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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eastern Sierra Mussel Prevention Collective to Launch Pilot Program This Labor Day Weekend to Protect Local Waters from Invasive Species

EASTERN SIERRA, Calif. - (August 26, 2025) – A new coalition of federal and state agencies, and local governments, the Eastern Sierra Mussel Prevention Collective, announced today that it will establish two watercraft inspection and decontamination (WID) stations over Labor Day weekend. This pilot project is a proactive effort to protect the region's pristine lakes and rivers from the rapidly spreading threat of aquatic invasive species (AIS), including the recently detected Golden Mussel.

The Eastern Sierra Mussel Prevention Collective is a joint effort between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the U.S. Forest Service, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), Southern California Edison, Mono County, and Inyo County.

The two WID stations will operate over the busy holiday weekend to intercept boaters and other watercraft users traveling into the Eastern Sierra. The stations will be located at:

- Mono Basin Visitor Center in Lee Vining.
- Diaz Lake, just south of Lone Pine.

The schedule for the stations will be as follows:

Friday, August 29 - Monday, September 1

7:00 am - 5:00 pm

The goal of this pilot program is to develop a framework and test logistics for WID stations in 2026 in not only these two locations but possibly others.

The primary purpose of this initiative is to prevent the spread of Golden Mussels and other AIS. The Golden Mussel, which was first detected in the U.S. in California in October 2024, poses a significant and evolving threat to the region. These mussels have rapid growth rates, can colonize a wide range of surfaces, and have been known to clog vital infrastructure, including

pipes, gates, and trash racks. Once established in a waterway, they are extremely difficult to eradicate and can devastate native ecosystems.

“This is an urgent and cooperative effort to safeguard the incredible natural resources that make the Eastern Sierra so special,” said CDFW Scientist Nick Buckmaster. “The Golden Mussel is a serious threat that could have devastating ecological and economic impacts. By working together, we can prevent its spread and protect our precious waters for generations to come.”

The Collective stresses the importance of “Clean, Drain, Dry” practices for all watercraft. Boaters, anglers, and other water users are urged to thoroughly clean their vessels and gear, drain all water from bilges and live wells, and allow equipment to completely dry before and after each use.

All watercraft coming to the Eastern Sierra over Labor Day weekend are strongly encouraged to stop at a WID station to receive a free inspection and, if necessary, a decontamination. This simple step can make a critical difference in protecting the Eastern Sierra from this new invasive threat.

For more information on the Golden Mussel and other aquatic invasive species, please visit the CDFW website at wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Species/Golden-Mussel.

About the Eastern Sierra Mussel Prevention Collective

The Eastern Sierra Mussel Prevention Collective is a multi-agency partnership dedicated to protecting the waters of the Eastern Sierra from aquatic invasive species. The collective includes the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Southern California Edison, Mono County, and Inyo County.

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