



Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter

1420 East Sixth Ave • Helena, MT 59601 • 406-444-2440 • CleanDrainDryMT.com

March 2021

Note from the AIS Bureau:

The AIS program is gearing up for another busy season. Hiring is under way, and some stations are scheduled to open mid-March. We are looking at another busy season ahead. Operations for this year will be similar to 2020 with a few minor changes including extending the season at several border stations. High boat traffic is expected again so we are preparing accordingly.

As the COVID-19 restrictions begin to be lifted, we look forward to expanding opportunities to work with partners on AIS outreach, training, and coordination. Please let us know if your group is interested in AIS materials or learning more about what you can do to help protect our waters from AIS. Call 406-444-2440.

We are looking forward to another great season.

Watercraft Inspections

Watercraft inspection plans for 2021:

- Watercraft inspection stations begin opening in mid-March to address snowbird traffic traveling from the Southwest. The first stations scheduled to open are:
 - FWP Kalispell: March 1
 - Ravalli: March 13
 - Dillion: March 13
 - Anaconda: March 20
- Inspection stations will continue to open into May and will operate throughout the boating season
- Changes for 2021 include:
 - Updated watercraft inspection training
 - Targeted enforcement to improve compliance
 - Targeted efforts to improve quality control at inspection stations
 - Improve acknowledgement and recognition for good inspectors
 - Discontinuing inspections at Canyon Ferry
- **AIS is hiring!** Watercraft inspector jobs can be found [here](#): Search key word: **AIS**.
- Watercraft inspection data for the 2021 season will be available on the [AIS Inspection Dashboard](#).
- Read the 2020 end of year report here: [WIS Report](#)

