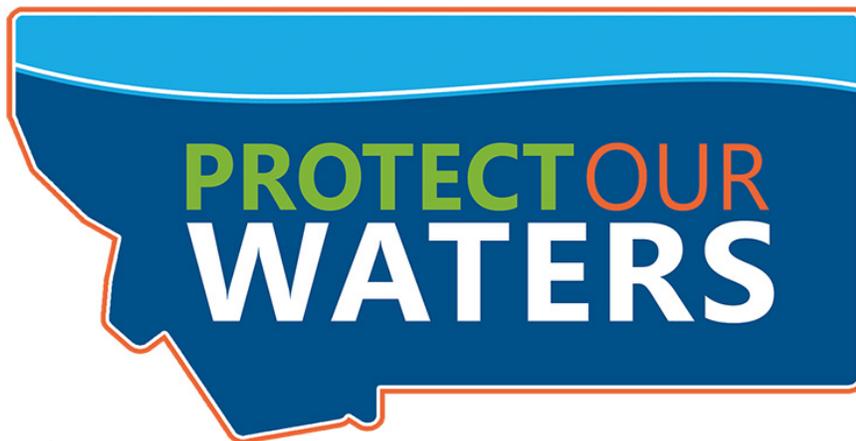


MONTANA AIS SUMMIT

Partner Updates



December 4-5, 2019
Carroll College – Helena

MONTANA **FWP**

Big Horn Conservation District

Maria Hopkins

District Manager

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station

Location: Garrison Stoker Resort on Hwy 313, 7 miles South of Saint Xavier, MT and 12 miles North of Fort Smith, MT

Year began doing this activity: 2019

Highlights: This year the Saint Xavier Station ran from July 18th to October 26th. The station's hours were Thursday to Saturday, 7 am to 7 pm. The Big Horn Conservation District hired five part-time inspectors and one on-call inspector. The inspectors did a wonderful job checking watercrafts and educating the boaters.

Inspected 1,320 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020: In 2020 the Saint Xavier Station hopes to run 7 days a week with 12-hour days. The Big Horn Conservation District will re-hire any 2019 staff that want to return and hire additional staff to cover the increased 2020 operating hours. In addition, the BHCD will focus on educating local boaters on the importance of check-stations and what they can do for a fast inspection.

Bureau of Reclamation

Jacob Bradford
Natural Resource Specialist
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The Bureau of Reclamation has provided approximately \$4 million dollars to support Zebra/Quagga mussel management activities across the West since 2017, as part of the Department of Interior's initiative to keep invasive dreissenid mussels out of the Columbia and Missouri River Basins and contain invasive mussels in the lower Colorado River.

Through this initiative and Reclamation's implementation of the Fiscal Year 2019 Mussels Spend Plan, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks watercraft inspection stations at Lake Elwell (Tiber Reservoir) have been funded. Reclamation also continues to conduct its own early detection and monitoring activities through veliger sampling for Zebra/Quagga mussels throughout its reservoirs in Montana including:

- Clark Canyon Reservoir – Dillon, MT
- Nelson Reservoir – Malta, MT
- Fresno Reservoir – Havre, MT
- Tiber Reservoir – Chester, MT
- Canyon Ferry Lake – Helena, MT
- Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir – Helena, MT
- Bighorn Lake – Fort Smith, MT

Through the year 2020, Reclamation's Fiscal Year 2020 Spend Plan will be implemented to support various mussel management activities across the West, as well as continued early detection/monitoring efforts.

Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team (CEMIST)

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AIS activity: Education/Outreach

Location: Along the Yellowstone River and Rosebud County

Year began doing this activity: 2018

Highlights: I compiled a contact list of anyone who may be an agricultural stakeholder along the Yellowstone

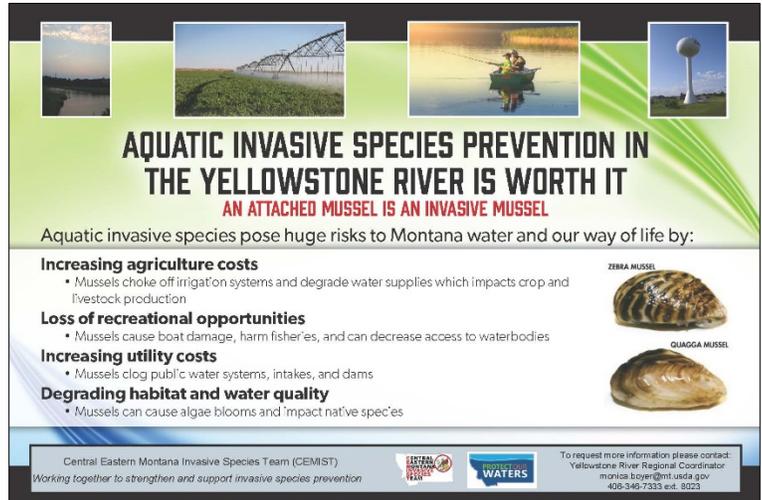
River. I added each county department and municipal department along the river basin; the president and ditch rider from each irrigation district along the river's reach; as well as the industrial users. I created and mailed an AIS impact postcard to this list. The postcard was intended to bring attention to the importance of preventing AIS in the Yellowstone River. The postcard was also mailed out to the entirety of Rosebud, Treasure, and Big Horn Counties mailing lists as well as to the offices of our partnering agencies.

I put together CEMIST swag packets for the participants of a catfish fishing tournament which included a floating keychain, an inspection station map, and the Protect Our Waters Boater rack card encompassed in a waterproof sleeve.

I hosted an Invasive Mussel Irrigator Workshop along with the Musselshell Watershed Coalition (MWC) in Huntley at the Irrigator's Museum which featured speaker Larry Pennington. Larry is an irrigator from Idaho who has studied invasive species extensively.

I presented AIS information at a Tree and Garden Workshop, put an educational table up at our county fair and have been in talks with the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council (YRCDC) about setting up artificial substrate monitoring stations along the river.

Plans/priorities for 2020: My plans for the upcoming year include mailing out the impact postcard to everyone along all of my rivers as well as creating a postcard that is river specific to the Big Horn, Powder, and Tongue Rivers. I plan to create awareness packets for multiple fishing tournaments hosted on the rivers and in the reservoirs (Tongue River and Yellowtail) that are part of my region. I also plan on doing an AIS station at our county's 6th grade Conservation Days and setting up another educational booth at our county fair. I will present AIS information at various workshops hosted by our conservation district and continue to do social media outreach as well. I also plan on hosting another irrigator workshop in my area along with anything thing else that may come along.



Clearwater Resource Council

Joann Wallenburn

Aquatics Program Director (retired)

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In this 2019 field season, the Clearwater Resource Council (CRC) conducted early detection monitoring on the 6 highest risk lakes in the Clearwater Chain-of-Lakes in Missoula County. The lakes that were monitored are Lake Alva (4 sites), Lake Inez (6 sites), Seeley Lake (9 sites), Salmon Lake (9 sites), Big Sky Lake (3 sites), and Placid Lake (4 sites for 2 rounds, 7 sites for 2 rounds). All lakes were sampled 4 times on a roughly two-week schedule between mid-July and mid-September. A total of 146 plankton tow net samples were collected, preserved, and sent to the FWP lab in Helena for veliger detection by cross-polar light microscopy. All samples were negative.

CRC began monitoring for Dreissenid mussels in 2010, recognizing its 10th consecutive year of monitoring in 2019. Early monitoring activities consisted of deploying artificial substrate traps (PVC pipe on a rope) on docks around several of the lakes. Plankton tow nets were introduced in 2011.

CRC's monitoring program is a Citizen Science initiative. On all lakes, volunteers provide a boat and driver. On Big Sky, Placid, and Seeley, a second volunteer takes the tows and processes the samples. On Salmon, Inez, and Alva, CRC's Big Sky Watershed Corps member went out with the boat and driver and conducted the sampling activities.

In 2019, CRC engaged its first Big Sky Watershed Corps member. This Big Sky Watershed Corps member recruited 2 new volunteers on Placid Lake, and 1 new volunteer on Lake Inez. Volunteers are always welcome!

CRC partnered with Swan Valley Connections and Blackfoot Challenge in 2017 to help implement similar programs. In 2017, this partnership collected over 20% of all samples collected statewide! CRC continues to annually review procedures and revise as needed and to develop budgets for the three programs.

In 2020, CRC hopes to resume sampling 6 rounds rather than just 4 as was funded this year. CRC is entirely dependent on grant funding which was reduced in 2018 and again in 2019. With the new grant funding program going forward, we'll have to see how that affects the three-way partnership and what funding is made available.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Erik Hanson

AIS Coordinator

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AIS activity:

Watercraft Inspection: CSKT operated Watercraft Inspection Stations at Plains, MT and Ravalli, MT in collaboration with MT FWP. MT FWP provided funds and support for the Plains station and daytime hours at Ravalli. Support of the inspection program also came from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Glacier National Park. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) funded nighttime operation at Ravalli, which operated 24 hour a day, seven days a week from May 15th to September 15th. Many high-risk watercraft were intercepted at night. The BOR also funded 50 hours a week of dedicated enforcement, which combined with local law enforcement support resulted in over 90% of motorized drive-bys intercepted and inspected. The 24-hour operation and enforcement ensured that over 97% of watercraft traffic that traveled on Highway 93 were inspected. Watercraft inspectors were trained to conduct an inspection of high-risk watercraft, regardless of previous inspection, which resulted in the detection of live mussels on a watercraft that had not been detected at two other inspection stations.

