

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Overview

2003

- Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) added to the Montana Noxious Weed List by Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA).

2007

- First confirmed sighting of EWM in Noxon Rapids Reservoir by FWP.
- MDA awarded Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWF) grant of \$5,000 to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) for AIS.

2008

- MDA facilitated Montana Invasive Species Subcommittee of the Montana Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Council meetings.
- Legislative working group was formed.
- MDA facilitated EWM Task Force.
- MDA awarded NWF grants totaling \$81,300 to Sanders County/EWM Task Force, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.
- Comprehensive mapping of EWM and curlyleaf pondweed in the Noxon/Cabinet Gorge reservoirs was completed by Dr. John D. Madsen from Mississippi State University.
 - Cabinet Gorge Reservoir - estimated that 195 acres of curlyleaf pondweed and 117 acres of EWM were mapped.
 - Noxon Rapids Reservoir - estimated that 401 acres of curlyleaf pondweed and 247 acres of EWM were mapped.
 - EWM was not found in the Thompson Falls Reservoir.
- 20,000 square feet of bottom barriers were installed along boat launch sites in the Noxon Rapids and Cabinet Gorge reservoirs.

2009

- Montana Legislature created the Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Act (SB 343).
- Provided \$667,000 to MDA from General Fund for the 2010/2011 biennium.
 - \$192,063 for distribution to FWP and \$474,937 for MDA AIS use.
 - MDA given lead jurisdiction on aquatic invasive plants, insects, and plant pests.
 - FWP given lead jurisdiction for all other zoological aquatic invasive species.
- MDA facilitated EWM/Curlyleaf Pondweed Research Project Environmental Assessment Decision Notice and Public Involvement Process/Comments.
- Environmental Assessment conducted and completed by Tetra-Tech, Inc. of Helena.
- MDA purchased inspection station equipment, including five boat wash units.
- MDA provided 1,030 staff hours, equipment and covered additional expenses to inspect watercraft at voluntary inspections in Lewis and Clark, Mineral, Beaverhead, Lincoln and Roosevelt counties.
- MDA leased HWY 93 billboard for invasive species educational messages.
- MDA distributed AIS education/outreach materials to weed districts, conservation districts, tribes, extension services and others.
- MDA awarded NWF grants totaling \$113,253 to the EWM Task Force/Sanders County for AIS/education and the University of Montana for AIS research.
- 32,000 square feet of bottom barriers were installed at Noxon Rapids Reservoir.
- Dye/herbicide plot study was conducted on two 20-acre plots on the Noxon Rapids Reservoir.

- Summary of herbicide research plots showed 80% control one year following treatment.

2010

- MDA-FWP AIS Cooperative Agreement signed, clarifying each agency's specific roles and responsibilities relative to management of AIS in Montana.
- Legislative Aquatic Invasive Species Report completed by MDA and FWP.
- MDA hosted a two-day statewide Invasive Species Summit.
- MDA hired an invasive species coordinator, technician and inspectors.
- MDA awarded NWTf grants totaling \$207,662 to the EWM Task Force/Sanders County and the Confederated Salish Kootenai College.
- MDA purchased 4 additional wash units and survey boat.
- MDA utilized \$7,000 for education/outreach.
- MDA prepared and distributed 120 EWM response tubs to county weed districts and others.
- MDA established Invasive Species Management Areas, requiring mandatory inspection for all watercraft at Noxon and Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs, and Lower Clark Fork River including the mouths of tributaries and a 200-foot setback beyond full pool or high-water mark beginning at Plains, MT, and extending to the Montana/Idaho border.
- MDA inspected 1,757 recreational vehicles at 18 roving border check stations.
- Avista and Idaho representatives cooperatively participated in and funded the Montana/Idaho border check station on HWY 200 inspecting over 3,000 watercrafts.
- Two mandatory boat check stations were established at Troy, and Plains, inspecting 4,250 watercraft.
- Three roving check stations performed voluntary inspections from May – September, for invasive species with 1,920 recreationalists at 17 locations including:
 - Bridger (7 days)
 - Culbertson (6 days)
 - Hardin (18 days)
 - Broadus (3 days)
 - Sidney (5 days)
 - Wibaux (9 days)
 - Dena Mora (3 days)
 - Sweetgrass (1 day)
 - Dubois, ID (3 days)
 - Chief Joseph (2 days)
 - Lima (3 days)
 - Hysham (3 days)
 - Fort Peck (3 days)
 - Emigrant (4 days)
 - West Yellowstone (9 days)
 - Madison (9 days)
 - Clearwater Junction (4 days)
- New infestations of EWM were confirmed in August and September on the Missouri river at the following sites:
 - Toston Dam and upstream for approximately six (6) miles
 - Cottonwood Channel and irrigation ditch in the Wildlife Management Area north of Townsend
 - A small back water channel south of York's Island Fishing Access Site (FAS)
 - A back-water channel below Douillard FAS on the Jefferson River

