

# Missouri Basin "River Watch" Newsletter

*A 100th Meridian Partnership Program between resource managers, Marinas and resorts and other water users to prevent the introduction of zebra mussels into the Missouri River Basin.*



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## The Missouri Basin "RIVER WATCH" Program

As part of this effort to prevent the inadvertent introduction of **ZEBRA MUSSELS** (and other aquatic invasive species) into the Missouri Basin on trailered watercraft, all seven Missouri Basin states, federal, tribal and local agencies in the basin and some of the businesses that depend on the good health of the river for their economic survival have partnered to establish ten traveler information radio stations on all major east-west cross-country highways, conducted public education efforts using all media outlets, developed and deployed new signs on all boat ramps on the river and established a network of monitors to detect the early presence of zebra mussels. So far this effort has prevented any documented introduction of zebra mussels into the system despite the fact that they are found in great abundance in the Mississippi River, many of its tributaries and a number of lakes in neighboring states.

The "**River Watch**" program is the partnership between government and business that establishes public outreach and education "mini-outlets" at business sites frequented by out-of-state boaters. Business partners participating are asked to prominently display information brochures and posters and to be educated enough on the issue to answer questions from the public. Government agencies provide all of the display materials and support needed to make that happen. **PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING THIS IMPORTANT PROGRAM** and help safeguard the river's future and the economic health of your business. Here is how you can become a "**River Watch**" partner:

Contact Bill Zook at (360) 427-7676 or [bjzook2@msn.com](mailto:bjzook2@msn.com) and express your interest. Someone will contact you on site to answer any questions you have and help you set-up a small professional display with informational brochures at your place of business. Simply e-mail any questions or requests for help in maintaining your participation to the above e-mail address and they will be promptly handled. No bureaucracy here!

***We simply can't do this without you, so please help us and yourself by participating,***



**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™**

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

- Bill Zook, Zebra Mussel Outreach Coordinator  
Pacific State Marine Fish Commission

## Zebra Mussels in Montana?

The vulnerability of Montana became very clear during 2005. In spring of 2005 Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks was contacted by an angler who was aware of the Montana boat inspection program and wanted his boat inspected prior to launching because he suspected that his boat was contaminated with zebra mussels. This was the first report of Zebra Mussels in Montana. The boat was purchased in Indiana by a Montana resident who noticed what he suspected to be zebra mussels as he was trailering the boat home. The angler trailered his new acquisition across the 100th Meridian and intended to launch it at Canyon Ferry Reservoir in Montana. He did however make the right choice and called Montana FWP prior to launching and the boat was cleaned thoroughly and passed a boat inspection before touching any Montana waters.

During the fall of 2005 Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks received another call about a zebra mussel threat. A peanut butter jar containing several zebra mussels was left on the doorstep of the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge office near Fort Peck Reservoir. The jar was left anonymously, officials do not know if the jar was left as a Halloween prank or as a warning that zebra mussels were or could be placed in Fort Peck Reservoir. Fort Peck reservoir is a very large reservoir on the Missouri River with 246,000 surface acres and 1,520 miles of shoreline; it is also one of the most popular fishing areas within the state and receives boaters from all over the region. If zebra mussels were established in Fort Peck they would be very difficult to detect and control due to the sheer size of the lake and would quickly spread around the state due to its popularity as a boating and fishing reservoir.

Montana contains the headwaters for the Columbia River Basin and the Missouri River Basin. As such any invasive species within the state would have the potential to easily spread downstream. If Montana waters become positive with zebra mussels then the entire Columbia River and Missouri River basins are at greater risk of introduction because of the planktonic stage of zebra mussels being able to disperse easily through downstream dispersal.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will continue to actively monitor for zebra mussels as well as for other invasive species and will continue to operate boat inspection stations. The agency hopes that if zebra mussels are present within the state that they will be detected early so that rapid response actions can be put in place to contain and limit their further spread. For further information on the Montana Aquatic Nuisance Species Program contact Eileen Ryce the Montana Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator at 406-444-2449.

