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1416 Ninth Street, Room 117
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News Release: For Immediate Release

Feb. 1, 2007

Public Asked to Help Halt Spread of Quagga Mussel DFG Opens Toll-Free Information Line (866) 440-9530

Contact:

Troy Swauger, DFG Office of Communications, (916) 654-2096

SACRAMENTO - The invasive Quagga mussel has been discovered in California and the public is being asked to help prevent its spread. A public toll-free number, 1-866-440-9530, has been established for boaters and anyone involved with activities on lakes and rivers seeking information on the invasive and destructive Quagga mussels. The toll-free number is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"With the discovery of the Quagga mussel in California last month, we are taking the necessary steps statewide to prevent their spread here," said Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. "It is critical that we enlist the public's help. Once the Quagga are established in a waterway, they will have significant environmental, recreational and economic impacts."

Although they range from microscopic to the size of a fingernail, they are prolific and attach themselves to any hard surface. In the Great Lakes area, Quagga mussels have covered everything from boat engines and steering equipment to water transport facilities. They also wreak havoc with the environment, disrupting the natural food chain and releasing toxins that affect other species. Spread of the Quagga could result in millions of dollars in damage to water transport facilities.

Boats are the primary transporters of Quagga mussels. All boaters and anyone connected to freshwater aquatic environments should take the following steps to inhibit the spread of the Quagga mussel:

- Thoroughly wash the hull of each watercraft once it is out of the water, removing all plants and animal material.
- Drain any water through the vessel's hull plug, and ensure the area is dry.
- Ensure the vessel's lower outboard unit is drained and dry.
- Clean and dry any live-well aboard the vessel.
- Empty and dry any buckets.
- Any vessel traveling from Lake Mead or the Colorado River should remain dry and out of water for five days.
- Dispose of all bait in the trash.

A multi-agency taskforce has responded with surface and underwater inspectors to determine the extent of the Quagga threat. Quagga mussels were found in and near Lake Havasu and the multi-agency response team has increased monitoring and inspection locations. For more information on the Quagga mussel response, visit the DFG Web site at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/quaggamussel/>

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