Education/Outreach: Conducted the annual mussel walk in collaboration with the Flathead Biological Station and the Flathead Lakers. Over 300 middle school students were educated on AIS. Funded a geo-fenced social media campaign through KPAX that provided millions of impressions per month.

Location: Flathead Basin

Year began doing this activity: 2017

Highlights:

Intercepted and decontaminated multiple high-risk watercraft that had not been previously decontaminated. Found zebra/quagga mussels on 4 vessels, 3 of which had been initially detected and partially cleaned at other inspection stations. Operated 24 hours a day.

Started an online website www.mtaisinspectionreview.org that allows boaters to provide feedback on their watercraft inspection

Plans/priorities for 2020:

Operate inspection stations at Ravalli and Plains. Explore options to implement 24 hour a day operations on Highway 2 near Glacier National Park.

Incentivize boaters to use www.mtaisinspectionreview.org and build it as an app.

DNRC

Stephanie Criswell

AIS Grant Manager, MISC Coordinator

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AIS activity: DNRC provides AIS grants for locally led projects that prevent and control AIS. MISC is a statewide partnership working to protect Montana's economy, natural resources, and public health through a coordinated approach to combat invasive species

Location: statewide

Year began doing this activity: 2011

Highlights: DNRC has awarded 104 grants totaling just under \$2 million dollars. These grants were matched with an additional \$3 million from federal, state, local and private sources. Reports for each project plus awards and program reports can be found using the following links:

Program reports and awards:

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/resource-development/aquatic-invasive-species>

Project reports:

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/resource-development/aquatic-invasive-species/ais-funded-projects>

MISC completed Montana's Framework for Invasive Species in 2016. Since then, the Council has been implementing the objectives within the plan. MISC has also hosted two science advisory panels to answer scientific questions about invasive species. For more information about MISC's accomplishments visit misc.mt.gov.



Science Advisory Panel for eDNA

Flathead Lake Biological Station - CSKT - Crown Managers Partnership

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AIS activity: Early Detection and Monitoring

AIS activity: Flathead Lake

Year began doing activity: 2016

Highlights: Sponsored in part by a Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation AIS grant, the Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS) monitored 31 sites on Flathead Lake three times a year to early detect for invasive mussels starting in the fall 2016. Monitoring sites were accessed from both shoreline and boat, with each site strategically selected around high risk areas such as docks, marinas, and bays. Partnership with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) and Big Sky Watershed Corps was essential to the success of such a large monitoring project – subsequently the fall 2019 marked the start of the 4th year in coordinated partnership with CSKT!

At each site, about 2,000 gallons of water was filtered using a plankton net and concentrated material was placed into a 50 ml tube. The sample was then split 50/50 - half of the sample went to the Montana Conservation Genetics Lab (University of Montana) to be analyzed for dreissenid mussel eDNA, while the other half of the sample was sent to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' microscopy lab to test for mussel larvae. After the completion of the third and final round of sampling in October, FLBS will have collected 504 samples from Flathead Lake during the 2019 field season alone.

In addition to early detection and monitoring, the group also provided outreach to the general public during their trips. This year over 40 individuals were reached through these opportunities, expanding the Clean, Drain, and Dry campaign to those who would not otherwise be reached. On top of that, another 7 students and professionals received detailed hands on plankton tow training, lending yet more sets of eyes to the prevention and spread of AIS.

Plans/priorities of 2020: FLBS plans to continue monitoring Flathead Lake for invasive mussels in 2020, but after learning more about aquatic plant and invertebrate identification at an AIS workshop training (sponsored by the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission, hosted by FLBS and the Whitefish Lake Institute), FLBS plans to expand monitoring for aquatic invasive plants and invertebrates during their future mussel work. And in order to effectively combat the spread of AIS, the latest technology must be implemented. Next season FLBS also hopes to utilize live stream video via a remotely operated underwater vehicle to help collect samples and identify plants from harder to reach habitats around Flathead Lake.

Flathead Lake Biological Station - CSKT - Crown Managers Partnership

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Website: <https://flbs.umt.edu/newflbs>

AIS activity: Education/Outreach – CSKT Mussel Walk

Location: Flathead Valley (Polson, Bigfork, Somers, Whitefish)

Year began doing this activity: 2017

Highlights: Our lakes, rivers, and streams benefit greatly when surrounding human communities serve as stewards. Education and outreach has the ability to foster community advocacy and care, making it a critical component in the fight against the spread of aquatic invasive species. Furthermore, young enthusiastic learners are able to not only share newfound knowledge with parents and friends - effecting change in real time - but they are also the foundation for the future.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) recognized that reaching students throughout the Flathead and Mission Valleys was an essential step in AIS prevention. During the past three years, the Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS) in conjunction with the Crown Managers Partnership and Big Sky Watershed Corps, and the Flathead Lakers have worked with CSKT to plan and implement an annual CSKT Mussel Walk event for middle school students along the shores of Flathead Lake. In 2019, FLBS also received funding from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to develop comprehensive “Be AIS Aware” teaching material geared towards middle school students throughout Northwest Montana. FLBS worked with the Flathead Lakers to design and pilot the AIS lessons in four middle schools (Polson, Somers, Bigfork, and Whitefish). CSKT also helped to pilot one of the AIS lessons in three other schools on the Flathead Reservation (Dixon School, Ronan Middle School and Nkwusm). The individual lessons connected students to AIS learning through a variety of mediums: inquiry activity stations, interactive maps, creative writing explorations, and hands-on food web building. For each pilot, the 3-4 days of classroom-based learning culminated in a final outdoor event - the CSKT Mussel Walk. As a result, we helped to expand the CSKT Mussel Walk this year from one event at two locations to four separate events at four separate locations in the region.

In 2019, a total of 429 students were reached, which makes for a large cohort of newly empowered future leaders throughout the valley - ready to take ownership and responsibility for the care of their local water bodies.

Plans/priorities for 2020: A major priority for the Flathead Lake Aquatic Research and Education (FLARE) Program at FLBS is to get every middle school in the Flathead and Mission Valleys to use the new Be AIS Aware lessons each year. We plan to reach out to all middle school teachers in the region to make them aware of the new lessons and to provide assistance in implementation of the lessons in their classrooms. FLBS has produced two Be AIS Aware teaching trunks that will be available for classrooms in the Flathead and Mission Valleys and a third trunk that will be available for classrooms in or near Helena. All of the Be AIS Aware teaching materials are also available for download on our website <https://flbs.umt.edu/newflbs/outreach/k-12-education/teaching-material/>.

The Flathead Lake Biological Station and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes would like to continue to educate middle school students at the CSKT Mussel Walk events in 2020. Since implementing the in class Be AIS Aware lessons prior to the outdoor CSKT Mussel Walk event was so successful, we would like to coordinate our efforts to continue to make this possible for schools in the area. By doing so, we hope to continue to build a community of stewards that actively take responsibility for protecting Northwest Montana from aquatic invasive species. By providing online access to the materials, we hope to expand our reach to areas of central and eastern Montana. Lastly, we plan to expand the Be AIS Aware teaching trunk to incorporate activities and lessons used during the mussel walk so that teachers in other areas of the state can create a mussel walk for their students as well.

Flathead National Forest

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AIS activity: Swan River valley - Roving Boat Inspector

Location: Swan Lake, Holland Lake, Lindbergh Lake,
Van Lake

Year began doing this activity: 2011

Swan River Valley - Roving Boat Inspection



Highlights: Thousands of boats inspected with friendly visit during launch for the past 8 years. Normally 500+ watercraft per year. 2 Dreissenid fouled boats intercepted in 2012.

From 2011 to 2019, the Flathead National Forest worked collaboratively to fund a “Roving Boat Inspector” in the Swan River valley. The goal was a friendly inspection/education just before launching watercraft that did not inconvenience the user. The inspector worked weekends and traveled an unannounced schedule between Swan Lake, Lindbergh Lake, Holland Lake and Van Lake. All four lakes were visited but the primary focus was Swan Lake, which was the busiest. Funding primarily came from Southwest Crown Collaborative (a Forest Service initiative) that sought landscape restoration in the Swan River valley. Typically the Forest Service funded the position while our partners provided hiring and supervision. The program evolved over time and went through three phases.

