



Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter

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

May 2020

Note from the AIS Bureau:

The AIS season is moving forward, although not exactly according to plan because of COVID-19. AIS watercraft inspections have been designated as an essential service and inspectors continue to check boats across the state. Watercraft inspector trainings are proceeding, and additional COVID-19 protocols are in place at inspection station to keep inspectors and the public safe. The monitoring program is gearing up for training and will begin sampling in late May. The AIS Dreissenid Lab will begin processing samples from Missouri River Basin states this month.

The AIS team at FWP has done an exceptional job adapting to COVID-19 challenges to get the AIS program up and running this season. And we continue to see outstanding partner involvement and support implementing the AIS program state-wide. Despite travel restrictions and quarantine requirements, we are still seeing a lot of out-of-state boats and a lot of movement of mussels.

We have a busy season ahead and it is critical we address the AIS issue safely and effectively. Fortunately, we have a great group of people across the state working together to protect our waters from AIS.

Please contact us if you have questions or need any further information.

Watercraft Inspections

Watercraft inspection stations have opened around the state and will continue to open through Memorial Day. Some station openings have been slightly delayed in order to comply with COVID-19 safety protocols for training and operation.

Changes for 2020 include new COVID-19 safety requirements, an updated training curriculum, new quality assurance / quality control (QA/QC) protocols and targeted enforcement to address compliance. COVID-19 safety protocols include mandatory six-foot social distancing, requiring staff to wear masks when interacting with the public and regular cleaning of equipment and surfaces.

FWP staff and partners have had no shortage of challenges this season, including a vehicle collision with a digital message board at the Anaconda station. Digital message boards improve the visibility of stations and help improve boater compliance.



As of May 12th, more than 6,500 watercraft have been inspected this season. Watercraft inspection data will soon be available on the [AIS Dashboard](#). (IT staff are revamping the Dashboard and expect it to be available before the end of May)

More information on watercraft inspection operations can be found here: [Watercraft Inspection](#).

Mussel Fouled Vessels: Seven mussel fouled vessels have been intercepted so far this season at the Dillon and Anaconda stations:

- March 16: Arizona to Creston, BC.
- March 21: Lake Havasu, AZ to Jordon, MT.
- March 24: Lake Havasu, AZ to Lloydminster, AB.
- April 22: Lake Pleasant, AZ to Priest River, ID.
- April 29: Lake Havasu, AZ to Hauser Lake, MT.
- May 1: Lake Havasu, AZ to Columbia Falls, MT.
- May 2: Mississippi River, IA to Lakeside, MT.

2019 Watercraft Inspection end of year report can be found under Reports here: [2019 Watercraft Inspection Report](#)



Canyon Ferry & Tiber Reservoirs: Inspection and launch restrictions have been lifted from Canyon Ferry this season due to no further detection of invasive mussels. Read more here: [Canyon Ferry](#)

Watercraft on Tiber Reservoir continue to undergo mandatory inspections upon exit. Removal of the mandatory exit inspections will be evaluated following the 2021 season if no further evidence of invasive mussels is found. Read more here: [Tiber Reservoir](#)

Early Detection Monitoring

- The AIS monitoring team is scheduled to train and begin sampling in May following COVID – 19 safety protocols.
- The FWP AIS Lab has started receiving and analyzing early detection samples from Missouri River Basin states.
- AIS early detection and monitoring trainings for partners and the public are still being evaluated to see if they can be accomplished this season while complying with COVID-19 safety requirements.
- The AIS program now has a dive team. The team will be a resource to respond to AIS detections with focused survey and treatment.
- 2019 Early Detection Monitoring end of year report can be found under Reports here: [2019 Monitoring Report](#)



Outreach and Education

AIS Prevention Pass: Nonresident boaters and anglers visiting Montana will see new aquatic invasive species rules in 2020. The 2019 Montana Legislature reduced the fee charged to nonresident anglers for the Angler Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Pass. Nonresident anglers will pay \$7.50 instead of the \$15 fee that was charged last season. Also, nonresident youth under the age of 16 will be exempt from purchasing the Angler AIS Prevention Pass. The Angler AIS Prevention Pass fee is included in the purchase of fishing licenses.

