



For Immediate Release — November 19 2019



Photo Caption: A strong contingent at the ICAIS conference: Robyn Hooper (Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society), Erin Vieira (Shuswap Watershed Council), Lisa Scott (Okanagan Similkameen Invasive Species Society), Hamish Kassa (Columbia Shuswap Regional District) (Left to right).

Local Organizations Bring Invasive Species to the International Stage, Highlighting Prevention Measures that Protect our Region's Fresh Water Resources

Robyn Hooper, Executive Director of the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society (CSISS) and Erin Vieira, Program Manager for the Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) presented to the International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species in Montreal on October 28, 2019. CSISS and SWC were joined at the conference by representatives from the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, the Okanagan Similkameen Invasive Species Society and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, which made for a strong B.C. contingency.

Approximately 250 conference delegates were in attendance from 22 countries. Hooper and Vieira spoke about their collaborative aquatic invasive species prevention in the Shuswap region including advocacy, education and outreach, watercraft inspection, and lake monitoring.

CSISS, in partnership with the SWC, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, leads lake monitoring for invasive mussels in the Columbia Shuswap region.

Invasive Zebra and Quagga mussels pose serious threats to water quality, fish habitat (resident species and anadromous Pacific salmon, infrastructure, water utilities, beaches, and property value are all at risk.

“If zebra and quagga mussels establish here, it’s conservatively estimated that it would cost \$43M annually to British Columbians, and \$500M annually to the Pacific Northwest Economic Region to deal with the impacts. These numbers surely do not represent the social and cultural losses should invasive mussels impact Pacific salmon stocks,” states Hooper.

As per the respective organizations’ mandates to prevent the spread of invasive species and protect water quality in the Columbia Shuswap Region, CSISS and the SWC have expanded their operations to include increased regional education, outreach, and monitoring for zebra and quagga mussels in the Shuswap. Both organizations work closely to deliver these programs within the Shuswap watershed, using a variety of communication media (face-to-face outreach with boaters, industry engagement and outreach, and media campaigns), lake monitoring, and advocating for policy changes at the federal and provincial level.

Resources

To learn more about the International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species visit <https://www.icaais.org/>

For information on Invasive Mussel prevention in British Columbia visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/invasive-mussels>

The Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention, management and reduction of invasive species in the Columbia Shuswap Regional District. The Shuswap Watershed Council is a watershed-based partnership that works on water quality, invasive mussels, and safe recreation in the Shuswap.

For more information please contact Robyn Hooper at 1-855-785-9333 or Erin Vieira at 250 314-9660.

www.columbiashuswapinvasives.org | www.shuswapwater.ca

CSISS is thankful for the generous support of the Shuswap Watershed Council, The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Columbia Basin Trust, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.