



Montana Invasive Species Council

Meeting Materials Packet for October 16th, 2025

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October 16, 2025 Meeting Agenda

Location: Fort Peck Fish Hatchery
277 MT-117, Fort Peck, MT 59223

All participants **must register to attend before October 9, 2025.**
[Registration Link](#)

8:30 AM	Welcome, Roll Call & Minutes Action: Vote on Meeting Minutes
9:00 AM	MISC Staff Updates 2026 Summit Discussion
10:00 AM	Committee Updates Woody Invasives-Sara Ricklefs Citizen Science-Bryce Maxell SAP-Assess Invasiveness-Bryce Christiaens
10:30 AM	Feral Swine Updates Dale Knouse-Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation-invited Tahnee Szymanski-Montana Department of Livestock
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	AIS Updates Tom Woolf-Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Ben Holen-North Dakota Game and Fish
2:30 PM	Fort Peck Dam History/Fort Belknap Dennis Longknife Jr.-Fort Belknap Indian Community
3:00 PM	Round Robin Updates
4:30 PM	Public Comment
5:00 PM	Wrap-Up & Adjourn

October 17th Nashua Watercraft Inspection Station Visit

9:00 AM Meet at Intersection of US Hwy 2 and Route 438

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- The agenda is subject to change and times are approximate; actual times may vary up to one hour.
 - This meeting is open to the public. Persons who want to attend in-person or virtually must register before the end of day on October 9, 2025. Meeting information is available at invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/meeting-schedule.
 - The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in the public meeting.
 - For questions about this meeting contact Russ Hartzell at 406-324-0021 or russ.hartzell2@mt.gov

MEETING MINUTES

These abbreviated summary minutes will become the official adopted minutes at the next Montana Invasive Species Council meeting when they will be approved. Until then, they are considered a draft.

Meeting Name:	Montana Invasive Species Council		
Date of Meeting:	July 29, 2025	Time:	8:30 am
Minutes Prepared By:	Russ Hartzell, Nicole Hallsten, Liz Lodman	Location:	Lakeside Resort, Trout Creek Zoom
Attendees:			
<p><i>MISC: <u>Steve Wanderaas</u>, <u>Pam Schwend</u>, <u>Karen Laitala</u>, <u>Paul Rossignol</u>, <u>Jake Chadwell</u>, <u>Dylan Brown</u>, <u>Taylor Tidwell</u>, <u>Michelle Cox</u>, <u>Jason Allen</u>, <u>Andy Welch</u>, <u>Craig McLane</u> (proxy for Tom Woolf), <u>Dennis Longknife</u>, <u>Martin Charlo</u></i></p> <p><i>Virtual MISC: <u>Brenda Witkowski</u>, <u>Jared Beaver</u>, <u>Jasmine Chaffee</u>, <u>Jessica Zarate</u>, <u>Robert Thompson</u>, <u>Sara Ricklefs</u>, <u>Monica Pokorny</u></i></p> <p><i>MISC Staff: <u>Liz Lodman</u>, <u>Russ Hartzell</u>, <u>Mia White</u></i></p> <p><i>Absent members: <u>Charles Headdress</u>, <u>Mike Bias</u>, <u>Sean Fritzler</u>, <u>Tracy Tyner</u></i></p> <p><i>Partners & guests: <u>Megan Hoyer</u>, <u>Becky Kington</u>, <u>Arthur Potts</u>, <u>Nancy Mehaffie</u>, <u>Kim McMahon</u>, <u>Rick Niwa</u>, <u>Megan Evans</u>, <u>Ashlee Atchison</u>, <u>Terry Hightower</u>, <u>Darin King</u>, <u>Cole Allen</u>, <u>Chuck Haugen</u>, <u>Sean Moran</u>.</i></p> <p><i>Virtual partners & guests: <u>Onno Wieringa</u>, <u>Brent Smith</u>, <u>Autumn Coleman</u>, <u>Nicole Hallsten</u>, <u>Lindsay Barnett</u></i></p> <p><i>*MISC voting members are <u>underlined</u>.</i></p>			
Agenda & Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome, Role Call & Minutes	<p>Steve Wanderaas (Chair) opened the meeting at 8:32 am. Wanderaas conducted a roll call and confirmed the quorum. Attendees introduced themselves.</p> <p>*ACTION: Approval of minutes from November and February meetings. Motion made by Dylan Brown, seconded by Jason Allen, no further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.</p>		
MISC Staff Update Liz Lodman Russ Hartzell Mia White	<p>MISC Staff Update:</p> <p><u>Council Member Updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms for 3 members have ended, but they remain on the council until they are replaced. Encouraging Charles Headdress, Tracy Tyner, and Mike Bias to submit applications for reappointment. 		
	<p><u>Don't Move Firewood:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mia White is an MCC intern serving with MISC. She provided an update on her efforts this summer to educate campground managers, hosts, and the public about forest pests and how they can easily be transported long distances in firewood. She has been to 108 sites so far and distributed 185 signs. Her term ends August 13. 		
	<p><u>ICS Training:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted in partnerships with Montana DES in April Well attended by many agencies and organizations 		

