

**Chris Taggart**

---

**From:** Montana FWP <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 10, 2021 4:38 PM  
**To:** Ravalli County Commissioners Office  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] AIS Newsletter - May 2021



## Aquatic Invasive Species **NEWSLETTER**

---

### **Record Boat Traffic in 2021**

Another busy boating season is here. Watercraft inspection stations have seen higher boat traffic than last year and more than twice the number of mussel-fouled boats. FWP staff and partners are busy training inspectors and setting up stations on major travel corridors around the state.

As you are on the road this season, stop by a watercraft inspection station and say "hi," even if you don't have a boat. Inspectors work long hours in all weather conditions and periodically deal with grouchy boaters. They have a tough job. Stop by and express your appreciation for the important work they do to help protect our waters from AIS. It's a long season and they need all the support and encouragement they can get.

Most watercraft inspection stations are now open. FWP staff have been busy setting up stations, training inspectors, working with partners, and getting the watercraft inspection program up and running. Inspectors are observing record boat traffic with more than 1,000 more inspections than this time in 2020.

Partners are playing a big part in this effort again in 2021. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, The Blackfeet Nation, Missoula County, and the McCone, Garfield, Powder River and Bighorn Conservation Districts are all contracting with FWP to manage watercraft inspection stations this year.

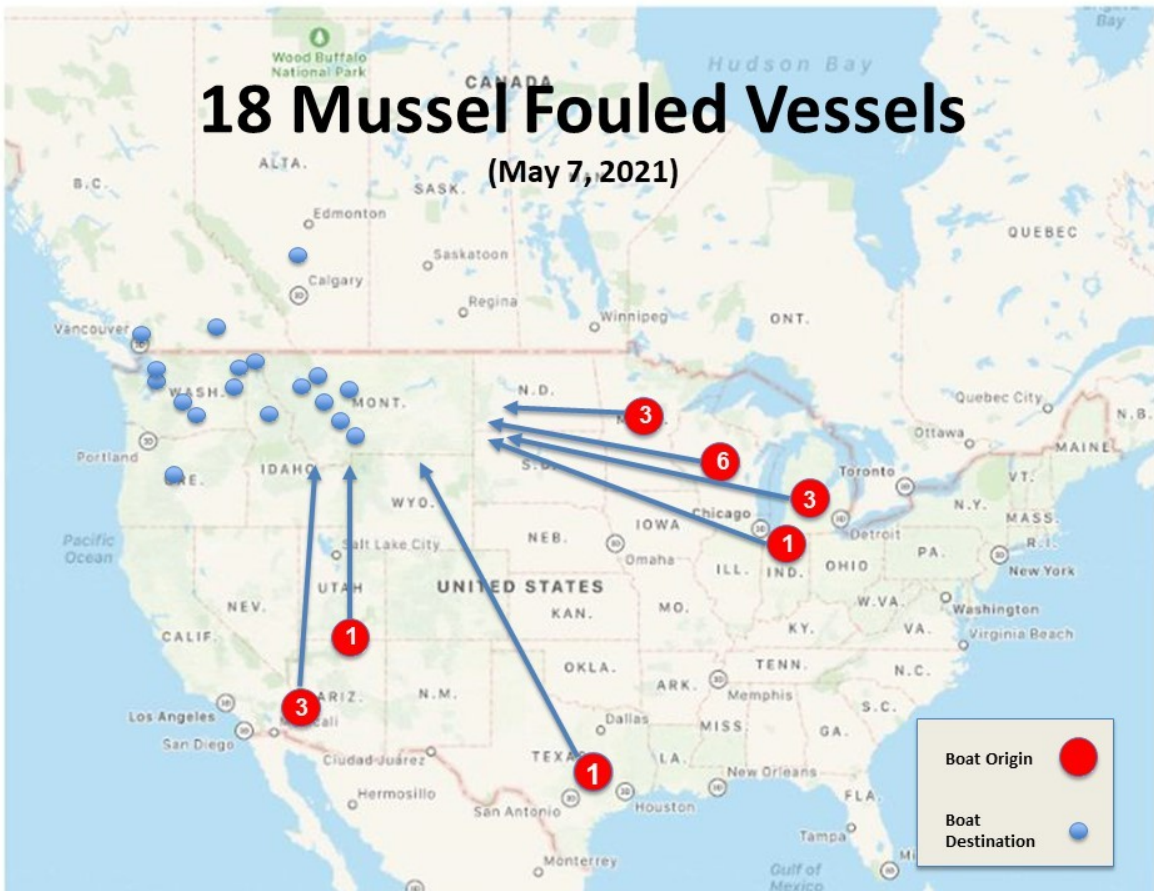


*CSKT watercraft inspector at Ravalli station*

Other inspections stations operating this summer include Glacier National Park, Yellowstone National Park and Whitefish Lake. All of these partners work closely with FWP to ensure a consistent and coordinated state-wide effort.

