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What to expect when visiting Lopez Lake or Santa Margarita Lake

Boaters visiting Lopez or Santa Margarita Lakes will find changes to launching procedures intended to protect our local waters from potential infestation by quagga and zebra mussels. This new program by SLO County Parks follows the recommendations of the California Department of Fish and Game and is similar to procedures recently implemented at Cachuma Lake in Santa Barbara County.

San Luis Obispo County Parks has been educating park visitors on the Quagga and Zebra Mussel threat since July of 2007. These tiny mussels are an invasive species that present a negative environmental impact on California's reservoirs and waterways. They can breed rapidly and can clog pipes and valves posing a threat to municipal water systems, aquatic food chains in lakes, access for fishing and boating, and recreation-based economies.

Based on new protocols, park staff will perform visual inspections on every boat and if any are found to have water in the bilge or live well, or are not clean, they will not be allowed to launch. Boats coming from infected waters will also not be allowed to launch.

Beginning April 12th, 2008, decontamination procedures will also be implemented. In addition to inspection, boaters will be required to have their boats decontaminated using hot water treatment or they will not be permitted to launch. The mussels and their larvae cannot survive water temperatures in excess of 140 degrees.

CLEAN AND DRY!

Remember when you plan your visit to Lopez or Santa Margarita Lakes to prepare your boat by having it clean and dry for inspection.

What is clean and dry?

- Drain plugs pulled, no water in bilge, live well or integral coolers.
- No mud, debris, aquatic weed or algae on hull, trailer or motor.
- Lower units on boats should be dry-when lowered they should not contain water.

Boats not meeting these criteria will be denied launch. In addition, boats coming from infected waters in Riverside, San Diego and San Bernardino Counties **will be denied entry**. For a list of these waterways please refer to the following link: [MusselDistributionMap](#).

WAKEBOARD BOAT ADVISORY: VESSELS WITH INTERNAL BALLAST SYSTEMS ARE CURRENTLY PROHIBITED FROM LAUNCHING ON LOPEZ AND SANTA MARGARITA LAKES.

The future of boating in San Luis Obispo County lakes depends on your cooperation and support. Please help to keep our waters clean and accessible to boaters.

For additional information on the quagga and zebra mussel threat please refer to the following resources:

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

<http://wwwdes.water.ca.gov/zmwatch/>