



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

AIS Update 5/30/2019

Note from the AIS Bureau

It was a busy legislative session that resulted in continued funding and support for Montana's AIS prevention, early detection and education efforts. AIS field operations are in full swing with watercraft inspection and monitoring crews deployed around the state. Partners are a big part of this effort and I am excited about expanding local involvement and participation in the program this season. Nationally we continue to push for federal support for the AIS issue and for improved containment of mussels at source waters. We also continue to work closely with regional partners in the Columbia Basin and throughout the west to improve cooperation, coordination and consistency between AIS programs.

Thank you for your continued support for protecting our waters.

Tom Woolf, AIS Bureau Chief



AIS Prevention

- **Watercraft inspection stations** are now open state-wide. Over 40 locations are now conducting inspections in the state. To date, over 9,400 boats have been inspected and 8 mussel fouled vessels have been intercepted.
- **Tiber watercraft inspection stations** have several new and improved locations this season. FWP, in coordination with Liberty County, established a new inspection location for the Willow Creek access. The Bureau of Reclamation also constructed a new inspection location for the Marina access. Using BOR funds, new construction will be initiated this season to improve Tiber inspection sites and construct campground facilities to house inspection staff.
- **The St Regis and Plains inspection stations** are in new locations this season to improve station oversight and expand hours of operation. To improve program efficiency, the Lincoln station was closed this year. That traffic is now addressed by the Clearwater Junction station.



- **CSKT** is currently inspecting watercraft at the Ravalli station 24 hours a day.
- **House Bill 608:** Watercraft inspection stations are now decontaminating all ballast and wake-surf boats that enter the state and those that cross west over the Continental Divide. If stations do not have the capacity to decontaminate the boats on-site, the boats are locked to the trailer and a follow up decontamination is arranged.
- **Glacier National Park**, in coordination with CSKT, the Blackfeet Nation and FWP, is providing mussel sniffing canines this season to assist with watercraft inspection operations. Mussel detection dogs will be deployed in Glacier and at the Ravalli, Plains and Browning watercraft inspection stations intermittently this season to support the inspectors at the stations. Mussel sniffing canines are not utilized as a regular part of Montana's watercraft inspection program due to cost and the dog's limited work schedule, but this provides a good opportunity to enhance inspections.
- **Whitefish Lake** has moved their decontamination station to the City's boat parking area. This location is a much more convenient and accessible location for conducting decontaminations than in previous seasons. Great work Whitefish Lake Institute and the City of Whitefish for finding new and better ways to protect our waters.
- **Expanding watercraft inspection in eastern Montana:** FWP, in coordination with eastern conservation districts and DNRC, is exploring opportunities to increase conservation district involvement with management and operation of watercraft inspection stations at high risk locations. The goal of this effort is to expand local capacity of Districts to help address gaps, expand operational hours, increase local involvement and increase station oversight at inspection station in high risk areas.

Monitoring Program

- Three crews based in Kalispell, Great Falls, and Bozeman are currently out sampling for AIS around the state.
- Sampling crews have collected over 100 samples so far this season.
 - From those samples, 60 have been processed by the FWP AIS Lab for mussel veligers.
 - To date, no new AIS and no positive veliger samples have been detected.



- The Upper Columbia Conservation Commission awarded a contract to the Whitefish Lake Institute and the Flathead Biological station to help expand partner capacity and support for AIS early detection monitoring. This effort will be coordinated with FWP to expand partner participation in AIS early detection monitoring in the Columbia Basin.

Education and Outreach

- The Montana Learning Center (MLC) at Canyon Ferry and the Lewis & Clark Conservation District have been awarded a grant to host trainings on AIS curriculum for middle and high school teachers. The trainings will be held in October of 2019 and 2020 and are part of MLC's Steam in the Rockies program.
- Holly Church with the Flathead Lake Biological Station is working with an artist to print and paint 3D models of quagga mussels. The 3D mussels were used at the Mussel Walk events and will be used at public outreach events. Examples below:



Recent Events Involving AIS:

- May 1-3: Mussels Walks for school kids and the public were held at Flathead Lake West Shore State Park, Yellow Bay and Salish Point. CSKT, the Flathead Biological Station and the Flathead Lakers coordinated and hosted the events. Each day began with educational activities and a mussel-detection dog demo, followed by the mussel walk and beach clean-up.
- May 4: Rosebud County Conservation District and CEMIST provided outreach to the anglers at the Forsyth Catfish Bash Tournament.
- May 4: Parks AmeriCorps Team Leader Kent Sassatelli had an AIS station at the Migratory Bird Day event at the Helena Regulating Reservoir.
- May 6: Region 3 Warden Captain Adam Pankratz taught at the inaugural Guiding for the Future (G4F) course sponsored by FOAM. G4F provides advanced levels of knowledge and skill

development for professional fishing guides. The program's goal is to inspire dedicated stewardship of aquatic ecosystems while increasing knowledge, professionalism and ethics of fishing guides and the fly-fishing industry throughout Montana. AIS information was included in the training.

