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From: Montana FWP <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>
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To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] AIS Newsletter - March 2021



Aquatic Invasive Species **NEWSLETTER**

AIS Program Gears Up for 2021

The AIS program is gearing up for another busy season. Hiring is under way and some stations are scheduled to open mid-March. We are looking at another busy season ahead. Operations for this year will be similar to 2020 with a few minor changes including extending the season at several border stations. High boat traffic is expected again so we are preparing accordingly.

Watercraft inspection stations begin opening in mid-March to address snowbird traffic traveling from the Southwest. Stations scheduled to open in March are:

- Kalispell FWP office
- Ravalli
- Dillon
- Anaconda

Inspection stations will continue to open into May and will operate throughout the boating season. **AIS is hiring!** Watercraft inspector jobs can be found [here](#): Search key word: AIS

A total of 35 mussel-fouled vessels were intercepted in 2020. These vessels are transported from states where invasive quagga or zebra mussels have infested the waterways. Read the [2020 Watercraft Inspection Report](#).



Watercraft inspection stations on the southern and eastern borders play a critical role in the prevention of AIS spreading in Montana. [Click here](#) to see the map of watercraft inspections and mussel-fouled vessels at each station at each station.

Early Detection Monitoring Update

The AIS lab analyzed 2,706 samples from Montana waterbodies, a record number for the state. The lab also processed 887 samples from states in the Missouri River Basin in 2020.

- No evidence of mussels was found in Montana samples.
- New mussel populations were identified in Kansas and North Dakota waterbodies.

New detections of AIS in 2020 included:

New Zealand Mudsnaills

- Bluewater Fish Hatchery near Bridger (population eradicated)
- Marias River below Tiber Dam
- Missouri River near Loma
- Spring Meadow Lake in Helena

Faucet Snail

- Lost Coon Lake (Lost Loon Lake) near Whitefish
- Smith Lake near Whitefish

Curlyleaf pondweed

- Lower Glaston Reservoir north of Big Timber
- Deadman's Basin near Harlowton

Spiny water nymph (non-native aquatic plant)

- Frenchtown Pond near Frenchtown
- Private pond near Frenchtown Pond

Read the [2020 Monitoring Report](#).



Big Sky Watershed Corps Member Joins FWP



FWP is thrilled to have Jennifer Riddle join the FWP-AIS team where she will be working on AIS education and outreach during her term. Jennifer will focus on the AIS Industry Outreach project where she will meet with water-based recreation businesses such as marinas, boat shops, commercial outdoor retailers, angling shops, and guiding services. She'll also assist with the Don't Let It Loose project, AIS monitoring, and watercraft inspections. Welcome Jennifer!

New Supervisor Andrew Rivers

Andrew Rivers has joined the FWP AIS Bureau in Helena. Andrew took over for Kathi Montgomery in September as the new AIS Supervisor for the Central region, an area that covers Helena to West Yellowstone (approximately FWP Region 3 area). Andrew is originally from Virginia but fell in love with Montana 13 years ago when he was hiking the Continental Divide Trail from Mexico to Canada.

Andrew looks forward to the summer season and working with boaters to educate them how to clean, drain, and dry their watercraft. Andrew says, "I want to make a difference in protecting Montana's water and giving back to our natural resources."

Welcome Andrew!



Read the March 2021 Newsletter

The **full newsletter** has a list of Montana's Watercraft Inspection Station partners, meetings dates, webinars, news stories from the region and beyond, and a list of bills at the Montana 2021 Legislature focused on AIS.



>> [Download AIS Newsletter as a PDF document](#)



Incase you missed it!

Moss Balls infested with zebra mussels found in Montana.



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