More than 7,000 watercraft have been inspected to date with 18 mussel-fouled vessels intercepted so far this season.

For more information on what inspections stations are seeing, go to: [Watercraft Inspection Dashboard](#) (updated weekly).



See the list of [Mussel Fouled Vessels Intercepted](#) as of May 7, 2021.



*Garfield County Conservation District watercraft inspectors at Wibaux station*

---

## **Moss Ball Update**

Zebra mussel-infested moss balls were first identified in aquarium nursery stock on March 3. An observant pet store employee in Seattle identified what looked to be zebra mussels in moss ball aquarium plants and reported it to the U.S. Geological Survey Nuisance Aquatic Species. Montana AIS staff were notified of the issue and rapidly visited all pet stores in the state. Mussel infested moss balls were identified and removed from multiple locations.

Further investigation found these infested moss balls originated from the Ukraine where they were collected from local lakes. Zebra mussels are native to this area. The mussels hitchhiked on moss balls when they were imported into North America and into pet stores all across the U.S. and Canada. The US Fish and Wildlife Service quickly took action, supporting state efforts to remove the product for sale at pet stores and online. Live mussels were detected in some states, but no live mussels were identified in Montana.

- S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidance for disposing of moss balls: **Destroy! Don't Dump!**
- Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council guidance for hobbyists, retailers, and water gardens: **PIJAC**

- PJAC new release



**ALERT: Zebra mussels discovered in moss balls sold at pet stores in Montana and other states.**

If you have purchased moss balls during the past year, please dispose of them by freezing overnight, then discard in the trash.



The graphic features a yellow background with a close-up of a hand holding a moss ball containing a zebra mussel. To the right is a whole moss ball and two more zebra mussels. Below the text is a dark blue section with a photo of a hand holding a glass over a moss ball in an aquarium. At the bottom right are two circular logos: one for 'DON'T LET IT LOOSE' with a globe and the text 'BE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERS', and another for 'MONTANA WILDLIFE & PARKS' with a tiger's head.

## AIS Early Detection

AIS early detection is gearing up for another season. Seasonal staff are now being trained and will be traveling the state to conduct AIS sampling and surveys beginning in late May.

This season we are looking for partners that are interested in learning more about AIS identification and sampling methods. Please **contact us** if you have a group or organization that would be interested in a workshop or training.



# NISAW

NATIONAL INVASIVE  
SPECIES AWARENESS WEEK

## National Invasive Species Awareness Week May 16 - 22

Click the link to register for webinars. Times have been converted to Mountain Time.

- Monday, May 17 Noon-1:00 pm: **The Climate Crisis and Invasive Species**
- Tuesday, May 18 7:00am-11:30pm: USGS Special Event **Biological Threat Surveillance Tools**
- Tuesday, May 18 Noon-1:00pm: **The Model Legislative Framework for State Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Programs and Resource Toolkit for Local Governments**
- Wednesday, May 19 Noon-1:30pm: **The Regulatory Process for Classical Weed Biological Control**
- Thursday, May 20 Noon-1:00pm: **Aquatic Plant Management Priorities**
- Friday, May 21 Noon-1:00 pm: **A Comparison of State Noxious Weed Lists and The Western Weed Action Plan**

---

### Big Sky Watershed Corps Members in Montana

Montana has three Big Sky Watershed Corps members working on AIS outreach and education this year. They will be traveling across the state visiting boating and outdoor businesses and providing AIS information and materials. Reach out to these members if you'd like more information or know a business they should visit.



- **Brant Dupree** has returned for a second term working for the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC<sup>3</sup>) and the Missoula County Weed District based in Missoula. Brant will visit businesses west of the Continental Divide. He is an inspector at the Clearwater Junction watercraft inspection station, too.
- **Colin Threlkeld** is working for the Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team (CEMIST) based in Great Falls. He will visit businesses east of the Continental Divide. Colin will also focus on AIS outreach to agriculture producers and irrigators and provide information about feral swine, tree pests and noxious weeds.
- **Jennifer Riddle** is working for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks based in Helena. She will visit businesses east of the Continental Divide, sharing the area with Colin. Jennifer also works on projects for the Don't Let It Loose program to inform aquarium pet owners about rehoming pets rather than dumping them into waterways.

