

HUMBOLDT BAY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

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July 18, 2008

To Ruth Lake Leaseholders

Re: Community Education and Prevention Efforts for Aquatic Invasive Species at Ruth Lake

Dear Leaseholders:

As I'm sure many of you know, the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) supplies drinking water to the majority of Humboldt County's population. HBMWD's source of supply is Ruth Lake in southern Trinity County. The District has a vested interest in maintaining the quality and health of this water supply resource.

We fully realize that you as leaseholders around Ruth Lake, as well as boaters and anglers in our community, have a vested interest in Ruth Lake too given the valuable recreational opportunities afforded there.

Unfortunately, lakes and water supply reservoirs throughout the country have been, and continue to be, infested by several dangerous and damaging invasive species – most notably the Zebra and Quagga mussels, and the New Zealand Mudsnaill. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of activities underway by our agency and the Ruth Lake CSD, and also to enlist your support in helping educate the boating and angling community regarding measures they can and must take to help prevent their spread to Ruth Lake and other northern California lakes and reservoirs.

Background:

The introduction of the Quagga mussel to California just last year, and its fast and aggressive spread in southern California is perhaps the most serious and urgent threat. The Quagga mussel spreads either from water releases from an infested reservoir, or is transported on boats and trailers which have been in infested reservoirs. The mussels are very small and are prone to attach themselves to any hard surface on the boat, motor or trailer. The larvae unfortunately are so small they cannot be seen. Once introduced into a lake or reservoir, they multiply very quickly – one mussel may release 40,000 eggs and up to 1,000,000 in a spawning season. Once introduced into a water body, exponential growth of the mussel population may occur. Once this happens, they adversely affect water supplies (by clogging pipes and infrastructure), coat piers, and ruin boat motors. Perhaps most significantly, they may upset the biological food chain and ecological balance in the infested lake (and in the worst case over a long period of time, they can potentially "kill" the lake).

Once introduced into a water body there is currently no known method to eradicate them. Therefore, the best strategies are boater and community education, and prevention.

What We Are Doing About this Emerging Issue:

First of all, we have received several inquires and have been apprised of numerous "rumors," that HBMWD is "closing the lake." That is not true.

What we are doing is taking this emerging issue very seriously. We are trying to strike a delicate balance while the science is evolving, and while the threat and risk assessments are advancing state-wide. We are beginning to consider and plan prudent actions to prevent introduction of these very damaging and harmful invasive species into Ruth Lake if they make their way out of southern California. For example, if the invasive mussels infest Trinity, Lewiston or Shasta Lakes in Trinity and Shasta Counties, or if they infest Clear Lake in Lake County, we need appropriate measures to have been put in place to ensure the chances of introduction into Ruth Lake are minimized or eliminated.

Therefore, HBMWD, in partnership with the Ruth Lake Community Services District, has initiated the following actions:

- 1) HBMWD and Ruth Lake CSD have initiated an educational campaign to raise awareness of this important issue. We have created a number of large educational signs that will be placed at a number of locations around Ruth Lake. Our respective websites are being updated to provide information to the boating and fishing community. Ruth Lake CSD is sending information to all parties who call to make campground reservations. And finally, HBMWD has sent a letter and informational material to marine stores and fishing/tackle shops not only in Humboldt County, but also in Trinity, Shasta, Del Norte and Mendocino Counties. We have apprised them of this emerging issue and have requested their assistance in educating the boating and angling communities regarding prevention measures they must take to prevent the spread of these invasive species.
- 2) A Joint Agency Committee of HBMWD and the Ruth Lake CSD has just been formed to address this emerging issue of importance to both agencies. The Ruth Lake Leaseholders Association has been invited to participate on this committee. RLLA will have two members on the committee to represent your interests and to communicate with you. Activities of this committee are to:
 - Understand the impacts if the invasive mussels or mudsnail are introduced into Ruth Lake
 - Evaluate strategies or activities recommended by the California Department of Fish and Game, or other agencies, to prevent the spread of these invasive species within the State
 - Develop a "threat assessment" for Ruth Lake
 - Develop a "Community Education Plan" aimed at educating and raising awareness within the local boating and angling community, and the community at-large
 - Support the California Department of Fish and Game with a monitoring program to assess whether the invasive species may be present
 - Develop a "Prevention Plan" which addresses the need for, timing of, and triggering events for actions aimed at preventing introduction of these invasive species into Ruth Lake.

We realize that you are very important stakeholders in this matter. We hope you will become valuable partners too regarding communication and prevention efforts. Our interests are mutually aligned to prevent the introduction of these very aggressive, very impactful, invasive species into Ruth Lake.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Working together, we hope to prevent the introduction of these invasive species into Ruth Lake and other northern California lakes and reservoirs.

Sincerely,



Carol Rische
General Manager
Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District



Tom Felt
Manager
Ruth Lake Community Services District

Cc: without attachments:

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