



MCWRA Briefing Report: Quagga and Zebra Mussel Update

April 4, 2013

Subject: Quagga and Zebra Mussel Update

Current Status:

Zebra and quagga mussels are nonnative dreissenid mussels from Europe. They reproduce prolifically, especially in warm western waters. Despite efforts to control their western expansion, they have begun to rapidly invade California fresh water systems. Zebra mussels were first discovered in Lake St. Claire in the Great Lake Regions in 1988. In January 2007, quagga mussels were found in Lake Mead, west of the continental divide, despite the passage of federal legislation and targeted strategic efforts by U.S. Fish & Wildlife to prevent their westward movement. Since January 2007, quagga mussels have been found in reservoirs in Nevada, Arizona and throughout Southern California. Most Southern California waterways receiving raw water from the Colorado River are suspected of being infested. By May 2011, 25 water bodies in California were infested. In January 2008, the closely related zebra mussel was found in San Justo Reservoir, which is located in San Benito County near the Santa Clara County line.

In May of 2010, the Agency, County Parks and SLO County Flood Control & Water Conservation District (SLO), began implementing a Mussel Prevention Program at Lakes Nacimiento and San Antonio. This program continues to evolve and be modified. In March of 2012 the Agency Board of Directors agreed to the implementation of a Resident Vessel Program at Lake Nacimiento to be administered by San Luis Obispo County. That program is currently being implemented.

In June of 2012 the Agency participated in and assisted with an invasive species tour in Monterey County for the Invasive Species Subcommittee of the CA legislature and its chair, Senator Anthony Canella. This tour included a demonstration of a vessel inspection for invasive species at Lake Nacimiento.

In September 2012 the Governor signed AB 2443 that added a fee to boat registrations for quagga/zebra mussel infestation programs. Agency staff and Monterey County's legislative team supported the passage of this bill. The Division of Boating and Waterways is charged with developing the process to distribute the funds and Agency staff has applied to be on that committee.

Next Steps:

Continue refining the Invasive Species Prevention Plan.

- Develop a Response Plan for the Reservoirs in the event of infestation
- Adopt the Invasive Species Prevention Plan – focusing on dreissenid mussels
- Continue participation with the Bay Area Consortium
- Continue to engage on a State-wide level for support and funding

Decision Points:

- Continue to improve the Mussel Program at Agency reservoirs
- Determine contingencies for the Prevention Program if funding not available

Completion will require:

- This Program is on-going until reservoirs are infested; then Program shifts to maintenance of facilities and infrastructure and possibly eradication
- Adequate funding to support inspection stations and inspectors