- The Dredge Cuts below Fort Peck Reservoir
- Timber Creek to Bone Trail, Fort Peck Marina
- Big Dry Arm on Fort Peck Reservoir
- Montana Department of Transportation donated \$22,000 worth of signage for permanent and roving check stations.
- Continued Education/outreach at campgrounds and boat launches in Noxon/Cabinet Gorge areas.
- MDA funding transfer to FWP for inspection station operation.
- 80 acres treated with herbicides in block and strip research plots.
- 32,000 square feet of bottom barriers were installed (project began in 2008).
- 1,316 pounds of EWM was diver dredged at the Toston Dam location in mid-October 2010 and over 500 pounds were hand pulled at Cottonwood Channel by FWP employees.

2011

- Completion of Montana's Statewide Strategic Plan for Invasive Aquatic Plant Management and Resource Protection.
- Funding for the 2012/2013 biennium:
 - HB621 provided \$558,000 to MDA for joint use with FWP
 - HB621 provided \$150,000 to FWP
 - HB621 provided \$190,000 to DNRC
 - HB2 provided \$200,000 to FWP
 - HB7 provided \$400,000 to DNRC
 - \$50,000 passed to MDA
 - \$40,000 passed to FWP
- MDA established light, temporary quarantine in the Missouri River Basin and its associated travel corridors.
- MDA funded and facilitated AIS trainings across Montana (Fort Peck, Missoula, and Lewistown).
- MDA hired an aquatic plant specialist.
- MDA awarded NWTf grants totaling \$157,646 to Sanders County, Valley County, the BIA, and University of Montana for education, treatment of AIS, and AIS research.
- MDA continued education/outreach with Counties and landowners.
- MDA funding transfer to FWP for inspection station operation and surveying.
- MDA deployed two seasonal survey crews (one boat, one ground) for Madison, Jefferson, and Missouri Rivers.
- Fort Peck area surveyed by Valley County and Corps of Engineers.
- MDA inspected 10,786 watercraft with five crews at 15 inspection locations including:
 - Troy – HWY 2/56 (111 days)
 - Noxon – HWY 200/56 (108 days)
 - Plains – HWY 200/28 (95 days)
 - Ft Peck – locations near Ft. Peck Dam (78 days)
 - Hauser Lake
 - White Sandy (31 days)
 - Devil's Elbow (7 days)
 - Canyon Ferry Lake
 - White Earth (9 days)
 - Silos (12 days)
 - Toston Dam (13 days)
 - Dena Mora – I-15 Westbound (10 days)

