

**CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR VESSEL INSPECTION FOR QUAGGA MUSSELS  
LAKE CASITAS RECREATION AREA**

**Date Issued:** February 1, 2008 **Effective Date:** February 1, 2008

**Park Services Manager Approval:** B. Roney **Date:** 2/1/08

**1. Policy & Procedure**

The policy and procedures in this document will focus on staff expectations of inspection criteria of vessels entering Lake Casitas. This vessel inspections procedure is being implemented to ensure that invasive species do not enter Lake Casitas and impact treatment infrastructure and threaten the lake's ecosystem.

In order to be consistent with policies, procedures and training, the Lake Casitas Recreation Area Vessel Inspection Checklist is to be used on all vessel inspections. This document outlines a 20-step process that staff must complete before a vessel of any kind is authorized to enter Lake Casitas Recreation Area. The Vessel Inspection Checklist is a check off sheet outlining aspects of this policies and procedures document. Each step in the Vessel Inspection Checklist has specific expectations associated with it and should only be conducted by fully trained staff.

Lake Casitas Recreation Area staff will follow a zero tolerance policy for inspection criteria. If at anytime during an inspection a vessel fails a step on the Vessel Inspection Checklist, the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list for a minimum of twenty-eight (28) days.

The following outlines the parameters, which staff will be adhering to on the Vessel Inspection Checklist.

Employee is to write the state boating identification number and owner/operators name and date on the Vessel Inspection Checklist.

(a) Employee will check the Casitas generated database on vessels that have previously been denied access due to inspection issues. All vessels that have been denied access will remain on the list, it will be necessary for staff to check the date of the last denial of entry. If the denial date is within the last 28 days, then access will be denied until 28 days has passed.

(b) The customer is to fill out and sign the "Vessel Survey Form" in your presence. The customer is voluntarily signing the Vessel Survey under penalty of perjury that he/she has not been on any of the listed infected waters in the past 28 days. If the vessel has been to one of the infested lakes in the last 28 days it is to be denied access and placed on the quarantine list. After the customer signs the survey, he/she is given the bottom yellow carbon copy of the Vessel Survey form. If the customer has a yellow copy, note the date it was filled out on the form. If the date is within the last ten (10) days ask the customer if the vessel has been to any other lake in the last 28 days. If the boater states he/she has been to a lake known to be infected, the vessel is denied access and placed on the 28-day quarantine list. If the customer has a survey dated beyond the 10-day use period, then they are required to fill out a new survey form.

(c) Park staff has been directed to provide educational materials to the boating community and general public. Two handouts are given to each vessel operator/owner who enters the park. The first hand out is a Casitas generated flyer called “Take Action to Save Our Lakes from Quagga Mussels” and the second is a red and white “Don’t Move A Mussel” flyer made by the California Department of Fish and Game.

(d) Request the owner/operator of the vessel to open all compartments: The owner/operator is requested to open all compartments rather than Park Staff due to safety concerns. Compartments on vessels open differently for each style of vessel and can be locked or difficult to open.

(e) Inform the owner/operator that you will be completing an inspection and that Casitas has a zero tolerance policy for any water, debris, or growth found on any vessel or trailer due to possible transportation of invasive species by vessels and trailers. By informing the owner/operator of the policy he/she should not be surprised if the vessel is denied access to Lake Casitas.

(f) Before an employee is authorized to inspect vessels, he/she must read and understand all aspects of the Vessel Inspection Policies & Procedures, watch the “It Only Takes One” video and complete several Inspection Vessel Checklists under supervision of qualified full time park staff. Inspections will be completed in a safe and effective manner by utilizing stepping stools and flashlights when needed. Park staff must be aware of the danger of vessel inspections. Some of these issues include: slippery surfaces, sharp surfaces, hooks and lures on boats and rods. Park staff should also be mindful of personal property on the vessel. Graphite rods break easy if stepped on and cost several hundred dollars each.

(g) The vessel, trailer and vehicle inspection will include looking for water, debris or growth on or in any inspected area. Surfaces will also be touched to see if growth or mussels may be attached. The inspection should be completed the same way each time starting at one side of the vehicle and ending up at the other side. Checking the “Yes” box indicates that the inspected material is dry and clear of debris. Checking the “No” box indicates that there is water or debris and the vessel will be denied access for a minimum of 28 days and will be put on the Casitas quarantine list.

## 2. **Vessel Inspection Checklist**

The following list of items comes from the Vessel Inspection Checklist and states what park staff should be looking for:

(a) **Vehicle Rear:** The vehicle bumper, tailgate or spare tire may have mud, grass, weeds or other debris on it. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then this vehicle and vessel being towed will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(b) **Trailer Structure, Railings and Spare Tire:** The trailer, railings and spare tire may have mud, grass, weeds, debris or standing water. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then this vehicle and vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(c) **Vessel Hull:** The vessel hull should be inspected for growth and debris. Growth may be visible if it has recently come from being in the water for an extended period of time. Small mussels attached to a boat can feel like sandpaper or sesame seeds. If a vessel’s hull has any type of