<p>MISC Staff Update Liz Lodman Russ Hartzell Mia White</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on how to incorporate the ICS principles into response plans • Attendees asked for more training and exercises, discussed holding a training every other year moving forward <p>Montana DES Spongy Moth Tx After Action Report</p> <p><u>Science Advisory Panel (SAP) - Assessing Invasiveness:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held in Missoula on May 5-6, 2025 • Goal: explore assessment tools and legal language for invasive species. • Actions from the SAP: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change wording of the MISC definition of invasive species 2. Review and discuss assessment tools 3. Look at pathways not just species 4. Work with the Montana National Heritage Program • Executive committee and SAP committee will guide the next steps <p><u>Eastern Heath Snail:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judith-Basin held community event on July 16th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planning integrated management and prescribed burns • Need more outreach and surveying <p><u>Aquatic Invasive Species:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New FWP AIS management plan: MISC is mentioned in section G. • Flowering Rush on Flathead Lake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No one manages flowering rush on the northern half of Flathead Lake ◦ A work group is needed to provide coordination for the entire lake ◦ Columbia River Basin Flowering Rush Management Plan • Bucket Biology: prevent illegal introduction of fish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ MISC and FWP working on video PSA to be released next spring • Celebrating Watercraft Inspectors: go to stations and say thank you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Other options to show support <p><u>Invasive Species Expert Database:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montana experts are needed for the Siren database http://siren.fort.usgs.gov/findexperts <p><u>Outreach:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story Map – on the MT Natural Heritage Program dashboard • T-shirts – new shirts have arrived, 3 designs (zebra mussels, EHS, bullfrogs) • SWAG – MISC branded tote bags, coffee cups, Grow Wild coloring books • Events attended: boot brush installed at M Trail in Missoula, Pet Rehoming event at UM, Roman snail roundup near Missoula, presentation to Madison CD in Ennis. <p><u>Budget:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY25 ended on June 30. Year-end budget reports were not available in time for this meeting. The report will be provided at the October meeting.
<p>2025 Legislative Recap</p>	<p>2025 Legislative Recap:</p> <p><u>Passed</u></p> <p>AIS Bills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 242: Increased AIS fines • HB 74: Revised private fish pond laws • SB 409: Revise Dept of Commerce laws, small increase to AIS funding