The initial phase was a growing period and lasted from 2011 to 2013. The Forest Service partnered with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 1. The boat inspector(s) was a FWP temporary employee, received local training, used shared agency equipment and regularly met with dual agency biologists. Due to safety concerns, at first two inspectors worked as a pair but later it was felt working solo was acceptable. During this period, strong emphasis was given to education and the inspector(s) handed out many brochures and explained the threat of Dreissenid mussels. At first, many boaters were unfamiliar with any AIS and inspections were slow. The inspector(s) also visited three primary access points on the Swan River to interact with drift boats and anglers regarding whirling disease and mudsnails, but visitor use was so sparse, this was discontinued after two years. During this period about 3 boats per year were intercepted with heavy vegetation fouling. In 2012, two boats were intercepted with (dead) adult Dreissenid mussels at the Swan Lake boat launch. Both of these boats were intercepted the same day, and these were the only Dreissenid infested boats encountered over the entire 8-year program.

As Montana FWP consolidated and strengthened the AIS program, the partnership shifted from Region 1 to Helena. From 2014 to 2015, the inspector remained a FWP employee and continued to primarily inspect boats at four lakes in the Swan River Valley. The program matured and relatively little interaction was needed with the Forest Service. Typically the inspector intercepted 1 or 2 vegetation fouled boats per year. During days when the inspector was stationed at Swan Lake boat ramp, all south-bound traveling watercraft were required to stop. This was the only period with a mandatory boat inspection. During this timeframe, the Swan Lakers (a local homeowners group) received training from FWP and began their own inspections at the Swan Lake boat ramp one day a week in order to increase coverage.

Montana FWP shifted focus to mandatory boat inspection stations so the final phase of 2016 to 2019 involved partnership with Missoula County Weed District. The Weed District sent their employee to FWP training and served as a roving inspector, although did not require mandatory stops to traveling watercraft. Emphasis remained on the four Swan River valley lakes although some flexibility was given to assist with busy days at Clearwater station or occasional inspection at nearby Echo Lake. The Swan Lakers increased their own inspections to two days per week at Swan Lake boat ramp. The number of fouled boats decreased and no failed watercraft inspections took place in 2018 or 2019.

Funding has ceased for the Southwest Crown Collaborative. The Swan Rover inspector program was a successful program. The roving inspector greatly increased public education and helped slow the spread of AIS.

Plans/priorities for 2020: None. Funding will cease in 2020 but maybe it has run its course anyway.

Flathead National Forest

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AIS activity: Monitoring/ Early Detection

Location: Various lakes on Flathead National Forest with boat access (ranging from 4 to 8 annually)

Year began doing this activity: 2012

Flathead National Forest-using eDNA for early detection of AIS



Highlights: Demonstrated that using eDNA is a feasible monitoring tool. No AIS detected. From 2012 to 2019, the Flathead National Forest worked collaboratively to utilize Environmental DNA (eDNA) samples for early detection of AIS. The goal of using eDNA was to complement and enhance other AIS monitoring conducted, such as Dreissenid mussel veliger sampling. The target detections were zebra mussel, quagga mussel, Eurasian watermilfoil and (starting in 2017) curlyleaf pondweed. These four species were selected because of their high potential for invasion on Flathead National Forest, their high ecological cost if not contained quickly, and their difficulty to detect with conventional sampling

While it is obviously important to have surveillance for AIS at all waterbodies, the Flathead National Forest was particularly concerned with those lakes with public boat ramps provided on their system lands. Lakes were further prioritized by perceived amount of motorized boat use. During this period, sampled lakes included Swan Lake, Lindbergh Lake, Holland Lake, Van Lake, Hungry Horse Reservoir, Tally Lake, Ashley Lake, and Upper Stillwater Lake. Funding was chaotic and not every lake was sampled every year.

Collections were taken independently of any other AIS sampling by partners. Protocols involved towing plankton nets for 100m at various locations in a lake and preserving in ethyl alcohol. Sample locations focused on boat ramps, shorelines, and optimal macrophyte habitats. Protocols continuously improved over time with better metadata documentation, better sample preservation, better decontamination techniques, reduced PCR inhibitors, and faster results reporting. Initially results were provided within 6 months but gradually the turnaround improved to 2 months post sampling. This technique is repeatable and defensible. However, a shortcoming of this program is uncertainty if sampling effort is sufficient to determine absence (in other words, no probability confidence of false negative error).

Typically the Forest Service funded the laboratory analysis and provided some or all of the field personnel. The University of Montana conducted the laboratory analysis, developed one particular PCR (curlyleaf pondweed), and donated supplies. Non-profits Swan Valley Connections and Whitefish Lake Institute donated field personnel. The Bureau of Reclamation partially funded laboratory analysis in one particular year.

Major findings of the program was no detection of these four invasive species in sampled lakes. This program also yielded three other benefits. A corollary study that found towed plankton nets offer superior sensitivity to filtered water pumps and findings will be published. Another study examined distance and seasonal sensitivity from known native watermilfoil beds. Although this work was not published, it suggests prioritizing August samples. Finally this program determined native mollusks and native watermilfoil were present in some lakes, which was previously undocumented.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Funding is declining. But in 2020, some funds are secure to continue with at least 4 lakes.

Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance - Gallatin River Task Force - Gallatin County Weed District

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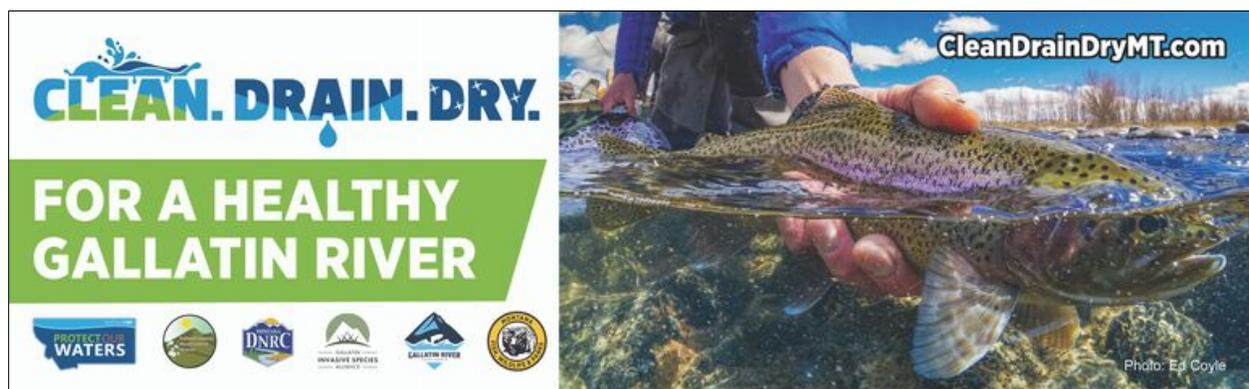
AIS activity: Education & Outreach

Location: Upper Gallatin Watershed

Year began doing this activity: 2017

Highlights: The Upper Gallatin Watershed encompasses some of the most ecologically and economically important resources in our county, which provide vital habitat and water for fish, plants, wildlife, and the people who live and recreate in the area. The Gallatin River is one of the top fly fishing destinations, with nonresident anglers comprising almost half of all angling days. The Gallatin River is also a popular destination for whitewater boaters. On busy summer days, an unbroken chain of whitewater rafters can be seen paddling down the Gallatin Canyon. Tourism and resort development drives close to one hundred percent of the local economy, and the Gallatin River is the heart of this engine. Aquatic invaders have yet to be found in the Upper Gallatin Watershed; however, the introduction and spread of AIS or pathogens could have a catastrophic effect on the fisheries, watershed health, and economy of the area.

- Billboards (2) in Gallatin Canyon and Gallatin Gateway
- Radio ads on KGLT
- Print ads in Outside Bozeman, Explore Big Sky, and Mountain Outlaw Magazine
- Community, youth and school events
- Partnerships with local outfitters and business to distribute AIS information cards and stickers



Garfield County Conservation District

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Garfield County Conservation District ran two watercraft inspection stations this season. This was our second season running the station at Flowing Wells rest area approximately 36 miles out of Jordan. On July 15th, we stepped up to the challenge of taking over the Wibaux station, located just out of town on I-94.

We completed 2,458 inspections at the Flowing Wells location and 801 at Wibaux. The primary success is that Flowing Well's inspectors have caught two mussel fouled vessels this season. Both detections were of small individual mussels, a testament to the good work of our inspectors.

The largest obstacle this season was finding staff mid-season for the Wibaux location. Thus, the 2020 priority will be fully staffing the Wibaux station with quality employees.



Glacier National Park

Brian McKeon

AIS Prevention Program Co-Manager

Glacier National Park

West Glacier MT 59936

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspections

Location: Four locations in the park – Lake McDonald, Two Medicine Ranger Station, St. Mary Visitor Center, Many Glacier Ranger Station

Year began doing activity: 2010

Highlights: After closing all waters to boating in 2016, the park has gradually increased recreational access for non-motorized and motorized boaters each year. In 2019, motorized boating resumed on Bowman and Two Medicine Lakes. Motorized access to St. Mary Lake is being considered for 2020.

