2012 INVASIVE SPECIES SUMMIT ENDPAPER

On January 17 and 18 of 2012 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks hosted an invasive species summit with a focus on aquatic species at the Montana Wild Center in Helena. Approximately 65 people convened representing state and federal agencies, counties, tribes, commercial interests, legislators, private citizens, and neighboring states.

Panels were held on **Coordination and Leadership, Outreach and Awareness, Early Detection and Monitoring, Watercraft Inspections, Response**, and **Legislative Issues.** Panels consisted of 4-5 people representing the stakeholders listed above, and panel members each gave a short presentation about their role and AIS activities they have been involved in, followed by general discussion with audience members on the panel topic.

The **Coordination and Leadership Panel** was headlined by Ron de Yong with MDA, Ray Beck with DNRC, Eileen Ryce with FWP, Jeff Tiberi with Montana Association of Conservation Districts, and Caryn Miske of the Flathead Basin Commission. Panel members gave presentations on how their organization fit into the larger AIS effort and how their group worked and coordinated with the other agencies and groups. Discussion was fairly light, with most attendees commenting that it appeared that communication and cooperation among FWP, MDA, and DNRC and between the agencies and stakeholders had greatly improved, but they still wished for more transparency and involvement in the early planning stages of AIS activities and programs.

The **Outreach and Awareness Panel** consisted of Bob Wilshire with the Invasive Species Action Network, Ron Aasheim with FWP, Ron Zellar with MDA, and Jane Mangold with the MSU Extension Service. Both Bob Wiltshire and Ron Aasheim gave somewhat longer presentations, with Bob focusing on some of the research behind marketing campaigns and the difference between making people aware and having them actually change their behavior, and Ron giving an overview of the current AIS public awareness effort. Ron and Jane followed with shorter presentations on their respective campaigns.

Audience members had many questions for panel members, especially for Bob and Ron, and the discussion could have easily lasted much longer. This might be a subject that could be delved into more with a workgroup or other collaboration. Issues that people wanted more focus on were:

- The fact that AIS affects all water users and not just anglers and recreationists
- The problems that the pet trade cause in terms of AIS
- More research into what kinds of public outreach is most effective in changing behavior
- More cross-discipline education programs with partners and interested parties

The **Early Detection and Monitoring Panel** was led by Celestine Duncan, Invasive Plant Consultant; Josh Gubits, Whitefish Lake Institute; Craig McClane, MDA; and Stacy Schmidt, FWP. Panel members each gave presentations on past monitoring activities and future plans. Audience members had some suggestions for increased transparency and facilitation in this area, such as having the three agencies create a common, shared database that could be viewed online by stakeholders.

The **Watercraft Inspection Panel** was led by Greg Ames, MDA; Lee Anderson, FWP; Linnaea Schroeer, FWP; and Erik Hanson, FBC. Greg and Linnaea gave summary reports on the past year's watercraft inspection stations, Lee talked about enforcement issues, and Erik spoke of stakeholder's concerns/suggestions for the stations. Among the issues raised were:

- The need to zero-in on high-risk boats
- Possibly shifting resources from internal stations to border stations
- Reviewing optimal hours of operation
- Finalize and disseminate all protocols for the field season
- Acquire quarantine authority
- Establish notification system for commercially hauled watercraft similar to what Idaho has in place and acquire authority to inspect regardless of final destination
- Work with Border Patrol to ensure that boats are inspected prior to entry from Canada

The Response Panel was led by Bruce Rich, FWP; Dave Burch, MDA; John Halpop, Sanders Co., Patricia Gilbert, USACE; and Jim Darling, FWP. Again, panel members gave an overview of current response plans, gave an overview of the MPDEA permitting process, discussed the use of aquatic herbicides and other issues related to programmatic EA's, and summarized the Rapid Response Exercise held in the fall of 2011 at Lake Koocanusa. Attendees were pleased with current efforts but still felt that they did not go far enough to establish exact protocols and procedures in the event of an invasive mussel or other AIS discovery. In particular, participants felt that much more work was needed to:

- Determine the decision making process in the event of an invasive mussel or other AIS discovery
- Determine containment methods and procedures in a Rapid Response scenario
- Establish how such efforts would be funded
- Encourage and keep abreast of current research

The Legislative Panel was led by Mark Aagenes of Trout Unlimited and Brianna Randall with the Clark Fork Coalition and was briefer than planned because of a large winter storm that had moved in, but it was generally agreed that the most critical issues were:

- The need for funding, including a long-term AIS Trust Fund, short-term funding for critical issues, and baseline funding for ongoing AIS Program activities. Areas where we might look for funding would include
    - AIS boat fees similar to what Wyoming and Idaho have in place
    - Power generation fees
    - Oil and gas taxes
    - County and local property taxes
    - Water user tax
    - General fund
    - Governor's budget
    - Reallocate Sport Restoration Act
    - Fishing License General Fund
    - Voluntary check box or opt out box on license plates, state income tax, etc.
    - Rent for riverbeds (PPL)

- Quarantine rules
- Weaknesses in current legislation and how to address them

Outcomes

One immediate outcome of the Summit was that FWP called for a workgroup to meet and provide input on where watercraft inspection stations should be set up for the 2012 field season, as well as what hours and dates of operation they should be operated. That workgroup, which was comprised of 10 representative stakeholders, met in February and brought many of the comments and concerns from the Summit into the meeting, and over a day-long process the group arrived at recommendations for FWP on locations, days and times of operations, and other pertinent information. FWP in turn took those recommendations and used those as their basis for their 2012 plans.

The main recommendation of the group was to reallocate some resources from internal stations to our borders, and stipulated that they would like to see stations at all major entry points into the state. FWP is therefore planning to operate border watercraft inspection stations at Hwy 2 Culbertson, I-94 Wibaux, I-90 Hardin, I-15 Dillon, and I-90 Dena Mora. We are also going to be operating internal highway inspection stations at Hwy 93 Ronan, Clearwater Junction, and Hwy 37 Eureka. Roving crews will also be operating in several areas around the State, including the Swan and Bitterroot Valleys, the Upper Missouri such as Canyon Ferry, Holter and Hauser Reservoirs, the lower Missouri such as Fort Peck, and numerous waterbodies along the Hi-line. A roving crew will also be operating in southern Montana, stopping at various points along the Madison, including Ennis and Hebgen Lake.

FWP along with MDA, DNRC and our stakeholder groups will be discussing the other issues raised in the Summit throughout the upcoming year. Thanks again to everyone who participated in the 2012 Invasive Species Summit.