	<p>Weed Bills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 932: Revised laws funding conservation • SJ42: Noxious Weed Study Bill <p>Failed/Vetoed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB829: Require AIS education and AIS Prevention Pass for resident boaters • HB57: Define California quail and Gambel's quail as upland game birds • SB167: Funds for Noxious Weed Trust Fund (passed, vetoed; veto override failed)
MISC Work Groups/Committees	<p>Citizen Science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at ways to enhance reporting efforts throughout the state <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing materials, tools, or training with Bryce Maxell at MTNHP ○ Encourage this effort through social media, events, and training <p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person communications workshop – work with planning committee • Webinars - survey topics of interest <p>Woody Invasives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next working group meeting in Lewistown on September 10th • MISC will add woody invasive pages to the MISC website • Working group outreach campaign: social media, radio ads, sponsored article directing to people MISC webpage
Sanders County Aquatic Invasive Plant Taskforce Kim McMahon	<p>Sanders County AIP Taskforce Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWM discovered in 2007, task force formed in 2008 to address management • Also have curly leaf pond weed and flowering rush in Noxon and Cabinet reservoirs • Deploy bottom barriers, herbicide treatment, and education/outreach • Initial Goal – eradication (2010-2016) cost \$1,000/acre (not sustainable) • 2017 Assessment – analyze treatment alternatives and change course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritize treatment based on public access areas ○ Chemical treatment is most effective and cost efficient • 2025 Update to Management Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reduce presence of aquatic invasive plants at or near high-use public and private access sites (12 public boat launches and 2 known high-use shoreline areas) during peak use season ○ Reduce or prevent expansion into other waterbodies ○ Establish measurable metrics to evaluate success • Challenges: spring run-off, water clarity/temperature/levels, boat traffic, application expenses/funding • Budget: around \$60-\$80K for herbicide treatment depending on funding • Sanders County Aquatic Invasive Plant Task Force sanderscountyaais.com • Western Aquatic Plant Management Society conference: March 9-11, 2026 in Coeur d'Alene, ID
Chronic Wasting Disease in Montana Bevin McCormick Wildlife Health Program Montana FWP	<p>Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Science, Surveillance, Management :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurodegenerative disease of deer, elk and moose – always fatal • Infectious misfolded protein called prion- affects central nervous system • Spread: animal to animal contact (direct) or animal to contaminated surface contact (indirect); prions can last 2 years in the environment • Signs: stumble, drool, weight loss (wasting), head droop, seek water • First detected in Montana in 2017, found around the world

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact: decline in animal populations; decrease to wildlife recreation activities Management plan (2020): management, not eradication; surveillance and monitoring; prevent spread from human activities fwp.mt.gov/cwd
<p>Invasive Species Council of British Columbia Lindsay Barnett</p>	<p>Community Science and Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISCBC mission: to take action to build healthy landscapes, habitats, and communities through education and responsible practices to prevent the spread of invasive species More than a fun way to get the public involved or contribute to local projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science strategy analytical and monitoring tools can address knowledge gaps related to conservation, restoration, and sustainable management Tools for community reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Invasives App – BC area only iNaturalist.ca – global reach ISCBC reports by email or phone Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Stewardship: host nature walk and ID species, then hold bio blitz, weed pull, plant non-invasive species regional focus, low barrier to access, partner with others Conservation Planning: help create invasive species management plans, make sure survey data is shared Early Detection, Rapid Response: normalize reporting and community science as social responsibility, awareness and reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social norm, make quality reports Will provide 1-pager with links
<p>Alberta Invasive Species Council Megan Evans</p>	<p>Alberta Invasive Species Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds: will update list of regulated invasive plant species, last updated in 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently 75 regulated weeds in 2 groups – enforced by municipal weed inspectors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibited noxious weed - landowner required to destroy Noxious weed - landowner required to control AIS: 52 prohibited species, 11 inspections stations + one roving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must stop at inspection stations and pull the plug Campaign under development – awareness between wildflowers and weeds New invaders: Dutch elm disease, common carp, largemouth bass, and pumpkinseed Rat on Rats campaign success - Alberta has been rat free for over 75 years Abinvasives.ca
<p>Montana Department of Agriculture Megan Hoyer</p>	<p>Montana Invasive Species Education Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on a variety of projects with many partners

Montana Department
of Agriculture
Megan Hoyer

- Suggests a flow chart of who to contact about invasive species
- Outreach efforts have reached 5,453 people over 125 hours
 - Outcomes: increase knowledge, become familiar, learn about resources, and overall awareness
 - Education Events (QR code)
 - Noxious Weed Awareness Week successful
 - National Bumble Bee Project
 - Pull Your Share project
 - Real Estate & noxious weed workshops
 - Sell Clean Go on NAISMA
 - Indian Education for All and Invasive Plants curriculum development
 - Russian olive & buckthorn removal at Billings Two Moon Park
 - i. Successful removal, transitioning to monitoring



24-25 Outreach Spreadsheet

- I Do – We Do – You Do modeling at every outing

I Do (Modeling):

- Introduce the concept of invasive species and their impact on ecosystems.
- Demonstrate how to inspect and clean hiking gear to prevent the spread of invasive species.

We Do (Guided Practice):

- Engage students in a group activity where they practice cleaning gear using provided tools.
- Discuss the importance of each step.

You Do (Independent Practice):

- Students encouraged to practice on their own
- Encourage audience to teach peers the PlayCleanGo or CleanDrainDry principles.