Brant, Colin, and Jennifer conducted AIS training for their fellow **Big Sky Watershed Corps members** on April 28 in Bozeman. These young professionals now have a better

understanding of AIS issues they can share with their host organizations and constituents.



*Big Sky Watershed Corps member AIS training in Bozeman*

---

## **Beaver Lake**

In 2011 Eurasian watermilfoil, an invasive aquatic plant, was discovered in Beaver Lake in northwest Montana. Since the detection of this small cluster of invasive plants, the Whitefish Lake Institute and FWP have been keeping them in check and preventing them from spreading to nearby waterbodies including Whitefish Lake. Control efforts include divers using underwater vacuums to suck the plants up by their roots, pulling plants by hand and installing fabric mats to cover the plants and prevent growth.

A new sign was installed at the Beaver Lake Fishing Access Site to remind recreators to avoid snagging fishing hooks on the barriers and ensure boats are free of vegetation when pulling out of the water. Milfoil survey and removal efforts will continue at Beaver Lake this summer.

# BEAVER LAKE

## FISHING ACCESS SITE REGULATIONS

- Day use only. No overnight camping.
- Discharge of firearms & weapons prohibited (including paintball guns).
- Pets must be on a leash and under control.
- Pack In / Pack Out. Do not litter.
- No fires or cutting firewood.
- No fireworks.

Other regulations apply. Contact your local Fish, Wildlife & Parks office for more information.

### BEWARE OF EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL

This aggressive  
invasive plant has been  
found in Beaver Lake.

Barriers are installed  
near the pier and ramp  
to limit its growth.

**Do not move or hook  
into the barriers.**

Don't move vegetation.



**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**

Call 1-800-TIP-MONT to report illegal activity.

## Hell Creek Boat Ramp Stencil

Local partners do a great job finding new ways to get the "Clean Drain Dry" message out there. Dusty Olsen and volunteers with the Garfield County Conservation District, Central and Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team (CEMIST) and Montana State Parks painted a "Clean Drain Dry" message on the boat ramp at Hell Creek last month.

Dusty was assisted by helpers Chris and Charlott, and Hell Creek State Park staff Tom and Jerry.



*Hell Creek State Park boat ramp*

---

## **AIS Billboards**

Motorists hauling watercraft will be reminded of the “Clean Drain Dry” message this summer at these locations.

- Near Evaro on Highway 93



- Near Montana/North Dakota border on I-94



## 2021 Montana Legislature

The 2021 Legislature has adjourned. Here are the AIS-related bills that passed. Find the latest information from the 2021 Legislature at <https://leg.mt.gov/>.

- HB 40 - Revising laws on mandatory decontamination of vessels with ballast and bladders.
- HB 152 - Requiring drain plugs to be disengaged to prevent aquatic invasive species.
- SB 384 - Revise laws related to Aquatic Invasive Species hydroelectric fee.

## AIS In The News

### MONTANA NEWS

- Coordinating with seaplane pilots to stop the movement of AIS
- Montana watercraft inspection stations work to keep out invasive species
- Mussel-fouled boat interceptions
- CSKT hard at work inspecting boats
- Glacier National Park opens inspection stations in May
- Volunteer program monitors water quality and searches for invasive species
- Fish limits lifted on Lake Elmo in anticipation of invasive clam eradication
- The Montana Invasive Species Council on Montana Ag Live

## REGIONAL / NATIONAL NEWS

- RV Prepper podcast about AIS and how MT FWP works to stop it from invading Montana waters
- Utah DWR and partners announce revolutionary new method for decontaminating boats, removing invasive quagga mussels
- Yellowstone Officials Work to Remove Invasive Cisco Fish Species
- ND steps up to address the threat of AIS
- Integrated Report Highlights Great Lakes Lower Food Web Changes and Invasive Mussel Impacts
- Case Studies: Impact and Control of Invasive Mussels at Hydropower Plants
- California Water District users may have to pay for treating San Justo Reservoir
- The American public is responsible for identifying over a quarter of new invasive species

---

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



---

Follow Protect Our Waters Montana on Facebook:



---

This email was sent to [commissioners@rc.mt.gov](mailto:commissioners@rc.mt.gov) using GovDelivery, on behalf of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Email: [fwpfsh@mt.gov](mailto:fwpfsh@mt.gov) | Phone: (406) 444-2440



[Manage My Subscriptions](#) | [One-Click Unsubscribe](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you believe the email to be malicious and/or phishing email, please use the **Phish Alert** button.