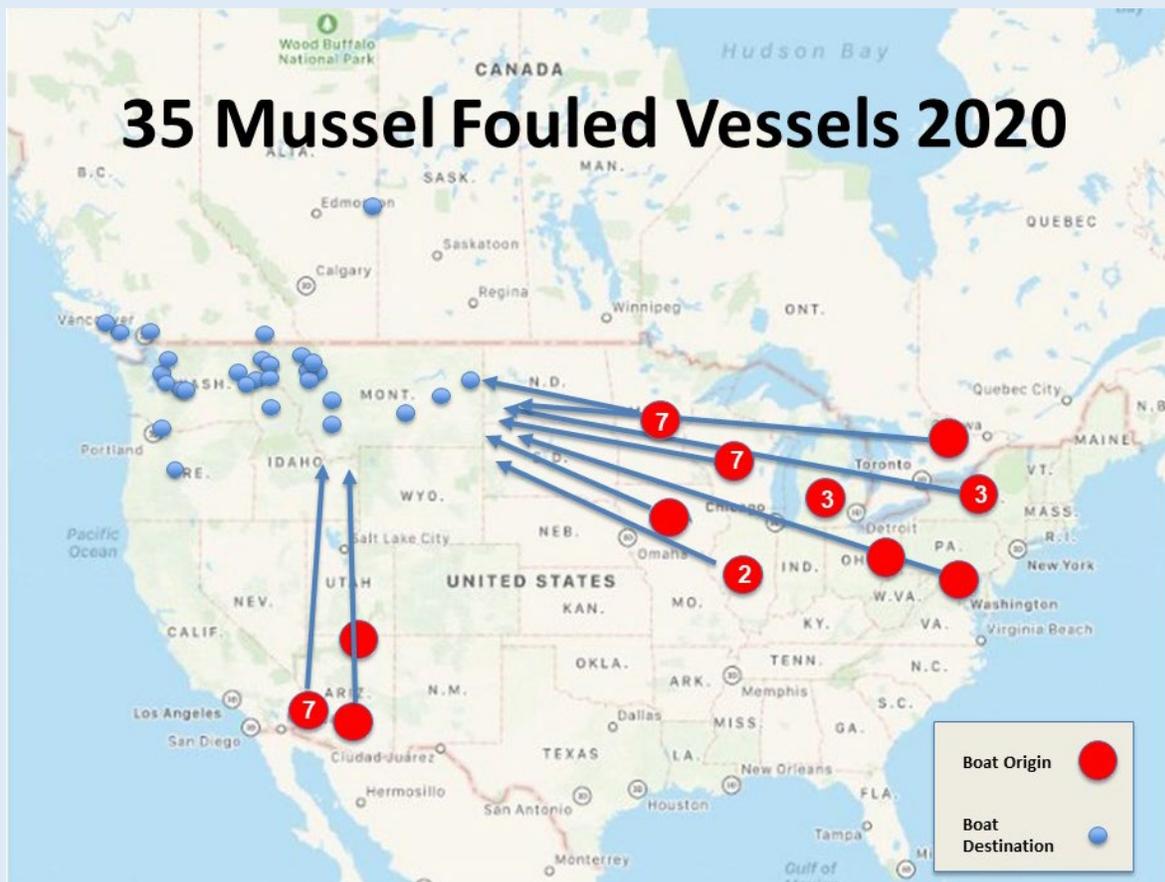


FWP maintains strong partnerships with local agencies who are contracted to operate watercraft inspection stations including:

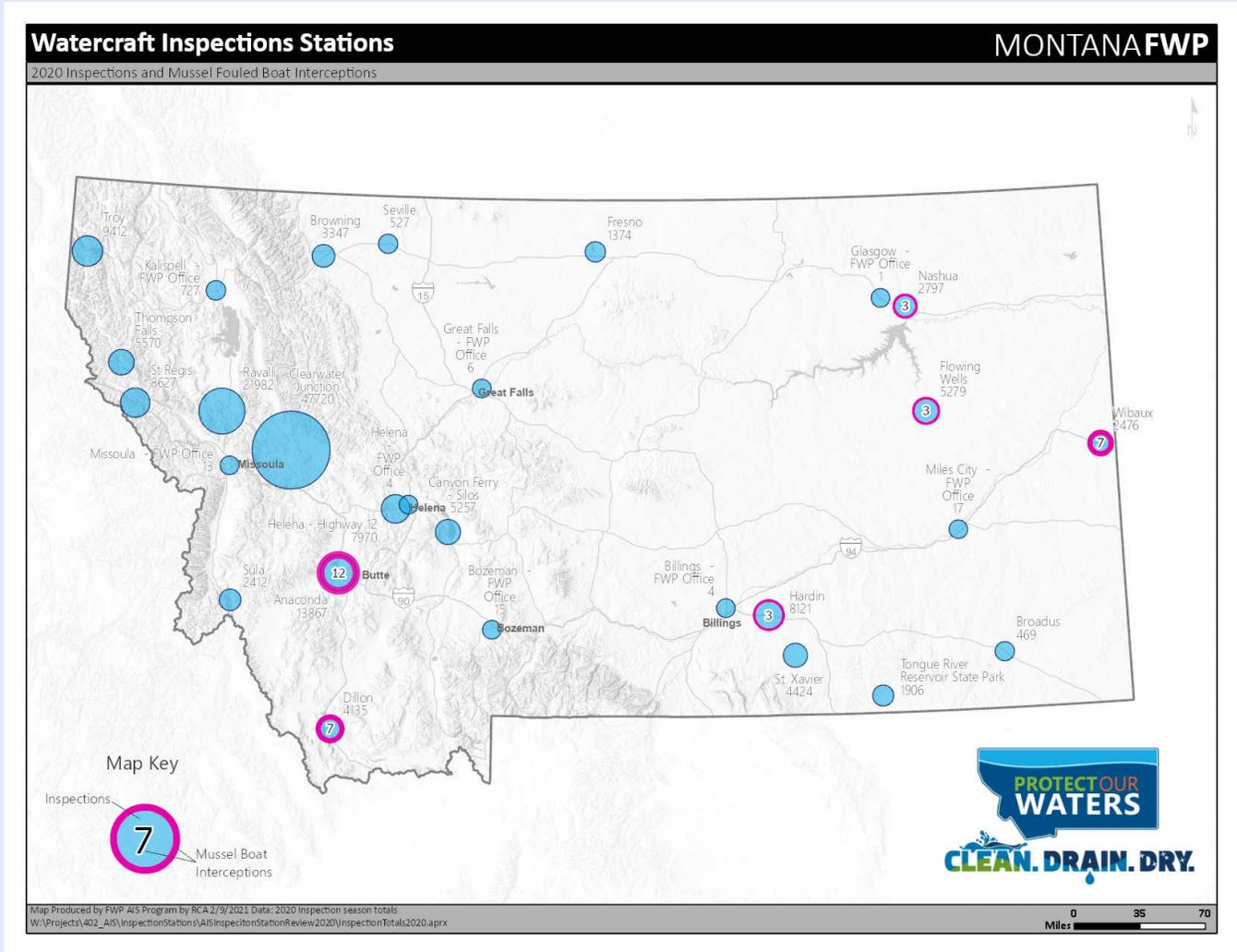
Bighorn Conservation District	St. Xavier
Blackfeet Nation	Browning
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	Ravalli and Thompson Falls
Garfield County Conservation District	Flowing Wells and Wibaux
McCone Conservation District	Nashua
Missoula County Weed District	Clearwater Junction
Powder River Conservation District	Broadus

