Aquatic invaders! (Personally, I prefer hitchhikers. It's nicer.)

Aug. 19, 2009 | By Molly Peterson

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The LA Times today reports on a proliferation of Asian clams in Lake Tahoe. The clams have been around for seven years, at least; it's in the last couple that they're really taking off. Some scientists fear they will make the lake more hospitable to other invasives, like the quagga and zebra mussels that are all over the Great Lakes, much of the west, and even in the Colorado River system.

A couple of years ago, I did a three part series on aquatic invasive species in southern California.

Here's one of our invaders:

Quagga mussels sampled from Metropolitan Water District facility near the California-Nevada border. Full grown, they'll be thumbnail size; at this point, they're like really swollen poppy seeds. MWD reports success with its efforts to control quaggas. But their spread remains a concern. I was in the eastern Sierra several times so far this year, and saw inspection stations for quaggas, and boats with inspection stickers as the state now requires. Still, all it takes is one pair of waders, one boat, one person. In the sea, one piece of plastic trash that cut loose from the gyre and lands where it didn't come from.

The Tahoe story is interesting because we're seeing the marine invasive problems of the San Francisco Bay Area - meeting with the fears of the marine invasive fears of southern California. It's also interesting because it's very difficult to get anyone to care about invasives unless they might cost someone money. Here I'm not just talking about my cantankerous editor Nick Roman.

Since I reported that series, the state's stepped up efforts to help local authorities find grant money - particularly for invasive plants, insofar as they impact agriculture. Discussions about potentially national or international marine issues like ballast water management are underway. But so's the financial apocalypse. And health care. And. And. And.

Still, the state did announce an Invasive Species Council at the Tulare World Ag Expo this year. 5 Agency heads are on it; their goal is to get stuff done without duplicating efforts and wasting what money they have. We'll watch and see if it goes anywhere.

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STAFF PICK
Pamela Gurstein

Stanley's Restaurant
13817 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks

Whenever asked what is a really good restaurant in the valley, I always say "Stanley's." I have been going there since the time they opened, which is about 25 years. When they first started they were known for their Chinese Chicken Salad, but grew relatively fast to have a menu that has everything on it, and is very reasonably priced. The portions are huge and you will never walk out of there hungry.

There is something there for everyone. The service is as good as their food. The ambience of the whole restaurant is very relaxing and the art work on the walls, which is forever changing, is incredible. I am a fan for life! Try it, you'll like it!

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