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**Pilot Vessel Inspection Program to Continue at  
Four County Boating Reservoirs**

*Peak Season and Off-Season Option to Help Reduce Cost of the Program*

SAN JOSE, CALIF.— Today, County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to continue the pilot Vessel Inspection Program in 2009 with adjustment to reduce cost of the program. The Vessel Inspection Program is designed to prevent the spread of invasive Quagga and Zebra mussels at four boating reservoirs in County Parks: Coyote, Anderson, Calero and Stevens Creek.

"This change strikes a balance," said Supervisor Liz Kniss, District 5. "It will enable boaters to have year-round access to reservoirs while reducing the cost to the county."

During peak season (April 15 through October 14), all four reservoirs will be open 7 days a week; during off-season (October 15 through April 14), Anderson and Calero Reservoirs will be open 5 days a week, and Stevens Creek and Coyote Reservoirs will be closed. This adjustment helps to reduce the cost of the program to approximately \$800,000 annually, a \$200,000 decrease from the May 2008 proposal when the program was first launched.

In May 2008, the County of Santa Clara implemented a pilot Vessel Inspection Program after several weeks of discussion between the County and the Santa Clara Valley Water District to mitigate the threat of introducing Quagga and Zebra mussels into Santa Clara County reservoirs.

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"To keep our waterways safe, County staff has inspected thousands of boats at County reservoirs," said Lisa Killough, Parks and Recreation Department Director. "We are pleased that to date we have not found mussel infestation during these inspections."

The Vessel Inspection program requires all vessels to go through an initial inspection at a cost of \$7 per vessel. Once a vessel has been pulled from the water for that day, the vessel operator has an option to allow inspectors to band the vessel. The band is attached between the winch hook of the trailer and the eyebolt of the bow of the boat. If the band is intact upon return to a County reservoir, the vessel owner may launch without further inspection. However, if the band is found broken, tampered or removed, the vessel is subject to re-inspection before entering the water and another inspection fee will be collected. This assures that the vessels have not been in other (particularly hazardous) waters.

Boats registered in counties south of the Tehachapi Mountains and out-of state are still banned from launching in County of Santa Clara waterways. Boats registered in a permissible county that have recently visited a banned area, will be quarantined. Quarantined boats must be decontaminated and fully inspected before being released.

### **About Quagga and Zebra mussels**

Quagga and Zebra mussels are invasive aquatic species that present a negative environmental impact on California's reservoirs and waterways. They breed rapidly and upset the food chain by consuming phytoplankton that other species need to survive. Quagga and Zebra mussels can also colonize on hulls, engines and steering components of boats and damage boat motors and restrict cooling. Because they rapidly increase, they quickly clog, and render useless, water facility pipes and infrastructure.

U.S. Congressional researchers estimated that an infestation of the Zebra mussel in the Great Lakes area cost the power industry \$3.1 billion in the 1993-1999 period, with an economic impact to industries, businesses and communities of more than \$5 billion.

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Zebra and Quagga mussels are native to Ukraine and Russia. Zebra mussels were first discovered in the Great Lakes in 1988, and a year later, Quagga mussels were discovered in the same area. It is believed they arrived in America via ballast water discharge.

The threat of introduction of these invasive species to County of Santa Clara waterways increased with the discovery of Quagga Mussels in a number of Southern California reservoirs in early 2007, and the more recent discovery of Zebra Mussels at San Justo Reservoir in nearby San Benito County in January 2008.

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