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From: Montana FWP <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 6, 2023 3:29 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FWP gearing up for a new watercraft inspection station season



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

FWP gearing up for a new watercraft inspection station season

Some stations will open in early March

HELENA Several watercraft inspection stations begin operation in early March to check snowbird boat traffic returning from mussel-positive areas such as Lakes Mead, Havasu, Pleasant and Powell. Boat owners coming to Montana must have their vessel inspected for aquatic invasive species (AIS) at a Montana watercraft inspection station prior to launch.

The stations near Dillon, Ravalli and Anaconda will open March 11. FWP works closely with partners for station operation and contracts with the Beaverhead Conservation District for operation of the Dillon station and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for operation of the Ravalli station. Inspections will also be available at the FWP Region 1 office in Kalispell in March to help accommodate requirements for Mac Days.

During 2022, crews conducted more than 119,000 inspections and intercepted 53 mussel-fouled boats. More than 600 boats were found with aquatic weeds.

Late last year, zebra mussels were detected 70 miles from Montana in Pactola Reservoir near Rapid City, South Dakota. Watercraft inspection efforts are being adjusted to address the threat of zebra mussels moving into Montana from the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Watercraft inspection stations are Montana's first line of defense to prevent the movement of AIS which can have devastating impacts on Montana waterways.

Boat owners should ensure their watercraft, trailers and gear are clean, drained and dry before transporting and need to be aware of Montana's inspection rules:

- All watercraft coming into Montana from out of state must be inspected prior to launching.

- All watercraft traveling west across the Continental Divide into the Columbia River Basin must be inspected prior to launching.
- Anyone transporting watercraft must stop at all open watercraft inspection stations they encounter.
- And all boaters are reminded to always clean drain and dry their boat, live wells, anchors, boots and gear when leaving the water.

-fwp-

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