

Exhibit 9  
EQC 9/27/2023

2022

MISC ANNUAL REPORT



# MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The Montana Invasive Species Council accomplished a lot during 2022, but the most important accomplishment was a concerted effort to work with you and other Montanans across the state to identify our invasive species priorities and concerns and work together on solutions to solve them. Through many hours of listening and work sessions, the council created a comprehensive work plan that lays out a roadmap to addressing those priorities over the next four years. From individual species and response preparedness to science advisory panels and increasing capacity, I am excited for the work that we will continue to accomplish together. Please take a moment to share in our successes from 2022, and we look forward to working with you in 2023!

**Bryce Christiaens, MISC Chair**

## MISC LEADERSHIP

- Chair Bryce Christiaens, Missoula County Weed District Manager
- Vice Co-Chair Tom Woolf, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks—AIS Bureau Chief
- Vice Co-Chair Steve Wanderaas, McCone County Conservation District—Board of Supervisors Chair

Since its inception in 2015, Stephanie Criswell has served as the Council Coordinator. In December 2021, Liz Lodman was hired as the Council Coordinator upon Stephanie's departure. MISC thanks Stephanie for her dedication to this program.



MISC Chair Bryce Christiaens



Liz, Bryce, Tom, & Steve

**Cover photo:**  
Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development



*The Montana Invasive Species Council is a statewide partnership working to protect Montana's economy, natural resources, and public health through a coordinated approach to combat invasive species.*

*MISC's work is guided by the objectives outlined in the Montana Invasive Species Framework, which is organized by the five tenants of invasive species management—coordination, prevention, detection, rapid response, and control. Projects are selected based on the highest priorities identified by partners, stakeholders, and the Council. MISC's 2022 accomplishments follow.*

## MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

### SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL – FIREWOOD

The 2017 legislature tasked MISC with creating and coordinating science advisory panels to evaluate and provide recommendations on key invasive species issues and topics. MISC identified the need to evaluate firewood as a pathway to introduce non-native insects and diseases that can impact Montana's forests.

A six-person panel, representing industry, tourism, researchers, and managers, met in Missoula on May 3 – 4.

The panelists addressed the following topics: evaluate opportunities for managing out-of-state transport of firewood; optimize the current external quarantine on ash material and understand enforcement or outreach options; explore opportunities to promote in-state firewood production and commercial distribution while managing forest conditions; and optimize public outreach by pooling resources among diverse stakeholders. The findings are found at [invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/science-advisory-panel](https://invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/science-advisory-panel).



**MAKE  
CAMPFIRE  
MEMORIES**  
**BRING MARSHMALLOWS,  
NOT FIREWOOD**

Invasive tree-killing insects and diseases that hitchhike on firewood can threaten Montana's forests.

Leave firewood at home—buy local firewood at or near your destination or collect firewood on-site when permitted.

**DONT MOVE  
FIREWOOD.org**

**BUY  
IT WHERE  
YOU  
BURN IT.**

**MISC**  
Montana Invasive Species Council

## ECONOMIC REPORT – EASTERN HEATH SNAILS

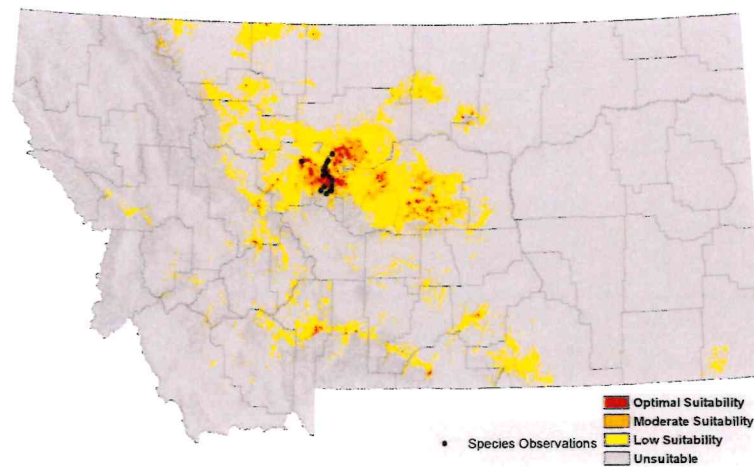
In 2020, MISC convened a science advisory panel to review the status of Eastern heath snails in Montana, discuss the gaps in our current understanding of their biology, review risks posed by this species, and determine the resources needed to initiate best management practices.

As a result of the panel recommendations, MISC contracted with the University of Montana-Bureau of Business and Economic Research to conduct an analysis and assess the potential economic impacts to the agricultural sector and its export market, as well as to Montana's broader economy.

The Eastern Heath Snail Economic Report, published in September 2022, provides predictions of the potential economic impacts of this snail to Montana. The estimates were scaled to the four-county region of the state where the species is most likely to be problematic: Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, and Judith Basin counties.

The report is available at [invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/reports-and-publications](https://invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/reports-and-publications).

Statewide model output classified into habitat sustainability.



