



COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
105 E. Anapamu St., Room 406 • Santa Barbara, CA 93101
www.countyofsb.org
(805) 568-3400 • FAX (805) 568-3414

P R E S S R E L E A S E

News Media Contact:

William Boyer
Communications Director
(805) 568-3428
(805) 896-1056 (cell)
wboyer@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Santa Barbara County Supervisors Adopt New Boat Launch Protocols for Cachuma Lake to Help Fight Quagga & Zebra Mussels

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, March 25 approved new inspection, treatment and quarantine protocols for boats prior to launch at Cachuma Lake County Park to help prevent the possible introduction of Quagga or Zebra mussels into the lake.

The new protocols will begin Friday, March 28 in conjunction with the opening of the new boat launch ramp at Cachuma Lake. The Supervisors' action Tuesday also included their approval for the County Parks Department to open the launch ramp provided the inspection and treatment protocols are followed.

The pre-launch protocols include a multi-stage inspection and treatment process that all boat owners will be required to complete. Boat owners should go online to www.cachuma.com for full details. The main criteria include:

- **ALL boats and trailers** must be **CLEAN** and **DRY upon entry to Cachuma Lake**.
- **ALL DRAIN PLUGS** must be removed prior to boat transport that day.
- **ALL boats longer than 24 feet will be quarantined** on-site for 14 days before launch.
- **ALL out-of-state boats will be quarantined** on-site for 14 days before launch.
- **ALL California boats with registration addresses near known infected lakes will be quarantined** on-site for 14 days before being allowed to launch.
- **ALL boats and trailers** will be thoroughly inspected and treated by hot water pressure wash after first passing the visual inspection and quarantine requirements.
- **Boat Launch Tags** will be available for boat owners who wish to remove their boats from the lake and who do not plan to use their boats elsewhere prior to returning to Cachuma Lake. The tags will be applied to boats and trailers upon exiting the lake.
- **Sign Affidavit** upon entry to Cachuma Lake County Park stating where boat was most recently used and whether or not in waters already infested by the invasive mussels.

The recommendations were made by the County Parks Department and a special ad hoc committee that was created March 11 by the Supervisors when the issue of possible Quagga infestation was first discussed before the Board. The ad hoc committee included Board Chair Salud Carbajal, First District, and Third District Supervisor Brooks Firestone, along with members of the Cachuma Operations and Maintenance Board (COMB), several south county water districts and the public.

COMB is responsible for providing water from Cachuma Lake to its member water districts in the south county. Approximately 80 percent of the water used in the south county area comes from Cachuma Lake.

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2-2-2/QUAGGA INSPECTIONS

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Boats that do not meet the basic visual inspection of being clean and dry and with drain plugs (if any) removed will not be allowed to launch. Boat owners would have the option of putting their boats into on-site quarantine for future use.

Boat Launch Tags are designed to allow frequent users of Cachuma Lake streamlined launch access. Boats and trailers with Boat Launch Tags will be able to launch after staff at the lake have determined the tag's seal has not been broken. A new Boat Launch Tag must be applied each time a boat is removed from the lake's premises.

Staff and the ad hoc committee opted for an automatic quarantine on boats longer than 24 feet due to the complexity of a thorough inspection for larger boats as they can have more bilge areas or water compartments where the mussels could be inadvertently hitchhiking.

Boats currently at the lake, including privately owned boats already docked at the marina or rentals, already have access and will be unaffected by the new protocols unless the boats are removed from the water and transported off site.

Quagga mussels are a non-native, invasive species of fresh water mollusk that are originally from Eastern Europe. About the size of a dime, the Quagga mussel is thought to have been first introduced into North America's Great Lakes region in the late 1980s from ballast water discharged from ships. Since then, the Quagga has spread, either by boat or water movement, throughout the Midwest and the Eastern United States.

In January 2007, Quagga mussels were detected in Lake Mead and the Colorado River water system and have recently been found in several lakes in Southern California. Currently, there is no known remedy to safely eliminate them from a body of water once infested with Quaggas. Quagga mussels can quickly multiply and are known to clog waterways, pipelines, change the ecosystems of the water system where they live and can create costly maintenance issues.

For more information about Cachuma Lake, go online to www.cachuma.com or call the lake's information line at (805) 686-5054.

The 13th annual Trout Derby sponsored by the non-profit Cachuma Lake Nature Center is still scheduled for April 19-20. Advanced registration for \$30 per adult is being accepted at a \$5 savings prior to April 1. After April 1, registration costs \$35. The entry fee for children 10 years old or younger is only \$10.

Boat owners wishing to use their boats for the derby are encouraged to bring their several days, or more, prior to the popular event. Early inspection, treatment, dry storage or boat launch tags will be available for boats prior to the Trout Derby.

There is \$5,000 in cash prizes for a variety of winning categories for both adults and children, including longest trout caught, trout caught with the highest numbered tag and shortest trout caught. Call the Trout Derby Hotline at (805) 693-8381 for more information.

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