

# Columbia River "Basin Watch" Newsletter

A 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Partnership Program between resource managers, marinas and resorts and other water users to prevent the introduction of quagga and zebra mussels into the Columbia River Basin.



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## Protect Your Business by Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Quagga and zebra mussels are on the move in the Western United States. Since their first discovery in Lake Mead and lower Colorado River impoundments a mere two years ago, quagga mussels have spread to 18 California, 7 Colorado and 3 Utah lakes, and zebra mussels have been found in one California and one Colorado water body. In addition, watercraft have been found in every western state with mussels or larvae on-board. We know that boaters are inadvertently moving mussels all over the west on trailered watercraft and equipment. **You will most likely have an opportunity this summer to prevent the possible introduction of these mussels into the lake, river or reservoir that your business depends upon for survival.** Make no mistake; your business will suffer if these mussels become established in your waterway.

That's why it's so important for you to take advantage of several free educational opportunities available within the Columbia Basin that will prepare you and your staff to act as the last line of defense. State and federal resource and water management agencies have received new funds and authority to wage war on this invasion and are working on the national, state and local level to implement public education and prevention programs, but your help is needed.

To learn more about how to prevent zebra and quagga mussels from harming your business, I urge you to take advantage of some or all of the following educational resources now available to you.



### Follow these simple steps:

- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or other animals before transporting equipment
- Eliminate all water from your boat and equipment before transporting anywhere
- Clean and dry everything that came in contact with water (including boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.)
- Never release plants, fish or other animals into a body of water unless they came from that same body of water



A new DVD video entitled "Don't Move a Mussel" can be obtained without charge by placing an order on <http://www.aquaticnuisance.org/video> or by contacting your state fish and wildlife or boating agency or by calling PSMFC at (503) 595-3100. This video explains everything you need to know about these mussels and their impacts and includes a "how to" section on watercraft inspection and decontamination.

In addition, educational materials, presentations and training are available through the following people at the numbers listed below:

Oregon – Randy Henry (503) 378-2611 or Glen Dolphin (503) 378-2625, Oregon State Marine Board

Washington – Sergeant Eric Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (360) 902-2426

Idaho – Amy Ferriter, Idaho Department of Agriculture (208) 332-8686

Montana – Eileen Ryce, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (406) 444-2448

Wyoming – Beth Bear, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (307) 745-5180 ext. 256

Bill Zook – Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (360) 427-7676

**Working together we can prevent these mussels from getting into the Columbia River Basin!!!!**



## ***Idaho Rapid Response Exercise Enhances Mussel Preparedness***

On April 29-30, the state of Idaho hosted a quagga mussel rapid response exercise in Boise. This event represented the third occasion that Pacific Northwest agencies have assembled to practice implementation of the *Columbia River Basin Interagency Invasive Species Response Plan for Zebra Mussels and other Dreissenid Species*, and the first drill to occur in Idaho. The exercise was led by the Idaho Department of Agriculture and Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security, and involved many other state and federal agencies, county Sheriff's offices, private companies, and other partners.

The first day featured a series of field response activities held at Spring Shores Marina at Lucky Peak Reservoir on the Boise River. Dive teams from the Ada and Gem County Sheriff's Offices, with training support from the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, practiced underwater detection survey methods. Colored pushpins were hidden among the marina docks to simulate a small infestation of invasive mussels, and the divers were extremely successful in locating them. Demonstrations were also given on decontaminating boats and dive gear, and on the use of new technology that optically scans water samples for the presence of microscopic mussel larvae. The Directors of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Department of Agriculture both spoke at the event, which was covered by several local TV stations.

On April 30, the "tabletop" portion of the exercise began with announcement of the hypothetical discovery of quagga mussel larvae in Lucky Peak Reservoir. Technical experts from state and federal agencies discussed a variety of questions, including possible treatment options, notification procedures, and methods to prevent further spread. Recommendations from this session were picked up in the afternoon by a meeting of state and federal decision-makers, who wrestled with the associated policy questions. By the day's end, participants identified a number of valuable "lessons learned" and future tasks to enhance response readiness in a real event.

When completed, the evaluation report from the exercise will be posted to the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Initiative Columbia River Basin website at <http://100thmeridian.org/ColumbiaRT.asp>. In keeping with the Columbia Basin Team's five-year exercise strategy, plans are already underway to arrange the next drill. For more information, contact Paul Heimowitz at [paul\\_heimowitz@fws.gov](mailto:paul_heimowitz@fws.gov).

