

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: April 2, 2008

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Chris Plakos, 760-873-0264

MANDATORY BOAT INSPECTIONS AT CROWLEY LAKE TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE MUSSELS

To help prevent the spread of invasive mussels that can impact the fishery and damage water conveyance systems, all boats entering Crowley Lake this year will be thoroughly inspected, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) recently announced. Boats showing signs of contamination with invasive mussels, or found to contain any water or debris that could harbor mussels, will not be allowed to launch into Crowley Lake. Boats that pass the inspection will be issued an Inspection Certification and allowed to launch.

“It’s critical that we take proactive steps to protect Crowley Lake from the spread of invasive mussels while allowing the public to enjoy fishing and other recreational opportunities on Crowley,” said LADWP Chief Executive Officer and General Manager David Nahai. “We know that thousands of people enjoy Crowley each year for its excellent fishing and other boating-related activities, and we understand how important Crowley is to the local Eastern Sierra economy. Our staff is working to insure that the survey and inspection program goes as smoothly as possible with the least amount of inconvenience to boaters.”

Crowley Lake visitors with boats will be asked to fill out a *Boat Use Survey* form containing a series of questions regarding past use and past cleaning

procedures, and sign the form. To minimize any inconvenience to lake visitors, the LADWP and concessionaire Crowley Lake Fish Camp will work closely together to check all boats for mussel contamination as quickly as possible. All boats that pass the inspection will be issued an Inspection Certification that must be displayed on the dashboard of the towing vehicle in order to launch. Boaters can expect the survey and inspection to take up to an hour.

For the convenience of Eastern Sierra residents and visitors who want to boat on Crowley during the opening of fishing season, the LADWP will operate pre-inspection stations during daylight hours beginning April 23 at the Vons/Kmart shopping center in Bishop, and at Crowley Lake South Landing.

Boat launching will only be permitted through the main gate at the South Landing. Boats will not be allowed to launch, and trailers will not be allowed to park, at the North Landing, Wild Willie's Springs and Layton Springs areas. Once their boat has passed inspection, frequent users of Crowley Lake can make arrangements to store their boat on-site and will not be required to have it re-inspected, unless it leaves the property.

If a boat fails the inspection due to signs of contamination, it will not be allowed into Crowley Lake. To prevent boats that have been denied access to Crowley Lake from being launched at another location, the boat's CF number will be recorded and the Department of Fish and Game and other marina operators in the area will be notified. State law prohibits the possessing, importing, shipping, or transporting in the state, or from placing, planting, or causing to be placed or planted in any water within the state, of invasive mussels (Chaptered Bill AB 1683).

Invasive mussels, which include quagga and zebra mussels, are small shellfish that were first introduced into the Great Lakes area in 1988 by cargo ships traveling from Eastern Europe. They quickly spread to 12 states within

ten years due to their ability to survive severe conditions and reproduce rapidly. They have since spread through the Metropolitan Water District's (MWD) Colorado River Aqueduct to reservoirs in Southern California. Currently eleven reservoirs in San Diego and Riverside Counties, as well as a small reservoir in San Benito County have been infested by these aquatic hitch hikers. Monitoring sites at LADWP facilities have tested negative for these mussels.

Quagga mussels produce millions of offspring that attach to almost any surface, coating it in thick mats. In some locations they have reached densities of more than 750,000 per cubic yard. They can attach to boat hulls and clog motors, water inlets and outlets, and power plants, causing millions of dollars in damage. These invasive mussels are capable of filtering up to a liter of water a day per individual, removing organisms that serve as a base of the food chain for fish and other organisms. This abrupt change in nutrient flow causes drastic changes in aquatic ecosystems that are only beginning to be understood. Some of these emerging impacts are poisoning of waterfowl, the devastation of important fisheries and the changing of lakeside beach surfaces from sand to sharp mussel shells.

To help prevent the spread of invasive mussels into other Eastern Sierra waters, the LADWP is also working to develop partnerships with other land management agencies, business operators, boaters and recreational enthusiasts to inspect boats and turn away those that show signs of infestation. Partnerships with the Forest Service and its concessionaires that manage many lakes in the area,

the Bureau of Land Management, Southern California Edison, Mono County, Inyo County, the City of Bishop, Town of Mammoth Lakes, the Department of Fish and Game, and local businesses, as well as boaters and fishermen will be essential to help keep these aquatic invaders out.

Boaters can take the following actions to help prevent the further spread of invasive mussels:

- Inspect boats and trailers thoroughly, and remove any trash, mussels or aquatic weeds before leaving any water body.
- Mussels and other items removed from the boat should be properly disposed of in a trash container.
- Drain water from the motor, live-well, bilge and transom wells, and any other water from the boat and equipment before leaving any water body.
- Wash boats, trailers and equipment thoroughly with a pressurized power sprayer and hot water.
- Rinse live-wells, bilge and cooling systems with hot water.
- Dry boats, motors, trailers and equipment thoroughly in the hot sun for at least two weeks before using them again.

Additional information can be obtained at the following websites:

www.LADWP.com/mussels

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/invasives/quaggamusel>

#