

# Keeping Invaders at Bay

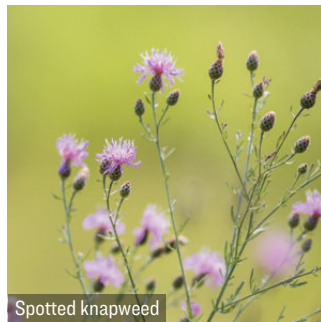
**Montana Invasive Species Council (MISC):** A statewide partnership working to protect Montana's economy, natural resources, and public health through a coordinated approach to combat invasive species



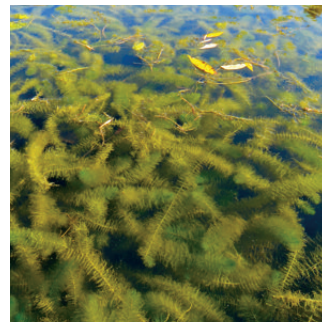
Russian olive



American bullfrog



Spotted knapweed



Eurasian watermilfoil



New Zealand mudsnails



Emerald ash borer



Zebra mussels



Leafy spurge

## A strategy for meeting our invasive species challenges

Two years in the making, MISC's Montana Invasive Species Strategic Framework offers more than 90 coordinated actions to better protect Montana lands, waters, and public health from invasive species:

- ▶ **COORDINATION:** Respond to invasive species as a shared responsibility by integrating management efforts
- ▶ **DETECTION:** Identify and share the locations of high-priority invasive species across jurisdictions
- ▶ **PREVENTION:** Engage resources and stakeholders to reduce the transport of invasive species into Montana
- ▶ **RAPID RESPONSE:** Build a rapid response plan to eliminate or mitigate emerging invasive species
- ▶ **CONTROL:** Grow capacity and expertise in managing invasive species to improve program effectiveness





Here in Montana, and across the northwest and Canada, the mussel detection brought the power and resources of many together as one—to give this issue the attention and priority it deserved. It gave us a second chance to keep the impacts from mussels at bay and protect the pristine Headwaters of the Missouri, Hudson and Columbia watersheds. When we all take responsibility for this problem and work together, we are seeing what we can accomplish together, and it is something remarkable.”

—Matt Wolcott, Incident Commander for Mussel Response, Montana DNRC



## MISC Accomplishments

◀ **December 2014** Governor signs executive order establishing the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC)

● **January-June 2015** 21 council members appointed representing key invasive species stakeholders and experts

● **June-February 2016** Assessment and gap analysis of Montana’s invasive species programs

● **April 2016** Governors Summit on Invasive Species

● **September - October 2016** MISAC hosts Listening Sessions across the state

● **December 2016** Montana Invasive Species Strategic Framework completed

● **December 2016** Governor signs executive order renewing MISAC (now MISC)

◀ ● **November 2016- April 2017** MISAC serves on Mussel Response Team leading long-term planning efforts and response preparedness for future detections

● **March 2017** Awarded a National Invasive Species Council grant to initiate an early detection rapid response project in the Missouri River Basin

● **April 2017** The Montana Invasive Species Council (MISC) is written into Montana Statute (2-15-3309)

● **April 2017** MISC hosts an Invasive Species Education Day at the Capitol Rotunda

● **April 2017** MISC hosts the state’s first invasive mussel rapid response exercise

● **April-June 2017** MISC participates with federal agencies to develop ‘Safeguarding the West from Invasive Species’ Initiative

● **June 2017** Montana’s Invasive Mussel Early Detection/Rapid Response Guidelines drafted

● **June 2017** MISC partners with the Montana Natural Heritage Program to incorporate invasive species data in Montana’s Natural Resource Information Database

◀ ● **July 2017** MISC, DNRC and FWP awarded ‘hot potato award’ by the Pacific Northwest Economic Region for their diligence in the 2016 invasive mussel response

## Other Accomplishments

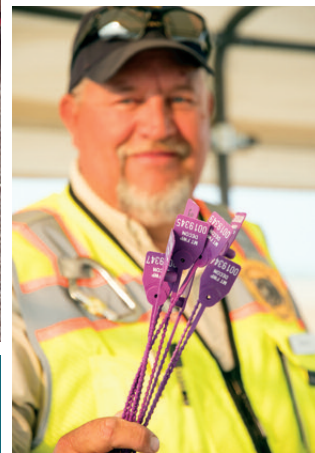
- ▶ More than 20 presentations to stakeholders and regional partners on Montana’s Mussel Response
- ▶ Invasive species education and outreach at events across the state
- ▶ National Invasive Species Awareness Week participation and outreach