## ***Highway Check Stations for Boaters in Washington***

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature passed ESSB 5923 which gave WDFW authority to operate mandatory watercraft "Check Stations." This requires all persons transporting watercraft to stop and allow the watercraft to be inspected for the presence of aquatic invasive species (AIS). The check stations must be plainly marked by signs, operated by at least one uniformed fish and wildlife officer, and operated in a safe manner. Any person stopped at a check station who possesses a recreational or commercial watercraft that is contaminated with AIS is exempt from any Washington State criminal penalties (including forfeiture of the watercraft) if that person complies with all department directives for the proper decontamination of the watercraft and any contaminated equipment.

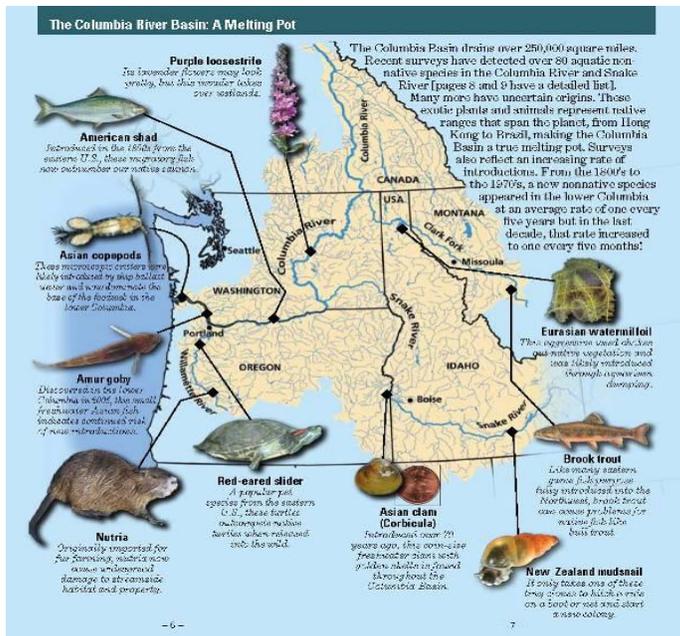


On August 22 and 23, 2008, WDFW Enforcement operated the first ever mandatory AIS watercraft check station. The check station was operated out of the WSP "Plymouth" Port of Entry weigh station on Highway 395 at the Oregon/Washington border. This check station was the first time that WDFW invoked its legal authority to conduct the mandatory AIS check stations. Besides physically interdicting AIS, thus preventing them from entering the state, a check station of this nature provides an important public outreach opportunity. The interaction between the officer and citizen and exchange of information about AIS and Washington State Laws is a powerful tool for AIS prevention efforts. Overall, the comments from the public during the check station suggested an overwhelming support of this type of action. In 2009, The WDFW Enforcement program is planning on expanding this effort and has scheduled 36 check stations to occur at various locations around Washington. For further information go to <http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/newreal/release.php?id=may2109b>



## New Columbia Basin Brochure and Poster Available

Just in time for the upcoming outdoor recreation season, the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Initiative's Columbia Basin Team has produced a new brochure and associated poster. "Intruders Among Us! Nonnative Aquatic Species in the Columbia River Basin" is a 12-page rack-size brochure that tells the story of Asian clam, shad, and other exotic animals and plants that now call the Pacific Northwest home. A primary purpose of the new publication is to enhance existing prevention and early detection outreach by helping Columbia Basin residents and visitors understand the impacts of existing introductions. A companion 24x36 inch poster features a map of selected "intruders" and information on how individuals can help prevent and detect new invasions, is also available. Through funding provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Lower Columbia River Estuary Program, limited quantities of both publications are available at no charge. To order copies, contact Shirley Donnelly at [shirley\\_donnelly@fws.gov](mailto:shirley_donnelly@fws.gov) or call (503) 872-2763.



## Montana Legislation Aims to Get State to Join Battle Against Invasive Mussels

(Reprinted from Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Bulletin, March 6, 2009.)

Montana is on the verge of joining a broader effort aimed at curbing the proliferation of tiny freshwater mussels that have caused huge damage in other parts of the country.

State Sen. Verdell Jackson, R-Kalispell, is sponsoring a bill that would start education campaign and a program for preventing an invasion of zebra and quagga mussels in Montana. And Senate Bill 343 is zipping through the legislative process with near unanimous support, even though it will cost about \$333,000 annually for the next two years.