- Eileen Ryce, Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks



## Recreational Boaters Encouraged to Prevent the Spread of ANS in Kansas

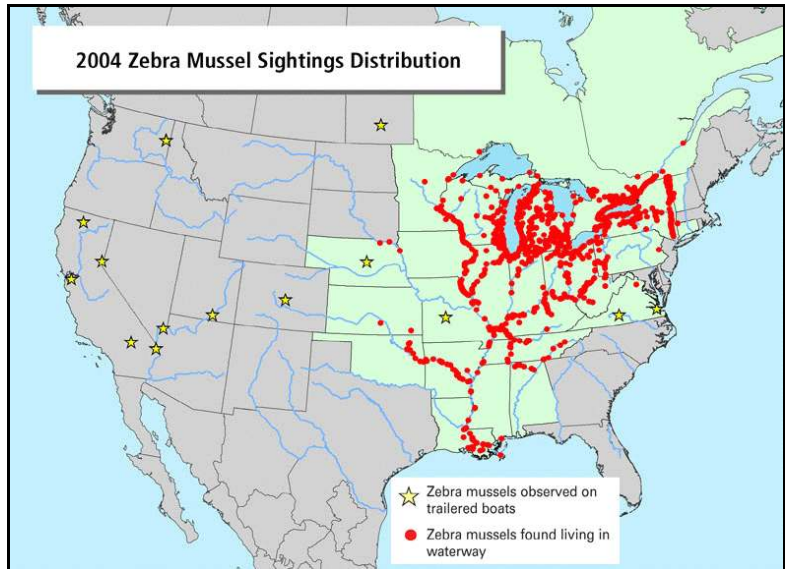
As you visit public waters across the country, you may notice new signs warning of Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS). The Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker program is a nationwide campaign encouraging the responsible use of public waters by teaching users about precautions to prevent the spread of ANS. An aquatic nuisance species is a non-indigenous species that threatens the diversity and abundance of native species or the ecological stability of infested waters, or commercial, agricultural, or recreational activities dependant on such waters. ANS such as zebra mussels can unknowingly be transported by boaters on recreational equipment. In Kansas, Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker signs have been placed at every public boat ramp across the state. These signs remind recreational users of their responsibility to ensure that ANS are not spread between waterbodies by keeping their watercraft and equipment clean.

In El Dorado Reservoir, Kansas, and the Walnut River below the reservoir, adult zebra mussels can be easily found attached to rocks along the shoreline. Swimmers and waders should wear protective clothing to prevent direct contact with the zebra mussel's razor-like shell. The zebra mussel larvae are free-floating and microscopic, which enables aquatic users to unknowingly transport them in standing water. Once zebra mussels become established, they are nearly impossible to eradicate. All aquatic users (especially boaters visiting El Dorado Reservoir) MUST drain and clean their equipment before launching in a new waterbody.

- Jason Goekler, Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator  
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

### To Report a Zebra Mussel Sighting, You Can Do Any of the Following:

- Call 1-800-437-2744. This is the Bonneville Power Administration and Bureau of Reclamation Crime Witness Number, which also takes reports of zebra mussel sightings. They will then contact your state's fish and game agency to alert them of the sighting.
- Call you local state fish and wildlife agency and report the sighting. Often times, an agency representative will come to the scene.
- Talk to the boat owner and encourage him/her to remove and properly dispose of the zebra mussels before placing the boat in any water body.



## Zebra Mussel Basics

### Description

- A zebra mussel looks like a small clam with a D-shaped shell. Usually it has alternating dark and light stripes (thus the name)
- Usually the adult is the size of a fingernail
- Usually found attached to hard surfaces in clusters
- Young zebra mussels look like black pepper and feel like sandpaper when attached to a boat surface

### How to prevent zebra mussels from hitching a ride as you leave a body of water:

- **Inspect** your boat and trailer.
- **Remove** any plants and animals.
- **Drain** lake or river water from your motor, live well, and bilge while on land.
- **Dispose** of unwanted live bait in a trash receptacle.
- **Rinse** your boat, trailer, and equipment with high-pressure or hot water.
- **Dry** your boat and equipment for as long as possible (at least five days is preferable).



Photo Credit: Marc Murrell

## Becoming a Zebra Mussel Monitoring Volunteer

The Missouri River is a vital economic, biological, cultural, and recreational component to the Midwestern US. Preventing the spread of zebra mussels to the Missouri River and its associated waterways in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Iowa is the primary objective of the Zebra Mussel Monitoring Network coordinated by the Center for Lakes & Reservoirs at Portland State University.

Monitoring is designed to detect the presence of zebra mussels as early as possible in any new water body. The Zebra Mussel Monitoring Network coordinates volunteers to respond in a manner that will minimize their future impact on that and other resources in the area. Like any other blight, detecting the presence of zebra mussels early is the most important factor in determining how damaging they will be within the Missouri River Basin.

The Zebra Mussel Monitoring Network coordinates volunteers like yourselves, throughout the western US who have access to lakes and rivers. Volunteers are provided a PVC substrate to hang on their docks and monitor for zebra mussel colonization and are asked to check them monthly and submit a reply report card (provided) to the ANS Volunteer Coordinator at the Center for Lakes & Reservoirs to indicate signs of colonization, if there is a positive sighting, authorities are alerted and further steps are taken to determine the extent of colonization.

Questions about becoming a zebra mussel monitor should be submitted to Mary Pfauth, Zebra Mussel Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator at 503-725-3834 or [invasivespecies@pdx.edu](mailto:invasivespecies@pdx.edu).

## What is the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Initiative?

The 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Initiative represents the first comprehensive and strategically focused effort involving Federal, State, Tribal and Provincial entities, potentially affected industries, and other interested parties to begin addressing pathways to prevent the westward spread of zebra mussels and other ANS. Success will depend on the commitment and support of these groups to aggressively combat the introduction and spread of these destructive invaders.