Total non-motorized inspections = 11,428

Total motorized permits issued = 89

Plans/priorities for 2020: Maintain current permitting requirements including mandatory inspections for all watercraft and 30-day dry time prior to launching for motorized watercraft

McCone Conservation District

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station - Nashua, Education/Outreach

Location: McCone county

Highlights: McCone Conservation District took over daily operations of the Nashua, MT Watercraft Inspection Station in May of 2019 and will operate through November 25, 2019. This has been an exciting and busy year for Nashua with roughly 2000 inspections so far, 600 of those inspections coming from states with known AIS infestations. In addition to that McCone CD distributes the WIS funding for 5 eastern Montana Stations.

Local Education and outreach performed throughout the year includes “What to expect at your boat inspection” with local boaters, community day, town and county day and activity day at the Circle School for 4,5,6 and 9th grade Students.

McCone Conservation District also participates in the Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team as Regional Coordinator since 2018.

Plans/priorities for 2020: 2020 I anticipate will be just as busy with continuing funding for 5 stations and daily operations of the Nashua, MT station. Education day at the school and community events.



Missoula County Weed District

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Weed Management Area Coordinator
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AIS activity: Macrophyte monitoring

Location: Missoula County

Years doing activity: 8

Highlights: Missoula County Weed District has been doing aquatic invasive macrophyte sampling in Missoula County since 2011. We are mainly surveying for presence or absence of aquatic invasive plants on waterbodies that are accessible by boat but we do take down information on all the aquatic plants we sample. Our data on plant presence is shared with the Montana Natural Heritage Program. We also survey several waterbodies in Powell and Lake County due to the proximity to our other surveying efforts. To date the only known invasive plants we have documented are curly leaf pond weed on the Bitterroot and Clark Fork Rivers and Fragrant Waterlily on a majority of the lakes in our sampling rotation. We have about 21 waterbodies we try to survey at least every 5 years with 4 high use waterbodies we try to survey every year. Each year we take out the Missoula Youth In Restoration (YIR) crew for 2 days to assist with the project. YIR is comprised of 4 high school students and a leader, they work on various stewardship projects around Western Montana for 8 weeks during the summer. In 2019 only Seeley and Salmon were surveyed.



Plans/priorities for 2020: at this station: 2020 plans are to do a more robust schedule of surveying and hit some of the lakes that we haven't been to in a few years. We are also hoping to get a more quantitative survey done on the extent of the fragrant waterlily in our area watersheds. Missoula County is exploring listing Fragrant Waterlily on our County Noxious Weed List so we would like to get a better idea of location and quantity to help inform some future management decisions. We will be hosting a Big Sky Watershed Corp member and this will be one of the projects they work on.

Missoula County Weed District

Lindsey Bona-Eggeman, Weed Management Area Coordinator

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – Clearwater Junction

Location: Clearwater Junction - Hwy 200 and Hwy 83

Years doing activity: 3

Highlights: In 2019 we once again began inspecting watercraft from both the east and the west on Hwy 200. We had not inspected from the east since 2016. This addition increased our overall season inspection numbers by 7000 from the 2018 totals. The total inspections performed at Clearwater for 2019 was 20,880.

With the ballast boat legislation we were nervous about our ability to handle the increased traffic and additional decontamination requirements. Most of the ballast flushes that were performed at Clearwater were of boats from Montana that were from East of the continental divide. We found out that the ballast flushes were not too much for the staff to handle and they were able to perform these flushes in about 20 minutes.

The busiest day at Clearwater was June 30 with 401 inspections being done. We hired 10 seasonal inspectors but ended up losing a few throughout the season. We were able to offer overtime to fill in needed shifts with the remaining staff.

Plans/priorities for 2020: For 2020 we are planning on adding two site supervisor positions that will provide supervision 7 days a week throughout the season. We also are planning on extending our hours of operation running down to dusk. We will have mostly brand new staff so we are planning on doing onsite training in addition to the FWP WIS training. We will also be trying an incentive program for inspector job performance and to keep employees engaged during busy, long days. We will increase staffing on weekends in July to accommodate high traffic days.



Montana Black Dog Services, LLC

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection and Monitoring

Location: Glacier National Park – Apgar, Two Medicine, Browning, Highway 2, Canyon Ferry and Tiber

Year began doing this activity: 2017

Highlights:

Watercraft Inspection: During the 2019 field season, Montana Black Dog Services, with canines Rosebud and Ismay, inspected watercraft in both Glacier National Park (at Apgar and Two Medicine) and at the Highway 2 Station near Browning. In addition to inspecting boats, the dogs added interest, helped educate tourists and made some enthusiastic crusaders for AIS prevention during their time in the Park. The Labrador sisters teamed up with inspectors at the Blackfoot Tribe's Highway 2 station outside of Browning during the early season and on several busy weekends in July and August. In addition to inspecting more than 125 boats, Rosebud and Ismay added another dimension to inspections and provided a morale booster for the hardworking and dedicated inspectors at all of these stations. We were very pleased to be able to help out with these efforts!

Monitoring: In early fall, the Labrador sisters switched gears and spent several days assisting FWP in shoreline surveys for aquatic invasive mussels at Canyon Ferry and Tiber Reservoir. We were happy to be part of the monitoring effort, putting to use another facet of the dogs' training and abilities.

Plans/priorities for 2020:

We hope to continue our work in 2020. We would like to locate a funding source to help us continue our educational outreach.



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AIS activity: Education/Outreach

Location: State-wide

Year began doing this activity: 2017

Highlights: Montana Black Dog Services volunteered our time and traveled more than 1600 miles throughout western Montana from Whitefish to Manhattan to present educational programs to more than 600 people of all ages. Rosebud and Ismay did their part to help spread the word – clean, drain and dry.



During the early part of the summer, we volunteered to help with the Flathead Mussel walk and traveled to events in Whitefish, Yellow Bay Salish Point, and Sommers, presenting programs to more than 300 seventh graders from around the Flathead area. The dogs were reported to be “crowd favorites” and enthusiastically helped educate the students about invasive mussels.

In July, Rosebud and Ismay participated in the Summer Education and Outreach program with the Gallatin Conservation District in Manhattan. The dogs helped educate (and entertain) approximately 80 students from ages 3 to 14. Rosebud and Ismay helped the kids learn about invasive species and demonstrated how trained canines can help with detection efforts. It was a fun day for all!

In August, the dogs joined forces with staff members from the Biological Station and were once again a popular attraction at the annual Flathead Lake Biological Station’s open house. They continued to spread the word about invasive mussels and demonstrated their mussel-detection skills while entertaining people of all ages.

In late summer, Rosebud and Ismay participated in the Blackfoot Challenge Swan Release day near Ovando. We partnered with JoAnn Wallenburn to teach students from around the area about AIS and AIS prevention. The dogs enthusiastically demonstrated how canines inspect boats and how they learn important early detection skills.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – Anaconda

The Anaconda Watercraft Inspection Station is a station located near the continental divide that intercepts high risk traffic originating from the Midwest and Southwest. Their priority is inspecting/decontaminating watercraft, but they are also responsible for handing out outreach materials and educating the public.

Location: The Anaconda WIS is located on I90 near the Anaconda exit.

Year began doing this activity: Station began full time operation in 2017

Highlights: The Anaconda WIS operated fully staffed this season and ran at max hours most of the season. The station intercepted 4 mussel fouled watercraft.

Inspected 5,587 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020 at this station: Complete some site renovations and re-vamp training for staff.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Stations – Canyon Ferry

Watercraft inspection stations are put in place at Canyon Ferry Reservoir to ensure that boats leaving Canyon Ferry are inspected if they are not returning and are planning on heading for another waterbody. Since Canyon Ferry is a containment zone due to the suspect zebra/quagga mussel detection in 2016, boats are inspected coming off the water rather than going into the water. We do this to prevent any potential aquatic invasive species from Canyon Ferry being transferred somewhere else. The main things our inspectors look for are animals, plants, mud, and any standing water that could be holding veliger.

Location: Canyon Ferry has four inspection/decontamination stations around the Reservoir. Silos WIS is the busiest, due to its access, location, and parking area. Silos inspected 3,637 watercraft for the 2019 season. BOR Visitor Center, (Canyon Ferry North), is the second busiest station, due to catching traffic going to and from Canyon Ferry and the Missouri River below the Dam. North inspected 2,712 watercraft. Goosebay station inspected 830 watercraft. Rounding out the 2019 season Hellgate station inspecting 746 watercraft.

Year began doing this activity: We began inspecting watercraft on Canyon Ferry in 2016 with some roving crews. In 2017, we set up inspection/decontamination stations at the four previously mentioned launches. In 2018 we installed on-site sheds for the inspection teams. The sheds provided storage for the equipment and a place to complete paperwork needed to perform the job.

Highlights: Potentially being able to delist Canyon Ferry. If the monitoring samples continue to be free of any AIS evidence, we will move forward with the delisting process for Canyon Ferry. If this happens, we will transition from Decon to Inspection stations.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Pre-Launch Watercraft Inspections. Roving crews to cover the Reservoir for inspection process and procedures prior to launching. Will not have the need to perform off water inspections, unless the crew notice anything that should not be on the watercraft.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – Dillon

The Dillon Watercraft Inspection station a border station that intercepts the majority of Montana's high-risk traffic originating from the SW. Their priority is inspecting/decontaminating watercraft, but they are also responsible for handing out outreach materials and educating the public.

