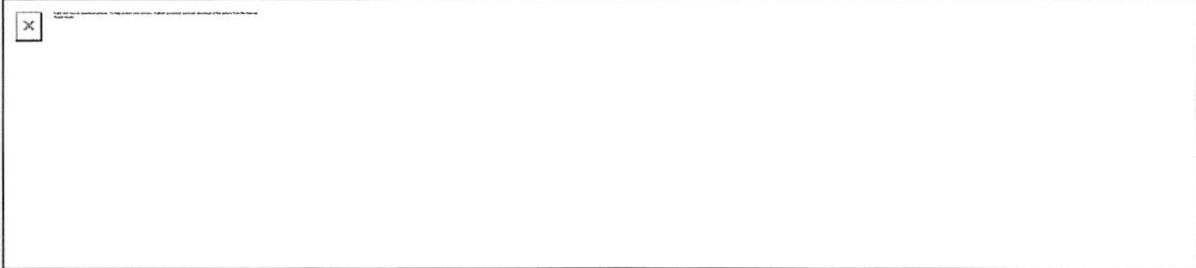


From: Montana Mussel Response <montanamusselresponse@public.govdelivery.com>
Sent: Friday, March 3, 2017 2:55 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: Watercraft inspection stations open in Pablo, Clearwater Junction



Watercraft inspection stations open in Pablo, Clearwater Junction

Montana's first watercraft inspection stations opened Friday in Pablo and at Clearwater Junction at the junction of Highways 200 and 83.

The inspection stations will be operated by the Flathead Basin Commission under a memorandum of understanding with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

These inspection stations represent the first of what will be an expanded aquatic invasive species inspection station program for the 2017 boating season in Montana.

This effort is in response to the positive detection last fall of aquatic invasive mussel larvae in Tiber Reservoir and suspected presence in Canyon Ferry Reservoir and the Missouri River near Townsend. These detections led Gov. Steve Bullock to declare a natural resource emergency and form a joint mussel response team in November. The mussel response team has developed a course of action for expanded inspection stations, decontamination stations at Tiber and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs and a more intensive monitoring and public education program.

"Boaters and water users in Montana can expect some significant changes in 2017 as we work diligently to protect our water bodies from aquatic invasive mussels, particularly west of the Continental Divide," said Eileen Ryce, FWP fisheries division chief.

The inspection stations in Pablo and at Clearwater Junction will be operated by the FBC through April 14, 2017, after which FWP will take over operations for the remainder of the season.

FWP is also seeking public comment on proposed rules that would require all water craft coming into Montana from out of state to be inspected prior to launching on a Montana waterbody. These rules would also require water craft leaving Canyon Ferry and Tiber Reservoir to go through a decontamination process. Additionally, these rules would require watercraft to be inspected prior to launching when crossing from east to west across the Continental Divide.

“A critical piece of our response to aquatic invasive mussels is to protect waters that are currently mussel-free,” Ryce said. “Inspection stations are a key part of this plan. However, everyone from fisherman to irrigators to stand-up paddle boarders must take responsibility for following our Clean, Drain, Dry protocols.”

Clean, drain and dry are simple measures that can go a long way in protecting Montana’s waters.

Clean all the mud and debris off your water craft and equipment. Drain all the water from them and make sure everything is dry. These simple steps prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.



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