(Source: Burkholder (2022a))



*Eastern heath snails*

## MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

### TABLETOP EXERCISE – FERAL SWINE RESPONSE

Feral swine are highly destructive animals. There are no known established populations of feral swine in Montana, but populations are as close as North Dakota, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Early detection and rapid response are the keys to success when dealing with feral swine.

MISC, in cooperation with the Montana Department of Livestock and MSU-Extension, hosted a tabletop exercise to work through a simulated response that would help identify the gaps, needs and challenges with current authorities across agencies and to identify the steps to ensure a timely and effective response. Twenty-eight individuals representing county, state, federal and tribal agencies attended the meeting.



Participants at the Feral Swine Response Tabletop Exercise held in June 2022.

# MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

During 2022, MISC took on a review of the Montana Invasive Species Framework and the creation of a work plan to guide MISC for the next four years. The process of identifying priority tasks to include in a MISC Work Plan created an opportunity to reach out to a broader audience of stakeholders for feedback. MISC held Listening Sessions and an Invasive Species Summit to gather input from stakeholders.

### **Listening Sessions - August 25 – 26**

Individuals from federal, state, and county agencies, tribes, industry, and nonprofit organizations were identified and invited to participate in a series of listening sessions organized by invasive species topics or activities.

Participants were asked to provide input on a variety of topics including the following: species or pathways of concern, science advisory panel topics, compliance issues, ways to improve response, species that could have financial impacts, and the increases in capacity that would provide meaningful change to species management.

The responses to these questions were summarized and shared with participants at the MISC Summit.

### **MISC Summit - October 25 – 26**

Nearly 120 stakeholders and partners attended the Invasive Species Summit held in Helena. Participants were prompted with questions to discuss in small groups. To ensure everyone could share their input, the “1-2-4-All” inclusive decision-making method was used to gather feedback and generate a work plan.



## UNITING TO PROTECT MONTANA

Assessing Montana's priority invasive species issues and collaborating to protect our lands, waters, cultural assets, and native species.



HOSTED BY:  
Montana Invasive Species Council  
Best Western Great Northern Hotel in Helena  
OCTOBER 25 – 26, 2022

## MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

### 2023-2026 MISC WORK PLAN

The invasive species concerns of Montana's stakeholders were used to create a work plan to focus the efforts of staff and the Council on the issues and species causing impacts now. The MISC Work Plan includes the following:

- **Invasive Species to Watch List**

This list was built from invasive species suggested at the Listening Sessions, narrowed to the top 14 species of concurrence at the Invasive Species Summit, and endorsed as a list of 10 invasive species by MISC. The list is intended to be used for educational purposes and represents species by different types and habitats.



## MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

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- **Science Advisory Panel Topic**  
The next Science Advisory Panel topics: Develop a process to assess the potential invasiveness of a species by effectively quantifying its impact to Montana’s economy and environment.
- **Impacts of Invasive Species Research**  
Working with researchers and economists, MISC will use the “10 Invasive Species to Watch” list to identify cumulative impacts and management gaps.
- **Activities to Build Capacity**
  - ◆ Provide land management professionals with the tools needed to effectively communicate the importance of invasive species management to new and diverse audiences.
  - ◆ Work with stakeholders to develop long-term, on-the-ground solutions to saltcedar, Russian olive, and other woody invasive species impacting riparian areas.
  - ◆ Continue to work to improve compliance with existing statewide regulations.
  - ◆ Engage regional experts in a workshop addressing the impact of a changing climate on the spread of invasive species.



*Zebra Mussels*



*Blueweed*



*Spongy Moth*



*Common Buckthorn*



*Red-eared Slider Turtle*



# MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

## AIS GRANT PROGRAM

MISC, in coordination with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, began overseeing the Aquatic Invasive Species Grant Program in 2020. Since that time, 37 grants valued at a total of \$720,799 have been awarded to Montana conservation organizations, counties, weed districts, conservation districts, universities, and other organizations. Grants can be used to fund public education or to implement projects to prevent, research, detect, control, or eradicate aquatic invasive species.

**For more information about the grant program, visit:**

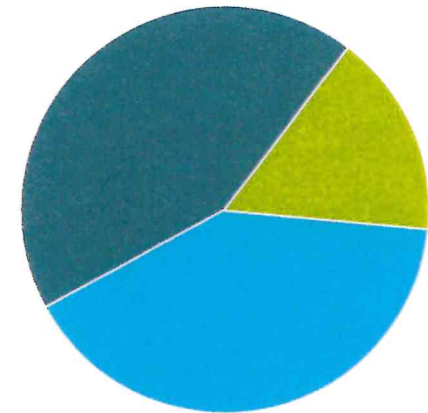
[invasivespecies.mt.gov/montana-invasive-species/Aquatic-Invasive-Species-Grant-Program](https://invasivespecies.mt.gov/montana-invasive-species/Aquatic-Invasive-Species-Grant-Program)