Location: The Dillon WIS is located on I15 N at the Red Rock Rest Area 30 miles south of Dillon.

Year began doing this activity: Station began full time operation in 2017

Highlights: The station operated fully staffed all season and operated at max hours most of the season. Dillon WIS intercepted 3 mussel fouled watercraft this season.

Inspected 2,764 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020 at this station: Keep the station fully staffed



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Education & Outreach

Location: statewide

Highlights: The FWP AIS program conducts outreach and education statewide in coordination with our partners.

Outreach

- CleanDrainDryMT.com website with resources for AIS partners and the public.
- Branded message using 'Clean Drain Dry' and 'Protect Our Waters' logos.
- Statewide news releases and advertising in newspapers, tv, radio, billboards, & special publications.
- Rack cards for boaters, anglers, irrigators, and certified boaters at Tiber/Canyon Ferry.
- Table-top and full-length banners and invasive mussels displays.
- Youth coloring book for grades K-3 and activity book for grades 4-6.
- Signage at boat ramps and along highways.
- Social media campaign and Facebook page: 'Protect Our Waters Montana'.
- Targeted postcards to Smith River permittees (inspect before arrival) and Billings Bench Water Association (Asian clams at Lake Elmo).
- "Don't Let It Loose campaign to releasing aquarium pets into water.
- Information in FWP regulation booklets: Fishing, Boating, Hunting & Waterfowl

Education:

- Partner with ISAN, DNRC and UC3 to host AIS workshops for resource professionals.
- Partner with Montana Learning Center to train science teachers on AIS curriculum provided by Flathead Lake Biological Station and Watershed Education Network.
- Conduct training for MEEA conference and Big Sky Watershed Corps.
- Outreach to MOGA, Extension Agents, Conservation Districts, Earth Day events, Audubon, FOAM, boat and sports shows, MATE show, Walleye Unlimited, sea plane pilots, and boat/fish/sporting goods stores.

CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY. **PROTECT OUR WATERS**

HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Clean: Remove all plants and mud from boat, trailer and fishing gear.
Drain: Pull your drain plug. Before you leave the area eliminate all water from your boat and gear.
Dry: Allow time for your boat and gear to dry completely before launching somewhere else.

All watercraft must stop at inspection stations

CleanDrainDryMT.com | Protect Our Waters Montana | 406.444.2440 | MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks - Enforcement

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AIS activity: I worked at the Troy and Ravalli AIS check stations stopping vehicles with boats who failed to stop at the inspection stations and making sure boaters complied with inspectors. I also worked the lakes and boat launches around the region checking boaters for AIS inspection receipts.

Location: All of Region 1.

Year began doing activity: Not quite sure I think 2017.

Highlights: Quite a few drive by citations and on the water citations for failure to get inspected.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Increased time at all AIS check stations.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station - Eureka

Location: Roosville Port of Entry, HWY 93 north of Eureka, MT.

Year began doing this activity: 2017 (expanded capacity)

Highlights: During the 2019 season the Eureka WIS faced the challenge of having a large volume of watercraft that required decontamination due to changes created by HB 608 after the last legislative session. The staff at the Eureka station did a great job implementing these protocols, educating the public on the changes, and assessing risk and using discretion while encountering a proportionately large volume of ballast boats.

Inspected 1,812 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Customized Inspection Station Signage. More work to expand coordination with Canadian Provinces to the North.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – Fresno Reservoir

Location: The Fresno Roving Watercraft Inspection Station is based out of Havre, Montana and covers the Fresno Reservoir. The Fresno Reservoir is located on the Milk River in North Central Montana. The Reservoir has around 5,700 surface acres at full pool and can be accessed by the public from two boat ramps. The roving inspection station moves back and forth between the two boat ramps and runs from around Memorial Day to Labor Day, running mainly on the weekends.

Highlights: Although Fresno Reservoir is located within Montana, AIS still pose a threat. Tiber Reservoir, which has a detection of invasive mussels, and Fort Peck, which has established Eurasian watermilfoil, are both popular fishing holes that many anglers bounce around from one to the next. The Canadian provinces to the North also have great fisheries and many anglers often take trips to experience them. With these fisheries comes the threat of other AIS being transported in. Fresno Reservoir is not the most highly used body of water in the state but offers a nice place to recreate. It is heavily used during weekends and holidays but sees little use during weekdays. The Roving Station is designed to mitigate the risk these recreators bring while also trying to be efficient with station operations.

The Fresno Roving Watercraft Inspection Station has been a safety net for boaters coming off water bodies with detected AIS in the area. It has accomplished this task and been able to adapt to the situations different watercraft have presented. Problems that do arise with the station is how effective it can be. With multiple boat ramps and many slow days, even on the weekend, the station relies heavily on boater buy in. It is easy to go and use the other boat ramp or get on the Reservoir before the station is set up.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Looking to the future, nothing big is planned for the station. Station improvements and adaptations to new Aquatic Invasive Species threats are always in the works.

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station - Hardin

Location: The Hardin Watercraft Inspection Station is located at the Christiansen – Graham Rest Area located on Interstate 90 going West Bound. This rest area is located just past the Fly Creek Road exit and about 15 miles West of Hardin Montana. This station is designed to be a border station and stop all watercraft traveling on the Interstate 90 corridor. This station runs from Mid-April to Mid-October 7 days a week.

Highlights: The Eastern United States has a lot of waterbodies that have been impacted from AIS. Whether it be a recreational boater looking for a different water body to recreate on or a shipment of new or old watercraft being transported to a new owner, this inspections station sees it all. With the station being designed to stop any AIS from entering the state it also catches boating traffic from the Bighorn River that has an established species of New Zealand mudsnail. This station is the busiest in Eastern Montana and with this causes the problem of quality control. This station catches multiple boats with AIS on it including zebra or quagga mussels and because of this they have a lot of inspections that are considered high risk. The station also can see a parking lot full of watercraft and can feel hurried and not give a full inspection to watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020: The challenge with the station is to be efficient and thorough during every inspection. Creating an environment to have crew members succeed is at the top of the list for 2020. Having protocols and procedures in place that are simple enough to understand while also covering every detail of what needs to get done would benefit the station greatly.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Education and Watercraft Inspection Station - Kalispell

Location: FWP Region 1 office in Kalispell

Year began doing this activity: 2017

Highlights:

Education: Attended 3 boat and sports shows in Kalispell and provided AIS information. Conducted an AIS and water safety class for Flathead Valley Community College class. Attended the CSKT Flathead Lake Honoring Day and conducted 6 classes about AIS for school children.

Watercraft Inspection: During the 2019 season the Kalispell FWP office offered inspections 7 days a week (including holidays) and was Montana's first inspection site to open (March 13).

Inspected 560 watercraft.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Smith River State Park

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AIS activity: Education/Outreach

Location: Camp Baker put-in on Smith River. Information Packets mailed with permit to permit holders, post-card mailed to permit holders two weeks prior to their float date, Smith River State Park website.

Years began doing activity: 2011

Highlights: The education and outreach tools have included both written and verbal communication. The original Inspect, Clean, Dry message, then later, the Clean, Drain, Dry message has been included in the Floater Information Packet beginning 2011. That same year, the River Rangers included this message in the Orientation Talk given to each float group during the registration process as well as on the Smith River website. A few years later, a pre-float post card mailing to each permit holder was begun, reminding them of the Clean, Drain, Dry message.

Plans/priorities for 2020: In 2019, River Rangers began asking non-residents for proof of boat inspection. River Rangers will continue requesting proof of inspection from non-residents, as well as continuing the verbal and written education/outreach.



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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – St. Regis

Location: Two-Mile Access Site, East Bound I-90 Exit 30, west of St. Regis, MT.

Year began doing activity: 2019 (first year at this location)

Highlights: The St. Regis WIS is a relatively high traffic station that had the increased challenge of implementing protocol changes due to HB 608, they did well in this regard and quickly became proficient at performing ballast tank flushes. Moving the station to the Two-Mile site was a successful change that eased some of the traffic concerns that were present at the old rest area location.

Inspected 5,575 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020: More infrastructure improvements at the Two-Mile Site (blacktop, grading etc.). Increased signage on the I90 corridor between the Idaho/Montana border and the St. Regis WIS to increase boater compliance.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – Sula

The Sula Watercraft Inspection Station is located near the continental divide and the state border. Their priority is inspecting/decontaminating watercraft, but they are also responsible for handing out outreach materials and educating the public.

Location: The Sula WIS is located on HWY 93 at the Sula USFS Resource Office

Year began doing this activity: Station began full time operation in 2017

Highlights: The Sula WIS crew has consistently performed well in our quality control programs

Inspected 1,351 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020 at this station: Re-vamp training for staff.



Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – Tiber Marina & VFW Campground

Watercraft inspection stations are put in place at Tiber Reservoir to ensure that boats leaving Tiber are inspected prior to leaving to go to another waterbody. Since Tiber is a containment zone due to the positive zebra/quagga mussel detection in 2016, boats are inspected coming off the water rather than going into the water. We do this to prevent any aquatic invasive species from Tiber from being transferred somewhere else. The main things our inspectors look for are plants, mud, and any standing water that could be holding veliger.

Location: The majority of our inspections from this last season took place at the Tiber Marina and Tiber VFW campgrounds. These are the most popular places boaters will go to launch.

Year began doing this activity: We began inspecting watercraft at Tiber Reservoir in 2017 since the detection of quagga/zebra mussel veliger's in 2016.

Highlights: Each season we are improving the way we perform our inspections to better ensure that no AIS is transferred from Tiber. This past season we started decontaminating every boat coming off Tiber using hot water. Years prior we would only use this method if there was AIS we could not remove by hand. Not every boater liked the idea, but most were understanding of our reasoning to do this.

Between the Tiber Marina and VFW campground stations, our inspectors looked at 1,405 boats this past season, an increase from last season which saw 1,253 boats.

This season we were able to get a shed for the Marina station now that a spot has been designated for the station. Inspectors were pleased with it since they finally had shelter from the sun and any weather Tiber gets.

Construction started late in the season for new camp sites and station site for our inspectors at the Tiber Marina. The camp sites will be only for our inspectors to use and will have power hookups. The station itself will now have a concrete pad for the inspectors to use to inspect boats so they are no longer walking around or laying in mud when doing an inspection. This will be a big improvement for next season.

Plans/priorities for 2020: The plan next season is to improve the inspection area for the VFW station. The hope is to reduce the mud that gets built up from decontaminating boats by using something the boaters can park their trailer on and the inspectors to walk on.

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station - Troy

Location: Troy Rest Area Junction of HWY 56 and HWY 2

Year began doing this activity: 2017 (expanded capacity)

Highlights: The Troy station continues to be a high traffic station that services a high number of repeat boat owners, many of whom visit the station multiple times per day. The operations at Troy and the work of the crew there have exemplified how efficiently stations can operate when the WID Mobile Data Application is used in conjunction with watercraft inspection passports. The crew has done a great job training boat owner on what to expect and how they can help the inspection and interview process go quickly.

Inspected 5,696 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Additional office space improvements. Add more visible signage to account for multiple traffic approaches.



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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station –Tongue River Reservoir

Location: The Tongue River Reservoir Watercraft Inspection Station is located within Tongue River Reservoir State Park. Tongue River Reservoir State Park is isolated with the closest town being 25 miles away. The Reservoir is located on the Tongue River in South Central Montana. The station is located just off the main road coming into the park, all boaters must stop by the station when entering the park. The inspection station runs from around Memorial Day to Labor Day, running mainly on the weekends.

Highlights: The Reservoir is highly used by all different kinds of boaters in the area. With the border of Montana and Wyoming just a few miles away this can cause a problem with out of state boaters who, by law, need an inspection of their watercraft before entering a Montana water body. There is also different established AIS in the area such as New Zealand mudsnail and curly leaf pondweed. Ballast boats like to use the Reservoir as well. Tongue River Reservoir is a popular place during weekends and holidays but then slows down to a crawl during the week.

This Inspection Station is designed to help mitigate the risk from the increased out of state boater traffic that uses the Reservoir. With the new ballast bill that went into effect this past season all out of state ballast boats would need a flush of their ballast tanks. This was an issue for a part of the early season but was relieved when a decontamination unit was brought down to help with ballast flushes. Boater compliance is also a big part of the station. The station is isolated and relies heavily on a game warden and the parks staff to help control drive by and non-compliant boaters. They also have the issue of watercraft, needing an inspection, using the reservoir when the station is not open.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Further education and information being spread in the area is a focus for the 2020 season.



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Type of AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station – Willow Creek

At Tiber Reservoir, there are multiple watercraft inspection stations put in place to ensure that boats leaving Tiber are inspected prior to leaving to go to another waterbody. Since Tiber is a containment zone due to the positive zebra/quagga mussel detection in 2016, boats are inspected coming off the water rather than going into the water. We do this to prevent any aquatic invasive species from Tiber from being transferred to another body of water. Our inspectors put a focus on looking for standing water as well as plants and mud.

Location: A new station was put in place this past season at the Willow Creek arm of Tiber Reservoir. The station is about a quarter of a mile off Highway 2 across from Lothair.

Year began doing this activity: We began inspecting watercraft at Tiber Reservoir in 2017 since the detection in 2016. The Willow Creek station was started in 2019.

Highlights: Each season we are improving the way we perform our inspections to better ensure that no AIS is transferred from Tiber. This past season we started decontaminating every boat coming off Tiber using hot water. Years prior we would only use this method if there was AIS we could not remove by hand. Not every boater liked the idea, but most were understanding of our reasoning to do this.

Willow Creek was the least visited station at Tiber Reservoir this past season. High water can contribute to this since a lot of camp sites were flooded for most of the season. However, there was positive feedback from a lot of boater that used the ramp that enjoyed having it open to everyone.

Inspected 103 watercraft.

Plans/priorities for 2020: The plan next year for Willow Creek is to potentially get a shed in place for the inspectors so they are not having to drive around with the wash unit behind them every day. Also, to get word out better so that more of the public are aware that Willow Creek will be open to everyone rather than everyone thinking it's a Certified Boater only ramp.

Montana Trout Unlimited

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AIS activity: Education/Outreach

Location: Statewide

Year began doing activity: 2016

Highlights: Since the detection of invasive mussels in MT, MTU has been actively educating the public and commercial angling community and our followers about the threats of AIS. We have especially reiterated the “Clean, Drain, Dry” message as well as angler-specific how-tos on cleaning wading and floating gear. We’ve used social media, member alerts, our quarterly newsletter, and in-person presentations/tabling to distribute information about the threats and preventative strategies. In the 2019 AIS check station season, MTU partnered with FWP to identify check station staff who performed exceptionally well and rewarded them with pre-paid \$50 gift cards as a way to boost motivation/moral at tough AIS stations around the state. In the past two legislative sessions, MTU’s lobbying efforts have been effective at making sure the state’s AIS funding and program gained full support from elected officials. Prior to the mussel threat, MTU has helped the state address AIS threat/incidents such as whirling disease and PKD through funding, technical support, and outreach/education to the public, anglers, outdoor recreation industry, and elected officials.

Plans/priorities for 2020:

We intend to maintain our general AIS outreach efforts as well as continue to AIS check station employee incentive program of providing gift cards to exemplary performance.



Musselshell Watershed Coalition

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AIS activity: Education/Outreach to schools in the Musselshell Watershed and to water users along the Musselshell River. The MWC visits at least six partner organizations per year and provided information about invasive mussels and how to prevent their spread. The MWC has obtained mussel displays and shared them with partners across eastern Montana. MWC is also an active member of the Central and Eastern Invasive Species Team. We are preparing to create a monitoring program in 2020.

Location: Central Montana

Year began doing activity: 2017

Highlights: Increased awareness among irrigators within the Musselshell Watershed about AIS, especially invasive mussels.

Plans/priorities for 2020: We plan to continue education efforts by visiting conservation districts and water user associations, as well as hosting workshops across eastern Montana. In 2020 we will also develop a local monitoring program.

Sanders County Aquatic Invasive Plants Task Force

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Highlights: For more than a decade, the Sanders County Aquatic Invasive Plants Task Force (Task Force) has actively managed aquatic invasive species (AIS) in Noxon and Cabinet Gorge reservoirs through a multi-faceted program that includes monitoring and mapping of AIS (specifically Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM), curlyleaf pondweed, and flowering rush); treatment of AIS through use of bottom barriers, herbicides, and diver dredging; and education and outreach aimed at local residents and recreationists using the waterways.

These efforts have been supported over time by monetary and in-kind contributions from Avista, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other agencies and programs.

In 2019, the Task Force utilized funding from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and DNRC, matched by contributions from Avista, to treat 75 acres of dense EWM using a combination of the herbicides endothall and diquat. Initial results of these treatments were very favorable, with most plots suffering an average of 95% - 98% injury ranking based on visual observations six weeks post treatment. In addition to these operational treatments, the Task Force also conducted a trial treatment using the herbicide ProcellaCOR, which has proven to be effective at treating EWM and hybrid watermilfoil in other areas of the U.S. This trial included treating 34 acres in two plots, and initial results were also favorable (~98% injury) based on visual observations six weeks post-treatment.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Herbicide treatments are planned for 2020 to ensure open and AIS-free public access areas. Pre-treatment surveys in early July will be a key factor in determining the longer-term effectiveness of the herbicide applications performed in 2019 and will aid in decision-making related to which herbicides are used in the future.

