

# Invasive Species Program at DNRC

REPORT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DNRC manages invasive species programs and two administrative attachments to help augment state programs and to coordinate invasive species issues with state and federal agencies, tribal governments, stakeholders, and the public. The programs include:

### THE MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL (MISC)

The Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) was formed in 2015 to advise the Governor on a science-based, comprehensive program to identify, prevent, eliminate, reduce, and mitigate the impacts of invasive species in Montana. The Council was codified in the 2017 Legislature and given additional authority. MISC is a statewide partnership working to protect Montana's economy, natural resources, and public health through a coordinated approach to combat invasive species.

### THE UPPER COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION (UC3)

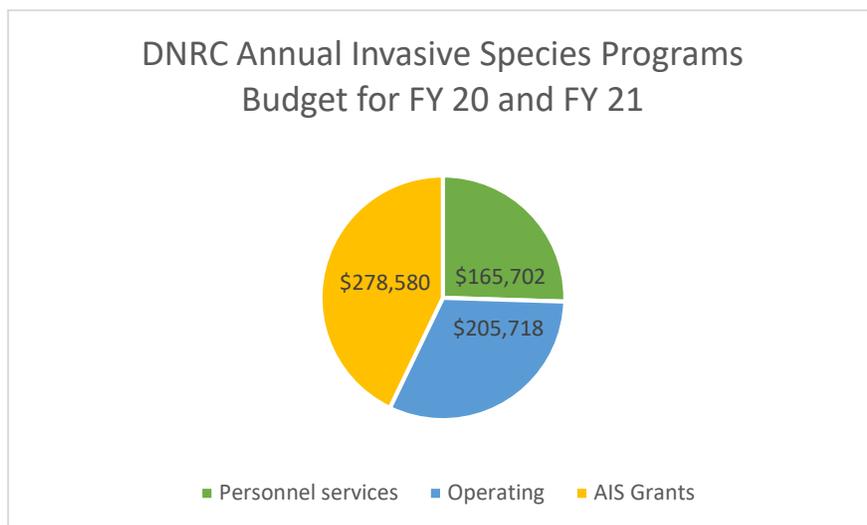
The Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3) was formed in 2017 and is tasked with a focused early detection and rapid response (EDRR) initiative. The purpose of the UC<sub>3</sub> is to protect the aquatic environment in tributaries to the Columbia River from the threat of invasive species.

### AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) GRANT PROGRAM

DNRC has managed the state AIS grant program since 2011 with funding provided through HB7 as part of the Reclamation and Development Grants Program. In the 2019 Legislature, funding for the program was appropriated through the AIS funding bill shifting it from HB7 to AIS grants in MCA 80-7-1017. The program is currently being redesigned and will be overseen by an advisory council of MISC.

### PROGRAM APPROPRIATION FOR THE 2021 BIENNIUM

To operate these programs, DNRC was appropriated \$650,000 per year for FY 20 and FY 21.



<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cadd/montana-invasive-species-program>

Personnel expenses: 2 FTEs to manage 3 programs

Operating expenses: MISC \$50k/yr.\*  
UC<sub>3</sub> \$40k/yr.\*  
Remainder operating: contracted services, supplies, communication, travel, training, rent, utilities

\*MISC and UC<sub>3</sub> operating funds are allocated for: member travel, science advisory panels, workshops, the Invasive Species biennial summit, and education and outreach activities.

This biennium staff and members of MISC and the UC<sub>3</sub> will collaborate to engage Montanans, implement programs, and efficiently and effectively address threats posed by invasive species. MISC will also redesign and recommend AIS grant awards. Through MISC and the UC<sub>3</sub> and the establishment of an independent scientific advisory panel, DNRC plans to accomplish the following:

- Provide policy-level direction, planning, and coordination for combatting harmful invasive species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others.
- Foster cooperation, communication, and coordinated approaches that support federal, state, provincial, regional, tribal, and local initiatives for the prevention, early detection, rapid response, and control of invasive species.
- Implement the Montana Invasive Species Strategic Framework and execute related projects.
- Implement UC<sub>3</sub> prevention, early detection, and rapid response work and coordination.
- Identify, coordinate, and maintain an independent science advisory panel that informs Montana's efforts based on the current status, trends, and emerging technology as they relate to invasive species management in Montana.
- Champion priority invasive species issues identified by stakeholders to best protect the state.
- Advise and coordinate with agency personnel, local efforts, and the scientific community to implement program priorities.
- Implement an invasive species education and outreach strategy.

DNRC works closely with FWP who manages AIS statewide. DNRC's grants support FWP's early detection efforts and support local efforts by providing technical support and financial resources. With these resources, local entities have:

- Surveyed their own waters – these efforts augment the statewide monitoring effort
- Participated in control efforts through hand pulls, herbicide treatments in places like the Jefferson Slough near Whitehall and Noxon Gorge in Sanders Co.
- Education and outreach efforts such as installing boot washing stations at fishing access sites along the Madison River
- Containment of emerging species—Phragmites (invasive riparian grass) on the Milk River
- Increase prevention efforts in their areas through supplemental check stations or using innovative techniques or pilot projects to increase the state's ability to detect unwanted AIS (e.g. sniffer dogs).
- Funds for emergency action to get sniffer dogs for rapid response



<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/montana-invasive-species-program>