## Looking Forward

### 2018 projects (2019 Biennium)

- ▶ Hosted Missouri River Basin Invasive Mussel Coordination Workshop, January 2018
- ▶ Hosted Plant Pest Rapid Response Exercise, March 2018
- ▶ Hosted Invasive Mussel eDNA Science Advisory Panel, April 2018
- ▶ Invasive Species Law Review—state, federal, tribal and local governments
- ▶ White paper on Lessons Learned from Mussel Response
- ▶ Invasive Mussel response exercises at Flathead and Fort Peck
- ▶ Statewide invasive mussel economic impact analysis
- ▶ Development of [invasivespecies.mt.gov](http://invasivespecies.mt.gov) website and landing page (to include pages for both MISC and the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission)
- ▶ MISC will co-host an invasive species workshop with the Western Governors’ Association (WGA) in conjunction with the 2018 Summit. The workshop is part of WGA’s Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative and will focus on early detection and rapid response at the Montana workshop.
- ▶ MISC will host the Montana Invasive Species Summit. The theme of the 2018 Summit will be the invasive species law review that is currently underway. Join us at the Radisson Colonial in Helena **November 15-16, 2018!**



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks watercraft inspection stations look for aquatic invasive species like mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil. Photos courtesy of Montana FWP.

## Why Montana cares about invasive species, and why Montana faces an urgent threat:

Invasive species include plants, animals, and pathogens that are non-native to our ecosystems and cause harm to natural and cultural resources, the economy, and/or human health. We are fortunate that Montana remains relatively free of invasive species that have wreaked havoc in other states.

It is imperative that we better protect Montana from the impacts of invasive species.

### Invasive species can damage property and natural resources. They can:

- ▶ Cost Americans up to \$137 million annually in impacts to agriculture, forestry, tourism, fisheries, utilities, buildings and natural areas
- ▶ Outcompete native species decreasing biodiversity
- ▶ Degrade and change sport fisheries
- ▶ Threaten key industries including agriculture, timber, hydro-electricity, and recreation
- ▶ Impede recreation such as boating, fishing, hunting, gardening, and hiking
- ▶ Spread easily by wind, water, animals, people, equipment, and imported goods
- ▶ Increase frequency and intensity of wildfires
- ▶ Alter ecosystem processes

## MISC Committees

**Data Management:** Committee to facilitate the development, implementation and enhancement of a coordinated information data management system for invasive species in Montana.

**Education and Outreach:** Committee to coordinate and promote invasive species information sharing between natural resource managers, scientists, educators, policy makers, stakeholders and the public.

**Invasive Woody Trees:** Committee to facilitate a more coordinated statewide network for management of invasive tree species across the state of Montana.

**Firewood:** Pathway-based Committee that focuses on preventing the spread of invasive species through the movement of firewood.

**Tree Pest:** Serves primarily as an information sharing body between multiple parties that have a role in tree pest issues throughout Montana.

“It is imperative that we do everything we can to protect Montana from the threat of invasive species that disrupt our land, water, and native species.”

—Governor Steve Bullock

**MISC Members and Partners**

- Agriculture Industry
- Blackfeet Nation
- Chippewa Cree Tribe
- Central Eastern Montana Mussel Response Team
- Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
- County Weed Districts
- Crow Tribe of Indians
- Fort Belknap Indian Community
- Ft. Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes
- Montana Conservation Districts
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Commerce
- Montana Department of Transportation
- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Montana Natural Resources & Conservation
- Montana State University Extension Services
- Montana Trout Unlimited
- Montana Wildlife Federation
- National Park Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- NorthWestern Energy
- Private Landowners
- Upper Columbia Conservation Commission
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services
- U.S.D.A. Animal, Plant, Health Inspection Services
- U.S. Forest Service



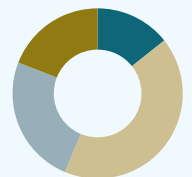
**Montana Invasive Species Council**  
 Stephanie Hester, Council Coordinator  
 (406) 444-0547

[dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/montana-invasive-species-program/misc](http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/montana-invasive-species-program/misc)

**MISC Financial Contributors from 2016-2017**

Avista.....	\$2,000
Missoula County Extension.....	\$3,000
Missoula County Weed District.....	\$17,000
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.....	\$9,980
Montana Association of Conservation Districts.....	\$500
Montana Department of Agriculture.....	\$10,000
Montana Department of Natural Resources.....	\$25,000
Montana Department of Transportation.....	\$10,000
Montana Weed Control Association.....	\$200
Summit Registrations.....	\$7,150
USDA Forest Service.....	\$10,000
Western Integrated Pest Management Center.....	\$10,000
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$104,830</b>

**Expenditures**



Member travel.....	\$14,000
2016 Summit.....	\$44,000
Invasive Species Assessment.....	\$25,830
Listening sessions and strategic framework.....	\$20,000
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$103,830</b>