



Aquatic Invasive Species NEWS

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August 23, 2019

Note from the AIS Bureau:

As the summer boating season draws to a close, the AIS program is still hard at work around the state. After visiting a number of FWP and partner watercraft inspection stations this summer, it is clear the stations are running better than they ever have. That is not to say we aren't still dealing with some challenges out there. Maintaining staffing levels as college students return to school is an issue we address every season. And maintaining quality control to ensure staff follow all protocols is always a challenge late in the season. These are issues that we continue to address and we continue to explore new strategies to improve station operations as we near the end of the boating season.

Some stations are schedule to close after Labor Day and some will operate through October. Station operating dates and times are variable depending on the location and can be found here: [Stations](#).

The date for the **Montana AIS Summit** is **December 4-5** at Carroll College in Helena. At the Summit we will review the 2019 season and discuss strategies to continue to develop and improve the program in 2020. We will be reaching out to you in the coming month for input, ideas, topics and issues that you would like to discuss during the Summit. All are welcome to attend. You will be hearing from us soon.
Tom Wolf, AIS Bureau Chief

Watercraft Inspections

- Over 82,000 watercraft have been inspected so far this season. Between FWP and partner operated stations, we are on track for inspecting a record number of boats this season.
- 13 mussel fouled vessels have been intercepted.
- The new AIS Boat Inspection Dashboard displays watercraft inspection information updated weekly. Take a look: [Inspection Data](#)
- FWP enforcement staff have issued nearly 100 AIS citations and over 200 written warnings so far this season. Citations and warnings are primarily issued to boaters for failing to stop at

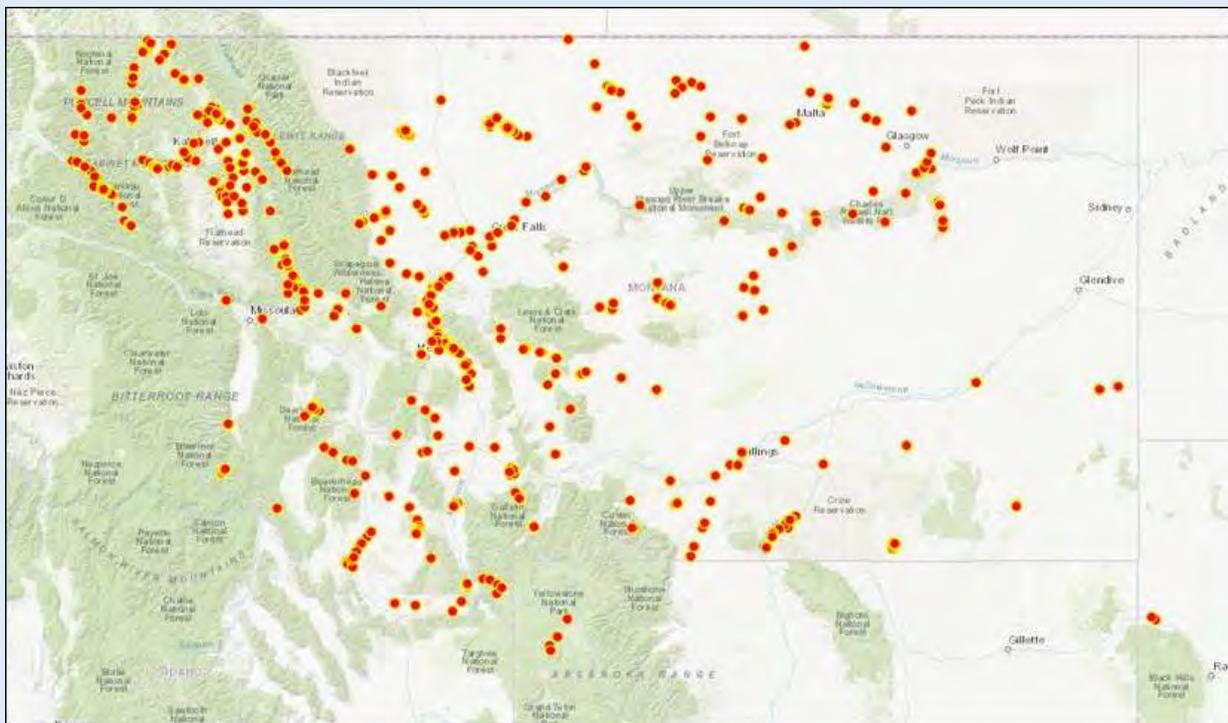


inspection stations. This number does not include AIS enforcement provided by other state, tribal, county and city enforcement entities

- The new watercraft inspection stations at Broadus and St. Xavier that opened in July are working very well. Powder River and Big Horn Conservation Districts have gathered a dedicated group of people to help address high risk boat traffic in Eastern Montana.
- National Park Service inspections: To date, Glacier National over 8,600 inspections, Yellowstone has conducted over 1,500 inspections and Bighorn NRA has conducted over 1,600 inspections.