"All down the line, people have support it. It's kind of nice to have a bill that has so much support," Jackson said, referring to the bill's recent 47-3 approval in the Senate.

During a fiscally austere session, many bills with price tags have been dying off quickly.

"But this is in the governor's budget so that gives it a lot momentum," Jackson said.

So far, the invasive and prolifically multiplying mussels have not appeared in Montana waters, but there is growing concern about the state not having any program in place to prevent it from eventually happening. Jackson is sponsoring the bill at the request of the Flathead Lakers, and he has broad support from other conservation groups, as well as recreation, business and utility interests.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that \$5 billion has been spent in the Great Lakes region alone trying to combat a zebra mussel invasion that has been underway since they were first detected in Lake Ontario in 1988. Carried across state lines attached to boats, they have since spread to lakes and reservoirs in Arizona, Nevada, California, Colorado and Utah in the West.

Jackson's bill states that without addressing the threat, Montana could incur millions of dollars in damage to rivers and lakes, water storage, delivery and irrigation systems and to hydroelectric dams and they have impacts on native aquatic species.

Jackson said perhaps the most important aspect of the bill is that it will result in education campaign to raise awareness among boaters about the risks of boats entering Montana from other states.

"It's not going to succeed unless we get the cooperation of the boating public," Jackson said.

The bill will find two positions for administering a program that will involve monitoring, inspections and check stations that will be established at fishing derbies and other types of boating events in Montana. There will be about \$83,000 in research grants for universities over the next biennium.

The program will be part of a broader "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" campaign that is mainly grounded in Internet and e-mail efforts.

**[UPDATE: Governor Schweitzer signed the Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Act on May 4.]**

## Boater's Guide Displays Come to the Lower Columbia River

An invasive species outreach partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and BRI Communications will extend into the Columbia Basin during 2009. BRI Communications has been in business since 1994 producing outdoor displays for boaters and environmental outreach. For the last few years, USFWS has provided funding to incorporate the "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" message and related aquatic invasive species information into BRI boater displays in Lake Washington, Lake Union, and Puget Sound. This year, USFWS cooperated with BRI to include similar outreach information into a series of lower Columbia River displays that will go up at over 35 public access points below Bonneville Dam.

Paul Sherwin of BRI estimates that his company has erected 350 boater displays of this type throughout the west coast. "They are very effective in getting information out to active boaters who are drawn by the useful boating information and maps that are the focus of the displays".

# ***State of Oregon Considering Strong New Boater Legislation this Session to Prevent the Spread of Quagga/Zebra Mussels and Other Aquatic Invasive Species***

This has been a very active legislative session for invasive species prevention efforts in Oregon. A number of bills aimed at protecting state waterways from invasive species such as quagga/zebra mussels, Eurasian water milfoil other aquatic invasives are currently working their way through the state legislature.

One of the key measures specific to zebra and quagga mussels this session is House Bill 2220, written to establish the authority to stop watercraft suspected of carrying mussels in transit. The hope is to use this law to enforce border inspection stations or check stations should funding or the need arise. However, Oregon’s constitution does not currently allow such authority, a fact clarified in the courts several times in recent decades. The bill continues to make progress, but is greatly simplified. It will provide limited authority on a voluntary basis, akin to the authority a creel checker in Oregon now has.

While HB 2220 shifts focus to voluntary inspections, HB 2583 creates a new and simplified enforcement tool. This bill prohibits launching a boat in waters of the state if there are any visible aquatic species on the hull, motor or trailer or any invasive species inside the hull. It’s making good progress with strong support. We call this the “clean launch bill,” and it could be pivotal in helping prevent the spread of aquatic weeds and other organisms.

HB 2625 amends existing statute to provide explicit authority to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for vessel boarding, inspections and collection of ballast water samples for compliance verification purposes. It also is making good progress. HB 2714 is related and is moving well, too. It updates ballast water exchange protocols under the jurisdiction of DEQ.



Another bill that increases penalties on existing violations is SB 571. It increases the penalty for releasing or attempting to release live fish into a body of water without permit to maximum of five years imprisonment, \$125,000 fine, or both. It requires the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to revoke the angling licenses and tags of a person convicted of the offense, and allows the Commission to institute suit for recovery of damages for control or eradication of live fish released into body of water without permit.

***[Update: HB 2625 and HB 2714 were signed by the Governor in May]***



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