FWP coordinates closely with other partners that operate inspection stations in the state and provide training and other shared resources including Glacier National Park, the City of Whitefish, and Swan Lakers who all contribute to the watercraft inspection efforts in Montana.

Mussel-Fouled Vessels in 2020: A total of 35 mussel-fouled vessels were intercepted in 2020. These vessels are transported from states where invasive quagga or zebra mussels have infested the waterways.



Watercraft inspection stations on the southern and eastern borders play a critical role in the prevention of AIS spreading in Montana. This map shows the watercraft inspections and mussel-fouled vessels at each station.



Browning Watercraft Inspection Station

Early Detection Monitoring

- The AIS lab analyzed 2,706 samples from Montana waterbodies, a record number for the state. The lab also processed 887 samples from states in the Missouri River Basin in 2020.
 - No evidence of mussels was found in Montana samples.
 - New mussel populations were identified in Kansas and North Dakota waterbodies.
- The AIS lab implemented a risk categorization system to improve turnaround time on high-priority samples, ensuring samples from the highest risk locations are analyzed rapidly. The turnaround time for high-risk samples was less than two weeks.
- No evidence of invasive mussels was found in Tiber Reservoir in 2020. Sampling in Tiber included:
 - Collection and analysis of 111 veliger early detection samples
 - Collection of 75 eDNA samples (supported by Bureau of Reclamation and Flathead Lake Biological Station)
 - Collection of benthic sled bottom samples
 - Snorkeling surveys
 - SCUBA surveys (USFWS)
 - Artificial substrates
 - Shoreline surveys
 - Mussel detection dogs
- An AIS Dive Team was created allowing FWP to conduct AIS survey, targeted control work, and rapid response for reported AIS.



- New detections of AIS in 2020 included:

New Zealand Mudsnails

- Bluewater Fish Hatchery near Bridger (population eradicated)
- Marias River below Tiber Dam
- Missouri River near Loma
- Spring Meadow Lake in Helena

Faucet Snail

- Lost Coon Lake (Lost Loon Lake) near Whitefish
- Smith Lake near Whitefish

Curlyleaf pondweed

- Lower Glaston Reservoir north of Big Timber
- Deadman's Basin near Harlowton

Spiny water nymph (non-native aquatic plant)

- Frenchtown Pond near Frenchtown
- Private pond near Frenchtown Pond

- Planning is underway to eradicate Asian clams from Lake Elmo in Billing by drawing down the lake in the fall of 2021.
- Monitoring data is available on the [Sampling Dashboard](#)



Outreach & Education

Read the 2020 Education & Outreach report here: [AIS E/O Report](#)

Big Sky Watershed Corps Member - Jennifer Riddle

FWP is thrilled to have Jennifer Riddle join the FWP-AIS team where she will be working on AIS education and outreach during her term. Jennifer will focus on the AIS Industry Outreach project where she will meet with water-based recreation businesses such as marinas, boat shops, commercial outdoor retailers, angling shops, and guiding services. During the visits, she'll provide information to staff about invasive species, AIS regulations, and watercraft inspections. Sites will receive materials they can share with their customers. She'll also be assisting with the Don't Let It Loose project, AIS monitoring, and watercraft inspections.

Welcome Jennifer.



Jennifer Riddle and her dog Frank

Meet the AIS Staff

Andrew Rivers has joined the FWP AIS Bureau in Helena. Andrew took over for Kathi Montgomery in September as the new AIS Supervisor for the Central region, an area that covers Helena to West Yellowstone (approximately FWP Region 3 area). Andrew is originally from Virginia but fell in love with Montana 13 years ago when he was hiking the Continental Divide Trail from Mexico to Canada.