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission

Industry Partner Outreach Project

The Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³) secured a US Bureau of Reclamation Grant in 2018 to conduct targeted outreach with industry partners including marinas, boat shops, fishing/fly shops and outdoor retailers during the 2019 season. UC³ carried out this project with a Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) member. Businesses in the Upper Columbia Basin were identified via online searching and local ground truthing. An inventory of all water-related businesses was developed. The UC³ worked closely with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to ensure that messaging was consistent and mutual goals could be encompassed in the project. Existing 'Clean Drain Dry' campaign materials were utilized, and in some cases, developed for outreach with specific industry partners.

Some examples of the existing materials utilized by UC³ in the project include:

- 'Protect Our Waters' and Clean Drain Dry stickers (reprinted)
- Boater rack cards (reprinted)
- 2019 Watercraft Inspection Map (printed/laminated)
- 2019 AIS Rules Flyer (printed/laminated)
- Drift boat stickers – specific to fly shops
- FWP 2019 Angler Regulations and Boating Laws
- AIS launch and Angler Signage
- AIS Program Overview/Update



Clean Drain Dry Partner Sign

Some examples of the materials created (in coordination with FWP) include:

- 'Clean Drain Dry Partner' signs for businesses who committed to our AIS pledge
- Angler AIS rack card with targeting information and messaging for anglers
- AIS sponges (modified existing design)
- Koozies including 'lil suckers' specific to rafts/whitewater boats

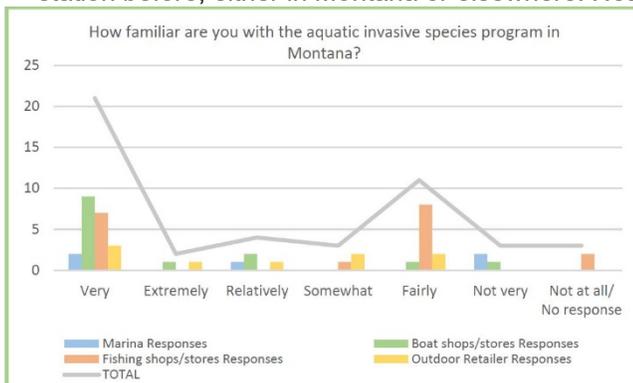
A total of 61 out of 121 businesses in the Upper Columbia Basin were visited during the 2019 season. We targeted shop owners/managers so that we would have the most impact and targeted the messaging specific to the industry. We sought to inform them of AIS program updates and changes and so that they could in turn educate their customers and clients. In addition to this project, our BSWC member was also able to set up AIS information booths and activities at many events in the Upper Columbia Basin.

Most of the businesses surveyed indicated that they had a fairly good – very good level of knowledge about the AIS program in Montana. Many received this information from a combination of sources, including radio and social media. They thought that most boaters, tourists and members in the community were 'aware' or 'sort of aware' of AIS risks. Most businesses surveyed also indicated that they were aware of current laws, though oftentimes when the BSWC member went into detail about the rules, there were some they were not aware of. Most of those surveyed had been through an inspection station before, either in Montana or elsewhere. Nearly all of those surveyed indicated



Angler Rack Cards

that they would be interested in additional AIS training should one be developed (free of charge) for industry partners, depending on the season and time commitment involved. While many water-based businesses were approached in the 2019 season, there are a fair amount that either did not respond or had closed for the season when our BSWC member was active on this project. The UC³ has partnered with Missoula County Weed District to secure another BSWC member for the 2020 season. The application was successful, and the chosen applicant has accepted; this project will continue into the next season and also provide a template for other potential projects outside of the basin in the future.



Familiarity with AIS

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission

Expanding AIS Monitoring in the Upper Columbia Basin

The Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³) secured a US Bureau of Reclamation Grant in 2018 to expand aquatic invasive species (AIS) monitoring efforts in the Upper Columbia Basin. While the state (FWP) and many partners are active in monitoring for AIS, most of the partners engaged in 'citizen science' AIS monitoring are located within the Flathead Basin. The UC³ sought to expand this capacity throughout the Upper Columbia Basin. An RFP went through the competitive process and a contract was issued to the Whitefish Lake Institute, with support from the Flathead Lake Biological Station.

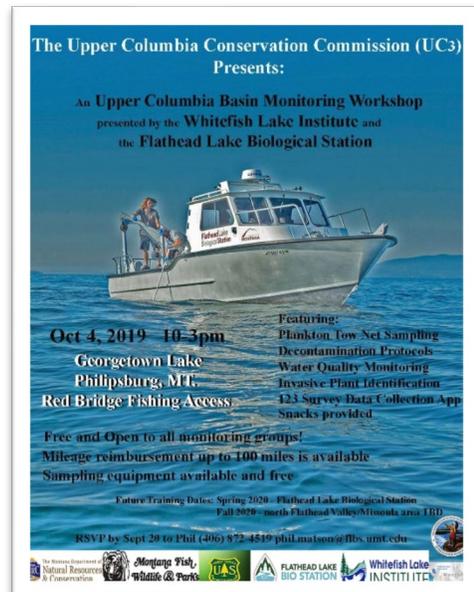
This project was initiated in the spring of 2019 and will continue into the 2020 season. It includes engagement with watershed/conservation groups, citizens and other potential partners throughout the Upper Columbia Basin, free in-person training provided by experts in the AIS field, monitoring kits, instruction on how to report findings and the development of a website for AIS citizen scientists. The contract also includes some support for the development of the UC³'s annual monitoring plan.

Two trainings were offered in 2019 and new partners were brought on to assist with AIS monitoring in the basin. AIS monitoring is a key component of a comprehensive state AIS program as it is the only means of detecting new/expanding invasive species. Bringing citizen scientists into the mix enables them to take an active part in protecting their individual watersheds and provides an excellent engagement tool for additional outreach.

While there are a fair amount of citizen science efforts taking place in western Montana, most of it to date has been in the Flathead Basin. This project has enabled the UC³ and partners to expand that network throughout the entire Upper Columbia Basin as well as increase engagement and consistency in monitoring protocols and reporting methods. These efforts will continue into the 2020 season.



AIS Monitoring Training



Flyer for AIS Monitoring Training

Whitefish Lake Institute

Mike Koopal
Executive Director
550 East 1st Street, #103
Whitefish, MT. 59937
Email: mike@whitefishlake.org
Phone: 406.862.4327
Website: www.whitefishlake.org

AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Station, Early Detection Monitoring

Location: Whitefish Lake

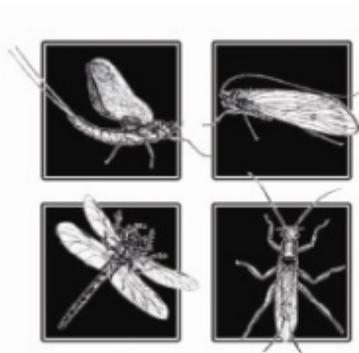
Year began doing activity: 2012

Highlights: The Whitefish Aquatic Invasive Species Program is a partnership between the Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) and the City of Whitefish. There are two watercraft inspection stations on Whitefish Lake at City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park, in partnership Montana State Parks with support from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. In 2019, the Whitefish AIS Program moved the Preventative Decontamination Station to the City Beach Overflow Parking Lot and infrastructure improvements are currently underway. WLI also conducts early detection monitoring (microscopy & eDNA) on local waterbodies as part of the City of Whitefish partnership and at 41 lakes (microscopy) that are included in the Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network in partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Site improvements for the Preventative Decontamination Station at the City Beach Overflow Parking Lot are planned in 2020 and include site drainage and a permanent building to house the decontamination unit and supplies. WLI will also partner with the US Forest Service for eDNA sampling of prioritized lakes. WLI will continue its partnership with MFWP for the EWM eradication effort at Beaver Lake.



Flathead Beacon photo



Watershed Education Network

Growing the next generation of watershed stewards

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AIS activity: Education/Outreach

Location: Missoula County, Lake County. Others as interested

Year began doing this activity: 2015

Highlights: The Columbia Headwaters Education Kit for Aquatic Invasive Species (CHEK4AIS) is a series of science activities and lessons designed by a high school teacher to meet biology standards and curriculum. The Watershed Education Network (WEN) facilitated the development (2019) and provided oversight for piloting and implementing the AIS high school education project (2016-2018). This 8-lesson series of AIS information, lessons, and activities and has provided nearly 400 students in Missoula County with this critical education service. The CHEK4AIS lessons and activities can be modified for other grade levels and all the activities meet Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). An additional four teachers were trained at MEA-MFT in 2018, and nine high school teachers along with 11 middle school teachers were trained to use the curriculum (Montana Learning Center AIS training 2019). We have served primarily Missoula County high school students (Seeley-Swan, Sentinel, Hellgate and Willard schools in Missoula. This fall, WEN shared this curriculum with the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff along with Montana Learning Center staff for a teacher workshop at Canyon Ferry. This teacher workshop featured Aquatic Invasive Species and included several CHEK4AIS lessons. Interested high school teachers who attended the workshop may include the CHEK4AIS curriculum in their teaching during the 2020-2021 school year.

