

Opinion: Time running out on dealing with invasive species

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The possible discovery of quagga mussels in two of Northern Nevada's must important reservoirs is reason for considerable concern.

The invasive mollusk has become Public Enemy No. 1 in waterways throughout the United States, including Lake Mead, where they were first found in 2007. From there, they migrated to Lake Havasu.

The natives of eastern Europe, and their cousins, zebra mussels, already have caused millions of dollars of damage in the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, they clog water intake pipes, foul hydroelectric operations and, particularly worrisome, voraciously eat the food that native species depend on for survival.

Officials at Lake Tahoe have battled fiercely to prevent an invasion of the alpine lake, where they could undo decades of hard work that has been done to protect its famous clarity. The mussels' favored method of transportation is on the private boats that often are moved from lake to lake. That's why boats entering Lake Tahoe have been subject to inspection and decontamination since 2008.

Inspections also are occurring at other area lakes.

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