

NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES ACT COULD HELP OKLAHOMA

By Gerry Cherry
Staff Writer

■(GIT) When President Clinton signed HR4283, last week, he signed into law the National Invasive Species Act of 1996, aimed at "controlling the unintentional introduction and spread of invasive species, such as the zebra mussel, throughout the waters of our nation." Clinton added, "HR4283 will establish a national voluntary ballast water management program to reduce the threat of additional pest species entering our waters." The bill includes provisions to support research and demonstrate new technologies for combating aquatic nuisance species.

The zebra mussel has made its way into Oklahoma from its introduction into the Great Lakes. Ballast water dumped from freighters introduced the tiny mussel into an alien environment with no natural predators.

Zebra mussels have been found inside the locks at both Robert S. Kerr and Webbers Falls along the McClellan-Kerr Navigation System, and may already occur in other Oklahoma waters.

The mussel is thumbnail-size, with elon-

gated, D-shaped, thin shells striped in a zebra-like pattern. They live up to five years. Thread-like filaments attach the mussel to boat hulls, reefs, navigational buoys and other submerged objects. Females produce from 30,000 to 100,000 eggs per season. Due to their high reproductive rate and the limited number of natural predators, zebra mussels can populate a body of water in two or three years, clustering together with hundreds of thousands per square meter.

More than 70 percent of U.S. power plants are expected to be affected by the year 2000. High water flow rates inside pipes provide a constant source of food for the mussels, which cluster in mats on top of each other, lining the inside of intake structures and clogging pipes. Larger facilities in the Great Lakes spend hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to eradicate the Zebra mussel.

Boaters beware. The mussels attach themselves to, and grow within, water intakes of both inboard and outboard motors, and attach themselves to boat hulls. If a boat hull feels grainy or gritty, it might be covered with young zebra mussels, which are about .02 millimeters long.

As prevention, boats should not be left in the water for extended periods of time. Mussels can be transported inside bilges, engine cooling systems, minnow buckets, live wells and anywhere water is trapped.

Wash the boat with hot water (at least 140 degrees F.) and a 10 percent solution of chlorine bleach and water to prevent the spread of mussels. Keep live wells drained and let the boat dry for at least a week, if possible, before putting it into another waterway.

A task force has been formed in Oklahoma to address the problem. The task force includes representatives from the Wildlife Department, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Biological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Oklahoma waterways were monitored throughout the summer by task force agencies to find out how far the zebra mussel has spread.

"In the field of observation, chance favours the prepared mind."

Louis Pasteur

STATE BACKS NEW VENTURE FUND

From Okla. Dept. of Commerce

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Michael A. Tharp, president, Oklahoma Capital Investment Board, on Monday announced that the Oklahoma Capital Formation Corporation has made an investment in Chisholm Private Capital Partners, L.P., an Oklahoma based venture capital fund with offices in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Chisholm invests in both new and existing firms with strong management teams who can use additional capital to create significant increases in value. Chisholm works closely with management and co-investors to help companies finance transitions from one stage of development to another. Chisholm invests in a wide variety of industries including manufacturing, software, telecommunications services and health care. The primary focus is Oklahoma and the contiguous states.

The fund recently held its first closing at \$12.5 million of total committed capital. The Oklahoma Capital Formation Corporation committed to \$3.15 million at the first close. C. James Bode, John B. Frick and Joe D. Tippens are the general partners of the fund and have committed \$1 million of their personal capital to the fund.

Bode stated that the Oklahoma Capital Investment Board has made it possible for Chisholm Private Capital Partners, L.P. to actively address the equity capital needs of small, high growth Oklahoma companies.

Bode, Tippens and Frick also have a contract to manage ML Oklahoma Venture Partners, L.P., formed in 1989 with capital of \$10.3 million. "This fund will build upon the prior investment success of each of the general partners by utilizing their respective unique networks of deal sources. We are particularly proud of our successful efforts to help transfer technology from Oklahoma universities and research organizations to local companies," said Tippens, who serves on the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals and the Oklahoma Private Enterprise Forum.

Michael Mitchelson, chairperson of the Oklahoma Capital Investment Board, stated that this group of general partners with two offices in the state should provide Oklahoma entrepreneurs with access to growth capital.

Frick said, "We are looking for those firms with high growth potential where we, as investors, can add value as well as supply capital so that the firms and our investors achieve strong long term capital gains."

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ers when he won his party's nomination in the race by defeating state Rep. Don McCorkell. Inhofe, on the other hand, easily defeated a challenge to the Republican nomination by Dan Lowe.

Inhofe severely outpaced Boren, who vowed not to accept any political action committee money, in the fund-raising arena, but that has not prevented the Tahlequah professor from launching a series of last minute television and radio ads aimed at discrediting his opponent, particularly over comments made during the Oklahoma City bombing recovery effort. Inhofe has been quick to label Boren a liberal and to attack him for some of his humorous writings.

Like in the Third District, the voters hold the key to the race and the number of voters who cross party lines — and it's almost certain voters from both parties will do so — will ultimately determine the outcome.

Also notably is the fact that there are three other candidates in the race — independents Bill Maguire and Chris Nelbacek, of the Natural Law Party, and Libertarian Agnes Marie Regier. While none is considered a real contender in the race, all of the candidates will likely draw votes from those disenchanted with the race in general.