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Joint News Release For Immediate Release

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New Zebra Mussel Prevention

Requirements on Lake Powell

Page, AZ – In response to the continued and growing threat of the introduction of quagga and zebra mussels at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, new requirements for Lake Powell boaters will be in effect during the main boating season of 2009. Effective June 29, 2009, self-certification of watercraft will no longer be an option at all major launch ramps and screening for the invasive mussels by trained personnel will be mandatory for all vessels. Trained personnel will be available daily for screening from 4:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (5:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Savings Time) at Wahweap, including Stateline, Lone Rock Beach, and Bullfrog, including Stanton Creek. The screening hours for Antelope Point and Hall's Crossing will be more restricted than the other large marinas, but will cover core hours during the busiest times of the day. Hours will be extended as staffing allows. Launching will be prohibited outside of these hours.

Through this interagency effort, boaters arriving to Lake Powell will be required to be screened by National Park Service (NPS) personnel or designated state and concessions employees prior to launching. Boat screening takes less than a minute and involves asking questions of boaters as they enter the recreation area to identify potential high-risk boats. High-risk boats will be fully inspected and, if necessary, decontaminated by trained personnel. Decontamination is available at each marina. Additional screening hours will be available during the busy holiday weekends to accommodate the increase in visitation. Boaters will be allowed to take boats off the water at any time.

These increased measures are intended to prevent the unintentional introduction of quagga and zebra mussels into the waters of Lake Powell. "We want to make it as easy as possible for visitors to enjoy Lake Powell without compromising the effort to keep the lake mussel free," said Superintendent Stan Austin. "Our aim is the same as those of boaters, that is to keep Lake Powell free from invasive mussels. Everyone understands what is at risk and the support of watercraft users has been overwhelmingly positive."

At Hite and remote launching sites only, visitors will still be allowed to meet the Mussel Free Certificate requirement using the self-certification option.

Self-certification packets are available on the park's website. "Lake Powell has many remote launching sites and it is impossible to staff them all. We will still rely upon signs to educate the visitors of the importance of following the self-certification program requirements in these remote areas and to wait to launch until your boat has been inspected if necessary," Austin said.

Mussel invasions may significantly alter aquatic ecosystems. A quagga or zebra mussel presence in Lake Powell will complicate recovery and preservation efforts for aquatic species listed under the Endangered Species Act and may increase the number of endangered and threatened species throughout western waters.

"Protecting our western waters from a mussel invasion will require the assistance of recreationists, conservationists, and government agencies," said Benjamin Tuggle, Regional Director for the Southwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Preventative measures like those being implemented at Lake Powell are an important step in protecting native aquatic species from the severe impacts of a mussel invasion."

The monitoring of boats arriving at Lake Powell will be a collaborative and ongoing effort among the partner agencies and restrictions may be modified as the threat of infestation is monitored. Keeping Lake Powell mussel-free is essential to maintaining the economic and ecological vitality of the resource and surrounding communities and region.

Boaters are encouraged to continue to help stop the spread of invasive mussels by making sure their vessels and boating equipment are cleaned, drained, and completely dry before moving to a new body of water. In addition, boats that are moved from infested waters to non-infested waters need to be properly decontaminated prior to launching. We ask for your assistance in this effort by calling (928) 608-6301, or 1-800-582-4351 if you see anyone launching outside the designated hours listed above.

"Reclamation is committed to working hand-in-hand with the National Park Service to reduce the potential for or prevent quagga or zebra mussels from being introduced into Lake Powell," said Larry Walkoviak, Regional Director of Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region. "Should these invasive mussels become established in Lake Powell or at Glen Canyon Dam, they could impact water delivery and power generating infrastructure and result in costly treatment or cleaning measures."

For additional information on the new launching restrictions at Lake Powell visit our website at www.nps.gov/glca. Information on the impact of invasive mussels can be found at www.ProtectYourWaters.net and www.100thMeridian.org.