



Invasive Species Threaten Alberta's Waterbodies
Pop-up K-9 Watercraft Inspection Station at Pigeon Lake

Pigeon Lake, Alberta, August 3, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On August 7th the Watercraft Inspections Decontamination Program will be at Mulhurst Bay boat launch at Pigeon Lake to run an official inspection station. Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA) will be onsite to raise awareness about the threat of aquatic invasive species in Alberta and the importance of inspection stations. It is a reminder for boater's to Clean, Drain, and Dry their watercraft when moving between waterbodies.

Aquatic invasive mussels and plants threaten the recreational and economic value of waterbodies in Alberta. Since 2018, the number of mussel-fouled boats detected in Alberta has doubled. Prevention programs like watercraft inspection stations are the cheapest and best defense against aquatic invasive species but stations have been reduced by nearly 80% in recent years. Catherine Peirce, PLWA Executive Director, says that "PLWA runs education campaigns to support the Alberta Government, but the efforts of small organizations such as ourselves will not be enough. Once established, aquatic invasive species are nearly impossible to eradicate and have costly impacts to the ecosystem and taxpayers." Studies estimate mitigation costs at \$80 - \$100 million annually. According to Peirce, "municipalities and partner groups across the province are speaking out in support of reinstating inspection stations."

PLWA encourages residents and media to see the Watercraft Inspections Decontamination Program in action on August 7. K-9 Hilo will be on duty during the inspection process, and there will be experts and local council to speak with the community and media about this issue in greater detail.

What to expect during a watercraft inspection station:

<https://www.alberta.ca/watercraft-inspections.aspx>

[Aquatic Invasive Species | PLWA.ca](https://www.plwa.ca)

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On-site Check-in for Media: PLWA will have a table set up for press to sign in.

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The Pigeon Lake Watershed Association is a charitable, not-for-profit environmental advocacy group made up of people who live, work and play in Pigeon Lake and its watershed. PLWA is responsible for promoting stewardship and community action as outlined in the Pigeon Lake Watershed Management Plan (the Plan). The Plan is a comprehensive, science-based strategy to coordinate action for the protection and improvement of Pigeon Lake, its shore lands and its watershed. The Plan was adopted in 2018 by all municipalities in the watershed and endorsed by the Chiefs of the Maskwacis Cree Four Nations, Pigeon Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce and other key stakeholders.