- Lolo Pass – HWY 12 (3 days)
- Eureka – HWY 93 (3 days)
- Flathead Lake (3 days)
- Clearwater Junction – HWY 200/83 (12 days)
- MDA crews surveyed for aquatic invasive plants at the following water bodies:
 - Fort Peck Dredge Cuts
 - Holter Lake
 - Portions of Tongue River Reservoir
 - Sylvia Lake
 - Madison River
 - Jefferson River
 - Jefferson Slough
 - Beaverhead River
 - Portions of Missouri River
- New infestations of EWM found in 2011 include:
 - Jefferson Slough near Whitehall (It appears to be the uppermost infestation in Missouri River Basin)
 - Beaver Lake (about 5 miles NW of Whitefish)
- Control work occurred at several EWM infestations:
 - Noxon Reservoir – No control work performed due to high water, but education program operated.
 - Toston Dam – DNRC removed 1,542 pounds of EWM.
 - Beaver Lake – Flathead County Task Force delineated populations and installed bottom barriers on known populations.

2012

- MDA designated two new EWM Management Areas, the Upper Missouri River EWM Management Area and the Lower Missouri River EWM Management Area, which replaced the light, temporary quarantine put in place in 2011 in the Missouri River Basin.
- MDA implemented a temporary quarantine on Beaver Lake to reduce the movement of EWM until completion of control work.
- MDA inspected 13 of 19 Montana pet stores licensed to sell plants (no AIS found).
- MDA awarded NWTf grants totaling \$40,920 to Sanders County for treatment of AIS, and the University of Montana for AIS research.
- MDA crews surveyed for aquatic invasive plants at the following water bodies:
 - Lake Helena
 - Canyon Ferry
 - Hauser Lake
 - Jefferson Slough
 - Bynum Reservoir
 - Fresno Reservoir
 - Nelson Reservoir
 - Gibson Reservoir
 - Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir
 - Lake Five
 - Lake Frances
 - Pishkun Reservoir
 - Savage Lake

- Willow Creek Reservoir
- Big Hole River
- Missouri River (Three Forks to Great Falls)
- Ruby River
- 9 sections of Yellowstone River
- MDA inspected 13,998 watercraft from May 24 – September 3 with six crews at eight locations including:
 - Troy – HWY 2/56 (102 days)
 - Noxon – HWY 200/56 (102 days)
 - Plains – HWY 200/28 (102 days)
 - Ft Peck – locations near Ft. Peck Dam (84 days)
 - Hauser Lake
 - White Sandy (49 days)
 - York Bridge (10 days)
 - Canyon Ferry Lake – Silos (33 days)
 - Toston Dam (8 days)
- EWM control work occurred at every known infestation location including:
 - Noxon Reservoir – Sanders County Task force treated 172 acres with herbicide and 231 square feet of bottom barriers were placed by Avista.
 - Beaver Lake – Flathead County Task Force removed 26 pounds of EWM in Beaver Lake and installed additional bottom barriers near boat ramp.
 - Toston Reservoir – DNRC contracted to have divers manually remove 1547 pounds of EWM and installed bottom barriers near boat ramp.
 - Jefferson Slough – Jefferson Valley Conservation District hand pulled 2,841 pounds of EWM.
 - Fort Peck and Dredge Cuts – USACE and Petroleum County Conservation District performed herbicide test plots on 27 acres of EWM.

2013

- Governor’s Aquatic Blueprint was developed by Tim Baker, Natural Resource Policy Advisor.
- Transfer of MDA aquatic plant specialist to FWP.
- MDA awarded NWTF grants totaling \$205,283 to Sanders County, Valley County, University of Montana and Missoula County for AIS treatment, education, and research.

2014 and Future - Summary

MDA’s role in the aquatic program for FY 2014 and 2015 was reduced. MDA attends AIS Stakeholder meetings and is an active partner regarding aquatic issues. While FWP and DNRC are lead agencies, MDA contributes to the aquatic noxious weed issue, and three aquatic weeds are listed as noxious weeds on the MDA Statewide Noxious Weed List.

- MDA awarded a 2014 NWTF grant of \$27,284 to the University of Montana for AIS research.
- MDA awarded a 2015 NWTF grant of \$28,287 to the University of Montana for AIS research.
- In 2016, grant funding for aquatic noxious weeds shifted from the MDA NWTF to DNRC funding.