Andrew looks forward to the summer season and working with boaters to educate them how to clean, drain, and dry their watercraft. Andrew says, "I want to make a difference in protecting Montana's water and giving back to our natural resources."

You might see Andrew on the trails near Helena, but you won't see him for long. Andrew runs ultra-marathons, up to 100 miles long. He trains by running 40-50 miles per week with his dog in all kinds of weather. If he's not working or running trails, he's chasing after his 2-year-old twin boys Ansel and Everett.

Welcome Andrew.



Andrew Rivers

Events / Webinars / Trainings

- Montana Invasive Species Council meeting (virtual): March 4 [MISC](#)
- Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team meeting (virtual): March 5
- Upper Columbia Monitoring Workshop (virtual): March 16 [UC3](#)
- Western Regional Panel on AIS meeting (virtual): April 7 [WRP](#)
- National Invasive Species Awareness Week: May 15-22 [NISAW](#)
- Western State AIS Watercraft Inspection & Decontamination Training (WIT II): Multiple Dates [Register Here](#)
- Flowering Rush webinar, U.S. Army Corps (Archived): [Flowering Rush Identification and Management](#)
- Eurasian watermilfoil webinar, U.S. Army Corps (Archived): [EWM Hybrids and Management](#)

Publications:

- Review of Dam Effects on Native and Invasive Crayfishes Illustrates Complex Choices for Conservation Planning: [Dams and invasive crayfish](#)
- Boat ramps facilitate the dispersal of the highly invasive zebra mussel: [Boat transport of mussels](#)

In the News

Montana

- [Montana Lake Drained Due to Invasive Clams](#)
- [US Army Corps provides AIS funding](#)
- [Prized by 18th Century Traders, Fragrant Waterlily Now Choking Clearwater Drainage](#)
- [AIS Summit Addresses COVID-19 Effects on Increased Watercraft Traffic and Inspection Station Protocols](#)

Regional / National

- [Colorado now mussel free and ANS Strategic Plan approved](#)
- [Boat from Texas intercepted in Oregon transporting mussels](#)
- [Army Corps plans mussel eradication in SD](#)
- [Zebra mussels eradicated from Lake Waco, TX](#)
- [Green poop problem in the Great Lakes](#)
- [Acoustic deterrent tested for Asian carp](#)
- [US Department of Interior releases Invasive Species Strategic Plan](#)
- [Other US Department of Interior Invasive Species Coordination](#)
- [Lake Tahoe looks to herbicides for aquatic weed control](#)
- [Mussel impacts on the Great Lakes](#)
- [Mussels change phosphorus cycling in the Great Lakes](#)
- [Research Successfully Removes Invasive Quagga Mussels from Lake Michigan](#)

International

- [Columbia-Shuswap \(BC\) Invasive Mussel-Free for Another Year](#)
- [Albertans told to stop dumping unwanted goldfish in storm ponds](#)
- [Invasive pigeon eating catfish in Europe](#)
- [Invasive hippos in Columbia](#)

2021 Legislature

Find the latest information from the 2021 Legislature at <https://leg.mt.gov/>.

HB 40	Revising laws on mandatory decontamination o vessels with ballast and bladders. Allows more flexibility in establishing criteria for vessel decontamination.	Curdy
HB 42 – Tabled	Clarify AIS management authority laws	Duram
HB 152	Requiring drain plugs to be disengaged to prevent the spread of AIS withing AIS management areas.	Durum
LC0024	Create penalties for transportation of AIS	Cuffe
LC1534	Revie laws related to AIS hydroelectric fee	Esp
LC1817	Joint Resolution urging MT to join interstate compact on AIS	Curdy
LC2468 LC2469 LC2471	Generally revise AIS funding	Manzella
LC2661	Revise AIS funding	Keane

BRINGING A BOAT TO MONTANA?

Help protect Montana waters from aquatic invasive species.

All out-of-state watercraft must be inspected before launching.

Find watercraft inspection stations at CleanDrainDryMT.com

Non-resident watercraft using Montana waters
MUST purchase a **Vessel AIS Prevention Pass.**

Non-motorized vessel fee: \$10

Motorized vessel fee: \$30



Buy pass online at CleanDrainDryMT.com

CleanDrainDryMT.com

 406.444.2440

 Protect Our Waters Montana