growth or debris, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(d) **Transom:** The transom is at the back of the vessel that the engine is attached to. The transom may have several items of importance to inspection that mussels can attach to including the out drive, trim tabs, transducers, bilge plug area and through hull fittings. Check the transom to make sure the surface is smooth and visibly clear of all debris and growth. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(e) **Outdrive:** The outdrive is attached to the transom on stern drive vessels and the lower unit on outboard vessels. It has intricate parts that make it easy for mussels to attach, hide and grow. The inspector should feel and look for any signs of growth, debris or texture of sandpaper. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(f) **Propeller/Shafts:** Mussels can attach and live on or around where the propeller attaches to the lower unit of drive shaft. Mussels can also attach to the shaft or connecting points of the vessel. These can be hard to see and should be inspected with a flashlight to verify if any mussels, debris or water is present. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(g) **Trim Tabs:** Trim tabs are located on the lower portion of the transom and are usually metal plates that help stabilize the vessel while underway. The inspector should feel the corners, edges and look on the underside of the trim tabs for debris and growth. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(h) **Transducers:** These are located on the transom or bottom of the hull near the stern of the vessel. They are used in conjunction with a computer to determine depth, speed and water temperature. Growth or debris can appear on them. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(i) **Bilge Plug:** If the bilge plug is pulled when the vessel arrives at the lake, there should be no fluid or debris coming from it. By carefully putting your finger in the plug hole, it can be determined if debris is blocking water from exiting. If the bilge plug is not pulled, have the owner operator pull the plug. If water exits, place the plug back it to prevent it from coming out. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(j) **Through Hull Fittings:** Through hull fitting in all boats have the potential to store mussels in the right conditions. To check these fittings, look with a flashlight inside them and feel for irregularities. If water or debris is observed or felt, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(k) **Bait Tank/Live Well/Compartments:** Bait tanks, live wells and compartments should be dry and clear of all water and debris. Some compartments do not drain completely due to the way they are manufactured. Any debris in compartments is not acceptable. Common debris often found includes; fish scales, weeds, small pebbles and trash. If it does have positive signs of the previous,

then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(l) **Bilge:** The bilge is at the bottom of the inside stern of the vessel. It may not be visible in all boats due to various boat designs. The bilge should be clean from all water and debris. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(m) **Anchor/Fenders and Line:** Anchors can have mud or debris on them. If an anchor, fender and lines attached have been in infested water for an extended period of time then mussels and debris can attach. Check these items for mud, growth and debris. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

(n) **Trolling Motor:** Trolling motors can pick up plants and debris while being used and must be inspected. Check these items for mud, growth and debris. If it does have positive signs of the previous, then the vessel will be placed on the quarantine list and denied access for a minimum of 28 days.

Denying a customer access to his/her favorite fishing lake can be very frustrating for both customer and staff. The following statement has been developed to help staff inform the customer of the results of his/her vessel's failure of the inspection.

“Your vessel has not cleared the inspection due to water and/or debris in one or more areas. Your vessel will not be allowed on Lake Casitas for a minimum of 28 days and will be placed on a vessel quarantine list as of today. This zero tolerance policy has been established to protect the reservoir water quality, water distribution system and its ecosystem. Thank you for your cooperation.”

The Vessel Inspection Procedures, Vessel Inspection Checklist, Vessel Survey Forms and Casitas handouts have been formatted to ensure proper inspections of vessels, trailers and vehicles to prevent Lake Casitas from becoming infested with invasive species. All documents pertaining to the Vessel Inspection Procedures are subject to change due to updated policies and recent biological information. Should you encounter a customer who becomes highly agitated or disruptive during or after the inspection, please request that this customer pull aside, and seek additional support from full time staff.

### **List of Infected Lakes & Waters**

#### **Rivers**

American  
Calaveras, Lower  
Colorado  
Mokelaume, Lower  
Napa  
Owens  
San Lorenzo

#### **Lakes**

Dixon  
Hayfield  
Havasu  
Matthews  
Mead  
Miramar  
Mohave

#### **Lakes**

Mono  
Murray  
Natoma  
Otay, Lower  
Pleasant  
Powell  
Skinner

#### **Reservoirs**

Copper Basin  
San Justo  
San Vincente  
**Other**  
Central Arizona  
Project Canal  
Grass Bay  
Hollister Area  
Parker Dam Area  
Putah Creek

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## LAKE CASITAS RECREATION AREA - VESSEL INSPECTION CHECKLIST

CF #: \_\_\_\_\_ Owner/Operator (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_

- Computer check to see if vessel has been previously denied entry
- Completed Vessel Survey Form. Have owner/operator complete and sign form. If owner/operator has checked any lakes on the form, deny entry to the vessel.
- Informational handouts "Take Action to Save Our Lakes" and "Don't Move a Mussel" flyers given.
- Request vessel owner to open all compartments and have the bilge plug pulled.
- Inform owner/operator that Casitas has a no tolerance policy for any water, debris or growth found on any vessel due to possible transportation of invasive species by vessels and trailers.

Vessel Inspection: Check for **WATER, DEBRIS** or **GROWTH** and check all smooth surfaces for "SANDPAPER" feel.

Clear of Water, Debris and/or Growth: Check appropriate box below.

**Yes No**

- Vehicle rear
  - Trailer structure, railings, spare tire
  - Vessel hull
  - Transom
  - Outdrive
  - Prop/shafts (propeller on the engine)
  - Trim tabs (located on back of hull near engine. Not all vessels have them)
  - Transducers
  - Bilge plug pulled – no fluid or debris
  - Through hull fittings
  - Bait tank/live wells/compartments
  - Bilge (may not be visible)
  - Anchor/fenders and line
  - Trolling Motor
- Your vessel has not cleared the inspection due to water and or debris in one or more areas. Your vessel will not be allowed on Lake Casitas for a minimum of 28 days and will be placed on a vessel quarantine list as of today. This zero tolerance has been established to ensure the safety of Lake Casitas water quality and its ecosystem. Thank you for understanding in this matter.
- OK to enter Lake Casitas Recreation Area, thank you for your cooperation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff (PRINT NAME)