

DON'T MOVE A MUSSEL!

What Local Businesses & Partners Need to Know About Golden Mussel Prevention

Golden mussels are an invasive freshwater species not yet detected in the Eastern Sierra — and **keeping them out is critical**.

They spread primarily by hitchhiking on boats, trailers, and gear that move between lakes and rivers. **Once they are here, they cannot be removed.**



Why Are They Such a Serious Threat?

Golden mussels:

- **Attach to almost anything** — docks, rocks, boats, motors, pipes, aquatic plants, even muddy lake bottoms.
- **Survive in a wide range of water temperatures and chemistry**, including low-calcium waters like many Eastern Sierra lakes.
- Can **live outside of water** for periods of time.
- Reproduce rapidly, spawning multiple times per year and producing thousands of microscopic larvae (called veligers) that are **nearly impossible to detect**.

Unlike quagga or zebra mussels, golden mussels are especially capable of surviving in Eastern Sierra conditions.



Photo: California State Parks

Why Should We Care in the Eastern Sierra?

If introduced to the Eastern Sierra, golden mussels can:

- Permanently damage lake and stream ecosystems.
- Deplete plankton that fish depend on for food.
- Threaten recreational fishing, boating, and tourism.
- Clog docks, motors, water delivery systems and pipes.
- Increase water and power costs due to expensive maintenance.

In October 2024, golden mussels were detected in the Port of Stockton. In less than one year, they spread more than 250 miles south.

Our lakes and rivers are highly interconnected. An introduction in one location could spread quickly across the region.

Prevention is the only solution.



Photo: Christian Pondella

What's new: INSPECTION IS REQUIRED BEFORE LAUNCH

New ordinances in Mono and Inyo Counties require inspections before launching any trailered watercraft, including boats and jet skis. Boaters must stop at a Watercraft Inspection & Decontamination (WID) station and receive an **Eastern Sierra mussel sticker** before launching. Launching without an inspection may result in fines, misdemeanor charges, or boat impoundment.

- **Resident boats (Mono or Inyo County)*:** Inspected once per year before the first launch of the season.
- **Visiting boats:** Inspected when entering Mono or Inyo County before launching.
- **Boats inspected in Inyo County:** That inspection is valid in Mono County for the same month.
- **Any boat that launches outside Mono or Inyo County:** Must be inspected again before launching locally.
- **Everything** (inspection, decontamination, and stickers) is **FREE at all WID stations.**



SAMPLE EASTERN SIERRA MUSSEL STICKER



**Please note: We're actively working to create a simpler, more convenient process for rental and resident boats that stay within Mono and Inyo County, while expanding local inspection options.*

For current inspection locations, hours, FAQs, and resources: EasternSierraWID.com →

Regular pressure washing is not effective. **Only high-temperature, high-pressure decontamination systems at official WID stations are proven to kill mussels and larvae.**

For ordinance questions or reports, please contact Mono County Sheriff (760-932-7549) or Inyo County Sheriff (760-878-0383).



What Can Local Businesses and Partners Do to Help?

1. Share accurate and clear requirements:

Help customers and guests understand that watercraft inspections are **mandatory and enforced**. Launching without an inspection may result in fines, misdemeanor charges, or boat impoundment.

- Add inspection requirements to your website.
- Include language in reservation confirmations and pre-arrival emails.
- Post reminders on social media, especially before busy weekends.
- Share updates in your newsletters or other communications.
- Business and partner toolkit at vcptoolkit.org ↑



2. Direct boaters to WID stations and legal launch sites:

- Inform boaters to visit EasternSierraWID.com for WID locations and hours.
- Explain that launching outside designated marinas or ramps increases risk and many informal launch sites are illegal.

3. Promote Clean, Drain, Dry:

- Clean boats, trailers, and gear of plants and mud.
- Drain all water from boats, livewells, ballast tanks, and equipment.
- Dry everything thoroughly before entering another waterbody.
- **Also check kayaks, paddleboards, float tubes, waders, and fishing gear!**

4. Be a local ambassador:

- If customers have questions, direct them to official county or CDFW resources.
- Emphasize that **early action protects recreation, infrastructure, and local jobs.**
- Possible mussel sightings should be reported to CDFW by email to invasives@wildlife.ca.gov or 866-440-9530. Please take clear, close-up photos that include something (such as a pencil or hand) to show size.