- May 7: Liz Lodman attended the Jefferson Valley Conservation District watershed event for 6th graders. Students learned about invasive mussels and did the Invader Inspector activity.
- May 18: Liz Lodman had a booth at the Craig Caddis Festival. Despite the rain and mud, it was very well attended.
- May 19 & 20: Big Sky Watershed Corps member Sarah Ganter attended the Wayfarers State Park Paddle Fest and Demo days.

Upcoming AIS Events:

- **Columbia Basin Team**, June 4th and 5th: The CRB is the coordinating group for AIS efforts in the Columbia River Basin. This group meets in Spokane June 4th and 5th to discuss regional AIS issues. <https://www.westernais.org/regional>
- **AIS Sampling Training**: For Natural Resource Professionals, NGOs, CD's and others that may be involved with AIS Sampling efforts or are interested in doing AIS surveys along with other job duties. **Billings June 18th**, **Bozeman June 19th** and **Great Falls June 20th**. Contact Craig McLane for more information: cmclane@mt.gov
- **Western Regional Panel of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Taskforce**, October 9th through 11th: The WRP is the coordination group for AIS issues in the West. This group will meet in Montana for the first time on October 9th through 11th in Missoula. <https://www.fws.gov/answest/meetings.html>
- **Innovations in Invasive Species Management**, December 10th through 12th. Coeur d'Alene, ID. Hosted by the Northern Rockies and the Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Councils. <https://www.invasiveplantcontrol.com/conference19/>

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

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Protect Our Waters Montana : 406.444.2440 CleanDrainDryMT.com

Visit www.CleanDrainDryMT.com for more information and outreach resources.

2019 Watercraft Inspections through May 28, 2019

Station	Station Manager	Inspections	Mussel Vessels
Anaconda (I-90 W)	FWP	771	4
Canyon Ferry Silos	FWP	334	
Canyon Ferry North	FWP	193	
Canyon Ferry Hellgate	FWP	17	
Canyon Ferry Goosebay	FWP	31	
Dillon (I-15 N)	FWP	427	2
Eureka (Hwy 93 S)	FWP	63	
Fresno Reservoir	FWP	53	
Hardin (I-90 W)	FWP	538	1
Helena (Hwy 12 W)	FWP	173	
St. Regis (I-90 E)	FWP	215	
Sula (Hwy 93 N)	FWP	63	
Troy (Hwy 2 E)	FWP	171	
Tongue River Reservoir	FWP	234	
Tiber Marina	FWP	1	
Tiber VFW	FWP	92	
Tiber Willow Creek	FWP	1	
Wibaux (I-94 W)	FWP	174	1
Partner Operated Stations			
Browning (Hwy 2 W)	Blackfoot Nation (FWP Contracted)	467	
Babb (Hwy 89 S)	Blackfoot Nation		
Cut Bank (Hwy 2 W)	Blackfoot Nation		
Birch Crk (Hwy 89 N)	Blackfoot Nation		
Clearwater Junction (Hwy 200 E/W)	Missoula County (FWP Contracted)	2,462	
Flowing Wells (Hwy 200 E/W)	Garfield Conservation District (FWP Contracted)	162	
Nashua (Hwy 2 W)	McCone Conservation District (FWP Contracted)	131	
Plains (Hwy 200 E)	CSKT (FWP Contracted)	203	
Ravalli (Hwy 200 W)	CSKT (FWP Contracted)	1,971	
Swan Lake	Swan Lakers	34	
Glacier National Park	National Park Service		
Whitefish: City Beach	Whitefish Lake Institute	110	
Whitefish: State Park	Whitefish Lake Institute	112	
FWP Regional Offices			
R1 Kalispell	FWP	211	
R2 Missoula	FWP	16	
R3 Bozeman	FWP	2	
R4 Great Falls	FWP	6	
R5 Billings	FWP	8	
R6 Glasgow	FWP	10	
R7 Miles City	FWP	9	
R8 Helena	FWP	7	
		9,472	8