Early Detection Monitoring

- Over 700 plankton tow samples have been collected for mussel veliger early detection analysis.
- Over 180 waterbodies have been sampled for all taxa AIS so far this season.
- Early detection monitoring data can be viewed here: [2019 Early Detection Monitoring Data](#)



- The FWP AIS Lab has processed over 1,000 samples so far this season.
 - Montana high risk waterbody samples are processed within 6 days after receiving them.
 - No zebra or quagga mussel veligers have been detected in Montana samples this season.
 - Lab staff recently detected veligers in a Kansas sample which led to the new detection of an established adult population. See related link at [Kansas WPT](#).



- July 8-10: Aquatic plant surveys were conducted on Noxon Reservoir in preparation for Sanders County's Eurasian watermilfoil treatment.

- July 15-17: An Asian clam delineation survey was conducted at Lake Elmo and surrounding waters in Billings. Only 5 small live Asian clams were detected, however many dead clams were located around the perimeter of the lake.
 - Delineation surveys will continue this fall for Lake Elmo and the surrounding area.
- July 29-Aug 1: The Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS), in partnership with FWP, conducted an intensive invasive mussel survey in areas of Tiber Reservoir. The survey utilized both molecular (eDNA) and microscopy methods in an attempt to get a better picture of whether invasive mussels are still in Tiber Reservoir and if so, where they are located. Labs are currently processing the microscopy and eDNA samples.
- August 14th: FWP staff conducted a survey of Beaver Lake (near Whitefish after Eurasian milfoil plants were detected earlier this year. Three milfoil plants were found and removed by Whitefish Lake Institute and FWP staff. Follow up surveys will continue to ensure this population is eradicated.



Outreach and Education

- AIS rack cards have been updated to include new laws passed by the 2019 Legislature.
- The Montana State University Extension magazine [Lives and Landscapes](#) featured the story [“Place Invaders”](#) in the Summer 2019 edition.



- The FWP Boat Education Program is promoting Respectful Boating Pledge campaign. The pledge cards include a “Clean, Drain Dry” message for watercraft owners.



fwpmontana.gov

RESPECTFUL Boater Pledge

- I give other users space. I don't get close to people fishing or swimming.
- I stay clear of other boats and fishing lines and plan a path to avoid them.
- I don't block launching areas by visiting or unloading gear. I have things ready to go before I head to the launch area.
- I keep my distance from wildlife.
- I leave it better than I found it. I always pack garbage out, even if it's not mine.
- I always Clean, Drain, and Dry my boat to help prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

 MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS



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 MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

News and Events:

- Keep it up Montana. Clean Drain Dry you boat and gear. [Clean Drain Dry](#)
- Coordination between inspection stations: [Inspection](#)
- Staff leaving for the season results in changes at Willow Creek Station: [Tiber changes](#)
- “Smiles and information”. Great work CSKT. [CSKT Inspections](#)
- Inspectors in Minnesota prevent mussel introduction: [Minnesota news](#)
- South Dakota planning to step up prevention efforts: [South Dakota Mussels](#)
- Mussels found in new Texas waters: [Texas Mussels](#)

July 11: FWP AIS Supervisor Austin Jaynes spoke at the [Cascade Conservation District's River Campaign Speaker Series](#) about “A Day in the Life of a Watercraft Inspector.”



July 13: Big Sky Watershed Corps Member Mitch Hoffman and Mark Werley hosted an AIS booth at the Fort Peck Water Carnival traditionally held the last day of the Governor's Cup Walleye Tournament.

July 20: Big Sky Watershed Corps Member Mitch Hoffman hosted an AIS booth at the Paddle Fest in Helena.



September 12-14: Columbia Basin Transboundary Conference. Kimberly, BC. [Transboundary](#)

October 9-11: Western Regional Panel of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Taskforce, Missoula. [WRP](#)

December 4-5: SAVE THE DATE: The Montana AIS Summit at Carroll College in Helena. More details to follow.

December 10-11: Innovations in Invasive Species Management. Coeur d'Alene, ID. Hosted by the Northern Rockies and the Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Councils. [NRIPC](#)