Nonresidents launching watercraft in Montana must purchase a **Vessel AIS Prevention Pass**.

- The fee for motorboats is \$30 and applies to all motorized watercraft that is registered in another state our country.
- The fee for nonmotorized watercraft is \$10 and applies to all nonmotorized craft that nonresidents bring into Montana.
- The Vessel AIS Prevention Pass expires Dec. 31 and is not transferrable between vessels.
- Nonresidents can purchase the Vessel AIS Prevention Pass [online](#) or at any FWP office. Proof of purchase is an electronic or paper receipt, there is no decal.
- Nonresidents passing through Montana and not launching a watercraft are not required to purchase the pass.
- AIS friends and partners can request the [Non-Resident/Vessel AIS Prevention Pass rack card](#) and flyers by contacting Liz Lodman at lodman@mt.gov or call 406-444-9940.

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



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Protect Our Waters Montana



Billboards: This spring billboards were posted on highways in Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota targeting out-of-state boaters traveling to Montana.

All watercraft entering Montana must:

- Get an inspection
- Buy Vessel AIS Prevention Pass *(if launching in Montana)*

visit **CleanDrainDryMT.com**

The billboard features a dark blue background with white text. Below the text is a white banner with the website name in green and blue. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of a car towing a line of various watercraft on trailers.

A billboard near Polson and Flathead Lake was recently installed by the Upper Columbia Conservation Council (UC3).

Clean Boats

STOP

Invasive Species

MONTANA BOAT INSPECTIONS ARE MANDATORY.

CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.

PROTECT OUR WATERS

MONTANA WILDLIFE & FISHERIES

www.UpperColumbiaCouncil.org UC³

The billboard features a background image of two people kayaking in clear water. The text is overlaid on the image. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of a car towing a line of various watercraft on trailers.

AIS Education for Stay-At-Home Students: Flathead Lake Biological Station has developed a multi-lesson AIS curriculum for middle school students. Since the closure of schools has prevented in person delivery of the lessons, the FLBS crew quickly adapted their AIS curriculum to be used on-line for at-home students. They are also working on a remote mussel walk and virtual field trips. Learn more about FLBS on-line learning here: [Be AIS Aware](#)

Events: Due to the uncertainty surrounding the future of COVID, many conferences, meetings and trainings have been delayed or cancelled.

- Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3): August 19th. Location TBA.
- Western Regional Panel for aquatic invasive species: September 16-18th. Virtual Meeting. [WRP 2020](#)
- North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA): October 6-8th. Virtual Meeting. [NAISMA](#)

In the News

- High early season boat traffic: [Canadian boaters](#)
- Mussels intercepted at the Dillon inspection station: [Mussel boats](#)
- Great to have Ham's help in Kalispell: ["Ham" Hamilton](#)
- Watercraft inspection station opens at Clearwater Junction: [Clean Drain Dry](#)
- FWP explores Asian clam treatment at Lake Elmo: [Clams](#)
- Stop illegal fish introductions: [FWP battles bucket biologists](#)
- Pond stocking rules to prevent the introduction of fish disease and AIS: [Ponds](#)
- Utah inspection challenges: [Powell challenges](#)
- Wyoming battles goldfish: [Goldfish](#)
- Battling AIS in the Tetons: [Kelly Warm Springs](#)
- Possible mussel treatment being investigated: [Mussel cancer](#)
- Dealing with invasive species in a changing environment: [Shifting baseline](#)
- Wyoming Governor speaks out on invasive species: [Gov Mark Gordon](#)
- Crayfish clones invade Alberta: [Marbled Crayfish](#)



CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.

PROTECT OUR WATERS

HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Your watercraft must be inspected if:

- You encounter an open inspection station.
- You are coming into Montana from out-of-state.
- You are traveling west over the Continental Divide.
- You are launching anywhere within the Flathead Basin and your watercraft last launched on waters outside of Flathead Basin.

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Protect Our Waters Montana
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