The major pathway for zebra mussels to invade the West is not from the ballast water of ships but from boats, personal watercraft, and related equipment transported from infested to uninfested waters. Zebra mussels attach to hulls, trailers, and other exposed locations on boats, boating equipment, and personal watercraft. Their free-living larva can enter motors, live wells, or other moist areas. Adults may remain viable for weeks. Their adaptability, lack of natural predators, and the propensity of boaters to move their boats from one body of water to another have facilitated the rapid spread of zebra mussels throughout their current range.

The goals of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian initiative are to: (1) prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other ANS, (2) monitoring, (3) rapid response planning, (4) identification and risk assessment of additional pathways, and (5) evaluation.


For more information visit [www.100thmeridian.org](http://www.100thmeridian.org).

– Reprinted from the 'The 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Initiative: A Strategic Approach to Prevent the Westward Spread of Zebra Mussels and Other Aquatic Nuisance Species', USFWS

## Power Wash Poster Available!

**ATTENTION BOATERS AND ANGLERS**  
Zebra mussels can ruin your favorite fishing and boating areas  
**Clean your boat before you float!**


Coming from a high risk area?



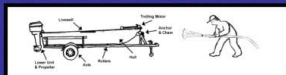
If you have been boating in an affected area, please take your boat to the nearest power wash facility (see directions), wash your boat, and inspect it carefully before launching.

You may not see young zebra mussels with your naked eye! You may be able to feel them by running your hand along the hull of your boat. A rough texture is a clue that zebra mussels may be attached. Always rinse out livewell and other areas where water and zebra mussel larvae may have collected.

Directions to the nearest power wash facility:



To report zebra mussels call 1-800-437-2744.



## Watercraft Inspection Training for Boating Law Enforcement Personnel

County Sheriff's, City Police, Port Districts, the National Park Service, State Fish and Wildlife agencies, State Parks and State Police are just a few of the agencies in the western US that sometimes have Marine Patrol units. Over 400 agencies in California alone have at least one boating law enforcement officer. The primary job of these professionals is to enforce boating regulations designed to maintain public safety and orderly boating on the nation's waterways. But, in recent years, the growing concern about recreational boaters being the primary unwitting carriers of a growing number of exotic plants and animals from one water to the next, has made it necessary to train these officers on how to identify high risk watercraft, how to inspect for the presence of hard to find zebra mussels and other ANS and on what to do if they find them.

Together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and Fish and Wildlife agencies throughout the west, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission has developed a new training course for this large group of agencies and individuals. In the last 9 months, boating law enforcement officers and their supervisors from Idaho, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah have taken this live 1.5 hour certificated training course and Washington is scheduled to have their officers trained in the fall of 2006.

In addition a professional quality 50 minute video and training manual has been developed and will be mailed to Boating Law Administrators in all 19 western states for distribution to agencies with boating law enforcement responsibilities in each state. To date approximately 250 officers have been trained and it is hoped that some form of the training will reach over 1,000 officers by the end of this year.

So, as you can see, the partnership grows. Don't let others carry the entire load.

- Bill Zook, Zebra Mussel Outreach Coordinator  
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

**Question?** We're considering sponsoring a two-half-day (afternoon day 1 and morning day 2 to facilitate travel) Workshop for our marina/resort business partners at a couple of locations in the Missouri Basin during 2007. One night's lodging (for two, so you could bring your spouse, manager, partner as long as you don't mind sharing a room) and two meals would also be provided. The Workshops would include fascinating presentations and discussions about Aquatic Nuisance Species and how to prevent their spread on recreational watercraft. Some promotional gifts and outreach materials would also be handed-out to those attending. Please e-mail your answers to the questions below to [bjzook2@msn.com](mailto:bjzook2@msn.com).

**Would you attend such a Workshop? What month of the year would work best for you?**

*N.P. Dodge Park Marina – Omaha, NE  
Cottonwood Marina – Blair, NE  
Lewis and Clark Marina – Yankton, SD  
Weigland Marina – Crofton, NE  
American Creek Marina – Chamberlin, SD  
Cedar Shores Resort – Oacoma, SD  
Down's Marina – Pierre, SD  
Bridge City Marina – Mobridge, ND  
Marina Bay/Broken Oar – Bismarck, ND  
Southport Marina – Bismarck, ND  
Moritz Marine – Bismarck, ND  
Sportsman Park Marina – Washburn, ND*

*Captain Kit's Marina – Riverdale, ND  
Bayside Marine – Riverdale, ND  
Fort Stevens SP Marina – Garrison, ND  
Dakota Waters Resort – Beulah, ND  
Indian Hills Resort – Garrison, ND  
McKenzie Bay Marina – Dickinson, ND  
4-Bears Marina – New Town, ND  
Lund's landing Marina – Ray, ND  
Lewis and Clark SP Marina – Epping, ND  
Fort Peck Marina – Fort Peck, MT  
Rock Creek Marina – Glendive, ND  
Hell's Creek Marina – Jorden, MT*

**To see your business listed here in future editions, join us today!**

For more information, contact Bill Zook at (360) 427-7676, email [bjzook2@msn.com](mailto:bjzook2@msn.com).



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