RESEARCH: Flathead Lake Biological Station

**16**  
EDUCATION &  
OUTREACH  
GRANTS

**6**  
RESEARCH  
GRANTS



**15**  
ON THE GROUND  
GRANTS



EDUCATION: Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance



ON THE GROUND: Fish, Wildlife & Parks - Lake Elmo

## MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

### OUTREACH EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Jan. 31 – Feb. 3	MT Weed Control Association Conference	Billings
March 2	MISC Meeting	Helena
March 8	Big Sky Watershed Corps Training	Helena
May 3 – 4	Firewood Science Advisory Panel	Missoula
May 19	CMR Working Group	Circle/virtual
June 1	MISC Meeting	Helena
June 6 – 10	MT Noxious Weed Awareness Weed	Helena
June 30	Feral Swine Tabletop Exercise	Helena
July 25 – 28	PNWER Summit – Feral Swine	Calgary AB
Aug. 24 – 25	MISC Listening Session	virtual
Sept. 1	Gallatin Conservation District	Manhattan
Sept. 7	MISC Meeting	Helena
Sept. 22	Feral Swine Public Meetings with Dept. of Livestock	Libby & Eureka
Sept. 16	Montana Environmental Education Association Conference	Missoula
Sept. 19	Forest Service R1 Wildlife Managers Meeting	virtual
Sept. 21	Webinar – Bryce Maxell	virtual
Sept. 28	Webinar – Tim Seipel	virtual
Oct. 4	Webinar – Emily Fusco and Eve Beaury	virtual
Oct. 24	FWP AIS Meeting	Helena
Oct. 25 – 26	MISC Summit	Helena
Oct. 27	UC3 Meeting	Helena
Nov. 7 – 10	North American Invasive Species Management Association	Florida
Nov. 16 – 17	MT Association of Conservation District Conference	Helena
Nov. 29 – Dec. 1	Grain Growers Convention	Great Falls
Dec. 7 – 9	Stockgrowers Association Convention	Billings
Dec. 9	Woody Invasives Working Group	Billings
Dec. 13	MISC Meeting	Helena

## MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

### OUTREACH EVENTS



#### **BIG SKY WATERSHED CORPS TRAINING**

MISC partnered with UC<sup>3</sup> and FWP to train new Big Sky Watershed Corps members about Aquatic Invasive Species and shared information they can use during their term on service in Montana.



#### **PACIFIC NORTHWEST ECONOMIC REGION SUMMIT**

MISC joined other state and provincial invasive species councils to educate U.S. and Canadian legislators, policymakers and business leaders about the damaging impacts of feral swine and AIS.



#### **GRAIN GROWERS CONVENTION**

MISC and the Central & Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team (CEMIST) collaborated to share information about the damaging impacts of feral swine and eastern heath snails on crop production.



#### **MISC WEBINARS**

MISC hosted three webinars focused on invasive species management and impacts. Recordings can be viewed at [invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/webinars](https://invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/webinars).

- Predicting suitable habitat for both weeds and biocontrol species – tools resource managers can use to measure risk, save time, and allocate resources.
- Plant invasions at multiple spatial scales: assessment, prevention and management.
- The case for consistent climate-smart regulations across jurisdictions.

## MISC MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

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### MISC COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Bryce Christiaens, Chair**

*Missoula County Weed District Manager*

**Steve Wanderaas, Vice Chair**

*McCone County Conservation District*

**Tom Woolf, Vice Chair**

*AIS Bureau Chief, Fish, Wildlife & Parks*

**Amy Gannon**

*Forest Pest Management Coordinator, Department of Natural Resources*

**Andy Welch**

*Hydropower Compliance Specialist, Northwestern Energy*

**Bob Gilbert**

*Private Landowner Representative*

**Brandon Gopher**

*Chippewa Cree Tribe*

**Charles Headdress**

*Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribe*

**Dennis Longknife**

*Climate Change Coordinator, Fort Belknap Indian Community*

**Gerald "Buzz" Cobell**

*Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department*

**Jan Stoddard**

*Tourism Office Program Manager, BrandMT, Department of Commerce*

**Jane Mangold**

*Noxious Weed Specialist, Montana State University - Extension*

**Jasmine Chaffee**

*State Weed Coordinator, Department of Agriculture*

**Jason Allen**

*Noxious Weed Coordinator, Department of Transportation*

**Leigh Greenwood**

*Conservation Organization Representative*

**Martin Charlo**

*Tribal Council, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes*

**Michael Bias**

*Fishing Organization Representation*

**Paul Rossignol**

*Wildlife Organization Representative*

**Steve Tyrrel**

*Agriculture Representative*

### FEDERAL PARTNERS

**Cara Riwai-Couch**

*U.S. Bureau of Reclamation*

**Gary Adams**

*U.S. Dept of Agriculture, APHIS*

**Jessica Zarate**

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

**Michelle Cox**

*U.S. Forest Service*

**Monica Pokorny**

*U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Services*

**Nadja Seymore**

*U.S. Customs and Border Protection*

**Patricia Gilbert**

*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

**Sue Mills**

*Yellowstone National Park*

**Wendy Velman**

*U.S. Bureau of Land Management*

### COUNCIL COORDINATORS

**Liz Lodman**

*MISC Administrator*

**Anna Connerton**

*MISC Administrative Assistant*

Visit [misc.mt.gov](https://misc.mt.gov) for more information and to access MISC meeting archives, events, reports, publications, and more.