Plans/priorities for 2020: WEN's high school CHEK4AIS lessons and trunk of activities is ready to be disseminated to high school teachers across Montana. WEN is seeking AIS education funding from a variety of sources and welcomes partnerships to assist in mobilizing this critical high school science education resource. Liz Lodman, AIS Information Officer for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has purchased one CHEK4AIS trunk/ curriculum based in Helena and WEN has one CHEK4AIS trunk/curriculum based in Missoula. We are working on a system for shipping the teaching trunk to any interested teacher, tracking CHEK4AIS education use, and developing the system to ensure teacher and student evaluations. To learn more please contact: Deb Fassnacht, Director, Watershed Education Network (WEN): deb@montanawatershed.org or visit our website: www.MontanaWatershed.org

www.montanawatershed.org

Yellowstone National Park

Sue Mills, Natural Resource Management Specialist

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Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

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Phone: 307-344-2515

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AIS activity: Watercraft Inspection Stations, Education/Outreach

Location: Yellowstone National Park

Year began doing activity: 2008

Highlights: Yellowstone National Park again operated three boat inspections stations centered on its three motorized boat ramps. On May 24, 2019, an AIS community boat inspection event was held in Mammoth Hot Springs and Gardiner, MT, for residents not located near park inspection stations. Twenty-two boats were inspected, and none were found to be high risk. Yellowstone tested a temporary ban on ballast tank boats this summer, which could be continued in subsequent years, pending an evaluation. 3,625 total AIS watercraft inspections were performed by the end of September 2019. 3,063 were initial entry, 511 were re-inspections, and 51 were exit inspections. Overall, numbers show a downward trend over the past couple of years, which could be attributed to slight decreases in visitation. 131 watercraft were determined to be high risk and 32 of those watercraft underwent a full decontamination. An additional 227 of these watercraft were partially decontaminated (vacuumed, sponged out, drained/dried, etc.), for a total of 390 watercraft full or partially decontaminated. An additional 51 exit inspections/seals were conducted on vessels planning to return the park waters. Approximately 5,000 people were contacted and provided with an educational message regarding AIS and how to prevent their transport and spread. For two weeks in July, Yellowstone hosted Working Dogs for Conservation to raise awareness about AIS. The two dogs and handler assisted AIS boat inspectors by working to detect zebra and quagga mussels and participated in public events. The dogs assisted with 30 boat inspections, none were found to be harboring mussels. Approximately 761 people were contacted and provided with information about AIS prevention, many had never heard of AIS or quagga and zebra mussels.

Plans/priorities for 2020: Continue the same type of work.

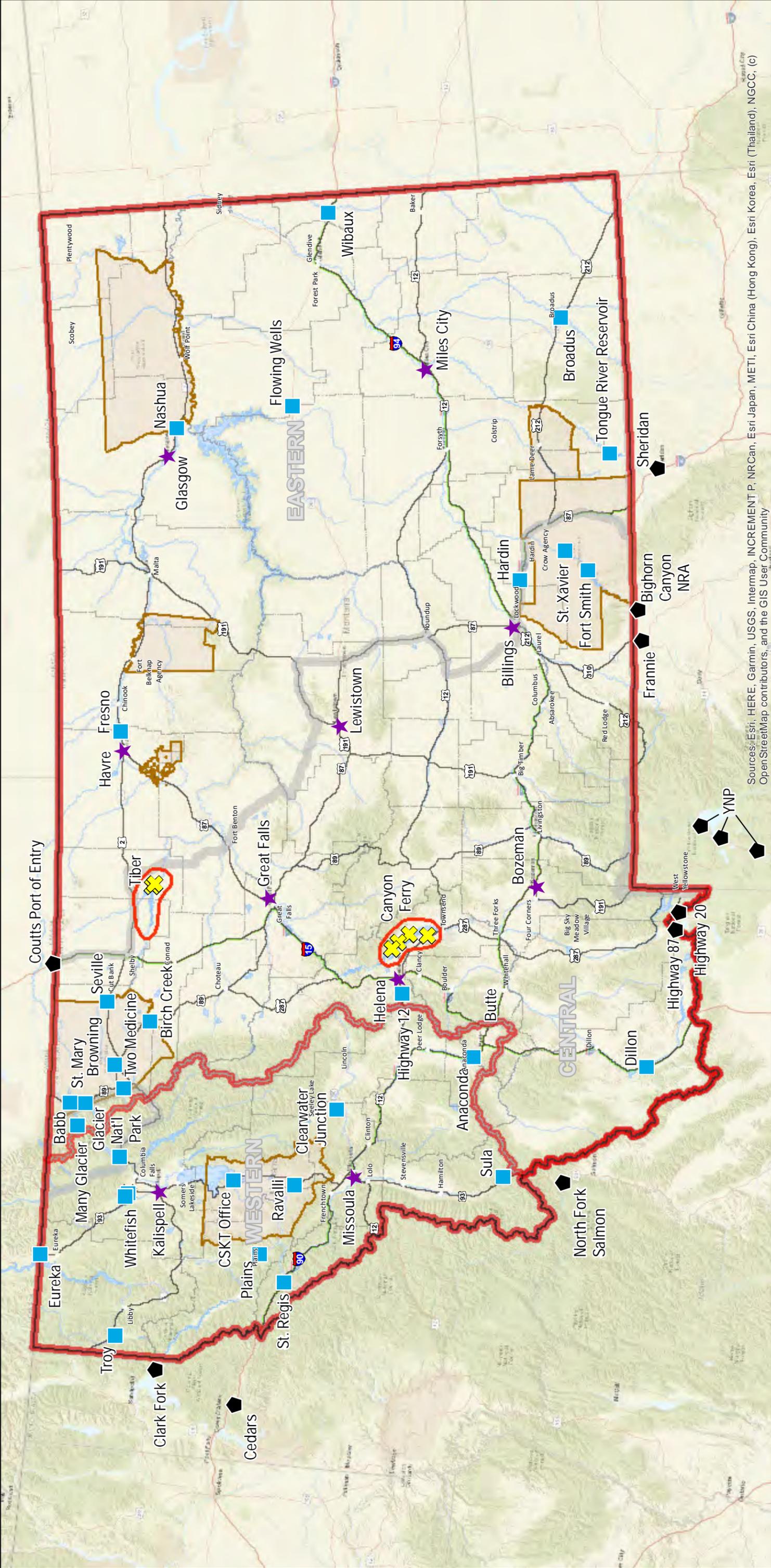


Kids become Junior Ranger AIS inspectors, learning to be the family boat inspector helping their family and classmates back home stop the spread of AIS

2019 Inspection Station	Total Inspections	# Mussel Fouled	Station Manager
Anaconda	5,587	4	FWP
Broadus	227		Powder River Conservation District
Browning	3,922		Blackfeet Nation
Canyon Ferry-Goose Bay Marina	830		FWP
Canyon Ferry-Hellgate Recreational Area	741		FWP
Canyon Ferry -North BOR Site	2,712		FWP
Canyon Ferry-Silos	3,637		FWP
Clearwater Junction	21,421		Missoula County Weed District
Dillon	2,764	3	FWP
Eureka	1,812		FWP
Flowing Wells	2,459	2	Garfield Conservation District
Fort Smith	2,035		Bighorn Canyon NRA
Fresno	856		FWP
FWP Helena Area Resource Office	9		FWP
FWP Lewistown Area Resource Office	3		FWP
FWP Havre Area Resource Office	2		FWP
FWP Region 1 Office	560		FWP
FWP Region 2 Office	26		FWP
FWP Region 3 Office	94		FWP
FWP Region 4 Office	26		FWP
FWP Region 5 Office	25		FWP
FWP Region 6 Office	13		FWP
FWP Region 7 Office	39		FWP
Glacier National Park	10,489		National Park Service
Hardin	5,939	4	FWP
Highway 12 Helena	4,122	1	FWP
Nashua	2,093		FWP
Plains	3,228		CSKT
Ravalli	14,034	1	CSKT
Seville	473		Blackfeet Nation
St. Regis	5,575		FWP
St. Xavier	1,320		Bighorn Conservation District
Sula	1,351		FWP
Swan Lake	692		Missoula County Weed District
Tiber-Marina	603		FWP
Tiber-VFW Campground	830		FWP
Tiber Willow Creek	103		FWP
Tongue River Reservoir State Park	2,604		FWP
Troy	5,696		FWP
Whitefish Lake City Beach	841		Whitefish Lake Institute
Whitefish Lake Decontamination Station	132		Whitefish Lake Institute
Whitefish Lake State Park	858		Whitefish Lake Institute
Wibaux	1,357	1	FWP
Totals	112,140	16	

FWP Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Stations

2019 Season



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

- Decontamination Station
- Class I Inspection Station*
- Class II Inspection Station**
- Partner Agency Station
- Statewide Defense Perimeter
- Containment Zones
- Columbia River Basin Defense Perimeter
- Fishing District



BoatInspectionStations_FY2019_Public.pdf
8/13/2019 Created by Geographic Data Services
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* Class I - full inspection and decontamination capability
** Class II - risk assessment screening, inspection and routing as needed

