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For Immediate Release:

**Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District
Issues Temporary Boating Restrictions to Protect Water Supply**

The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) and the Ruth Lake Community Services District have issued a temporary boating restriction at Ruth Lake in an attempt to protect Humboldt County's water supply from invasive species infestation. This restriction is now in place.

Only boats registered in and originating from Humboldt and Trinity Counties will be allowed to launch at Ruth Lake. Boats registered locally, but recently immersed in infested waters in southern California or the Colorado river system, are also prohibited from entering Ruth Lake. This restriction is expected to be temporary and will end once boating registration and inspection programs have been put in place. It is anticipated that the programs will be up and running by the end of this year or the beginning of 2009. This restriction will be in place for the upcoming Labor Day weekend.

All boaters are urged to take precautions before launching boats or other watercraft into Ruth Lake or any other northern California waterway. To date 19 reservoirs in California and many more across the United States have been infested by invasive species – most notably the Zebra and Quagga mussels. These invasive mussels thrive in freshwater. The species spread either from water releases from an infested reservoir, or are transported on boats, other watercraft, and trailers which have been in infested reservoirs. The mussels are very small and can attach themselves to any surface on the boat, motor or trailer. The larval form (called veligers) can be transported in pockets of water in the bilge, engine, live wells and other areas of a boat. Boaters often frequent a number of reservoirs, which significantly increases the chance of the mussels spreading.

Once introduced into a water body, eradication can be extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible. Therefore, the best strategies to ensure these mussels do not spread are boater and community education, and prevention measures.

The larvae are so small they cannot be seen. Once adults take hold in a lake or reservoir, they can multiply very quickly – one mussel may release 40,000 eggs and up to 1 million in a spawning season. Once this happens, they can adversely affect water supplies (by clogging pipes and infrastructure), adversely affect marinas by coating piers and other infrastructure, and boats by ruining motors. To date, billions of dollars have been spent in the Great Lakes region where the mussel infestation first occurred in the United States, and millions of dollars have already been spent in Southern California since the mussels arrived just last year.

As they grow and multiply, the mussels damage the ecosystem by filtering organic nutrients and plankton, altering the aquatic food chain and ultimately harming the fisheries. They can consume so much organic material that the water may turn too clear, allowing sunlight to penetrate deeper and stimulate the growth of nuisance aquatic weeds and algae, which can cause taste and odor problems in drinking water. The natural cycle of the weeds can at different stages cause oxygen deprivation resulting in fish kills.

HBMWD supplies drinking water to the majority of Humboldt County's population. HBMWD's source of the water supply comes from Ruth Lake in southern Trinity County. Water District General Manager, Carol Rische said, "We support the use of our reservoirs for recreational purposes; however, the reservoir was built for water supply and storing drinking water, and protecting the resource is our top priority. We are implementing this plan in an attempt to prevent these invasive mussels from being introduced into Ruth Lake."

Rische added, "at this time, there are no plans to close the lake, but work is underway with the Ruth Lake Community Services District to develop a Prevention Plan. Closing non-staffed boat launches, and initiating boater registration and inspection processes are vital components of this plan."

Ruth Lake CSD General Manager, Tom Felt said, "Ruth Lake provides a significant amount of recreational opportunities to visitors ranging from the weekend camper/boater/fisher people to the 174 lease (cabin sites) surrounding the lake. Ruth Lake CSD is actively working with the Humboldt Bay MWD to prevent a possible infestation. We apologize to boaters for possible inconveniences while we work to protect your opportunities to use Ruth Lake now and in the future. The marina at Ruth Lake does offer boat rentals as a possible alternative."

DFG Director, Donald Koch commented, "Quagga and Zebra mussels pose a serious threat to all of California's waters. DFG is committed to providing local agencies like Humboldt County with the information they need to protect local waters from these invasive species."

HBMWD and Ruth Lake CSD are urging all boaters to follow posted boat inspection procedures. A list of checkpoints follows and applies to any other waterways in our area as well as Ruth Lake. At this point boating restrictions have not been implemented at any waterways other than Ruth Lake.

Boaters are asked to employ the following procedures:

- 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.

www.100thmeridian.org provides additional information including online education which provides the user with a certificate to show authorities that you are doing your part in helping to prevent the spread of these invasive species.

The HBMWD and the Ruth Lake Community Services District, are working closely with DFG to monitor the reservoirs and evaluate protective measures against the introduction of mussels from boating. For more information contact HBMWD at (707) 443-5018, or online www.hbmwd.com, Ruth Lake CSD at (707) 574-6332 or DFG information line: (866) 440-9530 or online www.dfg.ca.gov/invasives/quaggamussel.