to help offset the cost of the program.

Quagga and Zebra mussels are known to be very invasive and destructive. The mussels attach themselves to boats and can spread from one body of water to another. They can clog water pipes, boat piers, and ruin boat motors. Typically they are the same size as a fingernail. Quagga mussels inhabit fresh water at depths from 4 to 180 feet (most commonly 6-12 feet) and prefer hard surfaces.

Quagga/Zebra mussels can colonize on hulls, engines and steering components of boats, other recreational equipment, and if left unchecked, can damage boat motors and restrict cooling. They also attach to aquatic

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plants, and submerged sediment and surfaces such as piers, pilings, water intakes, and fish screens. In doing so, they can clog water intake structures hampering the flow of water.

What Residents and Visitors Can Do

County residents and visitors can do their part to prevent the spread of Quagga and Zebra mussels by inspecting their water vessels, including powerboats, kayaks, canoes and jet skis. When leaving water:

- Inspect all exposed surfaces - small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch
- 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.

Please visit www.parkhere.org for further information about boating reservations and more information on Quagga/Zebra mussels. For information on the boat inspection program contact the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department. Water quality questions should be directed to the Santa Clara Valley Water District at 408-265-2607 ext. 2237

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