Invasive Annual Grasses Work Group Update

- History of Invasive Annual Grasses Working Group
- Three invasive grasses on Noxious Weed List
 - Phragmites listed 2015
 - Medusahead listed 2017
 - Ventenata listed 2019
- Cheatgrass has been on regulated weed list for long time
- Japanese Brome & Bulbous Bluegrass continues to be of concern
- 2022 Bipartisan infrastructure law provided needed funding for invasive species
 - UM Spatial lab received grant to research best practices for remote sensing of Ventenata
 - MSU conducted research on effective control methods of Ventenata
- Working Group members: USFS, UM, NRCS, MSU, BLM, MDA, MDT
- Education
 - Management plan is based on one from University of Wyoming
 - Focus area – south central Montana
 - Understand distribution
 - Develop landscape scale management strategies
 - Treat and monitor infestations
 - Facilitate data sharing
 - Increase awareness with managers and public
- Need to expand the working group
 - Who to include, what are the next step, where to house, who will coordinate? MDA doesn't have the time and this isn't EDNR
- Education
 - 2018-2019 Ventenata presentation and tours across state
 - Invasive grass information guide

Montana Department
of Agriculture
Jasmine Chaffee

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NAISMA Ventenata campaign and added to certified products list ○ 2023 Ventenata and palmer amaranth tour in eastern Montana (6 counties) ○ Invasive grass workshop in McCone county
Wrap Up & Adjourn	<p>Final Discussion: None</p> <p>Public Comment: Ashlee Atchison/Montana Salinity Control: explore offering continuing education credits for future MISC meetings since many topics are covered.</p> <p>*Action: Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion: Pam Schwend Second: Paul Rossignol No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.</p>

DRAFT



Proposed Projects, Programs, and Priorities for MISC 2025 (4-P)

MISC Website Revamp

- Investigate options to reorganize the invasivespecies.mt.gov web pages. Make website easier to navigate and remove pages about UC3. Combine MISC page and Invasive Species page into one instead of two separate pages.

Council member comments/suggestions:

1. Agree. At one point we discussed the website as a clearinghouse for all taxa information. Is that still needed?
2. I would like to see some tribal tidbit info or general tribes' info in the MISC Website Revamp.

Additional Comments/Summary from February Quarterly meeting discussion:

What is next? Investigate with government entities how to make these changes. Starting fresh might be faster and cheaper.

Ongoing-impacted/integrated with mandatory compliance with accessibility standards.

Social Media Presence

- Establish Montana Invasive Species Facebook and Instagram accounts to promote MISC projects, events, and invasive species issues. Share content from other partners.

Council member comments/suggestions:

1. See montanafwp on Instagram for a good example of entertaining and informational. Can we post through their Instagram to get people connected to the resource?

Additional Comments/Summary from February Quarterly meeting discussion:

What is the process? Who approves the content? Do Canadians have social media we can piggy back off of?

Ongoing-unlikely to receive departmental ok to move forward with own social media, options?

Outreach and Education

- Host Don't Move Firewood intern (through MT Conservation Corps) to build on 2024 accomplishments. Investigate creating a video to for campground hosts.
- Investigate TU's Trout in the Classroom curriculum to include invasive species awareness.
- Create a display for Eastern Heath Snail showing massing behavior.

Council member comments/suggestions:

1. EAB is an invasive species that could impact large part of MT population and would be a good candidate for education. Consider larger effort on EAB education/ outreach including how to identify, what is it, threats to natural and urban areas, costs (control, increased energy bills with less shade), replacement trees, where to get replacement trees/how to plant....
2. DNRC is working on updating the EAB Response Plan in 2025.
3. Help with coordination and creation of community based social marketing outreach strategies and materials to help integrate into MISC member outreach campaigns.
4. For education-outreach maybe add a part for what tribes should include, for example: At our annual powwows and ceremonial events, we get a lot of traffic from outside the reservation, and Brochures that include how Invasive species awareness would go along way to protect our reservations (times when extreme weather hits like, Floods, Drought, Wildfires, when state or out of state resources arrive and Invasive species can spread). Maybe a Display for education-outreach, showing a Picture of a Fancy Shawl Dancer, and below has a saying, "Protect Our Mother Earth, please don't spread invasive weeds". We could get our local schools and students involved by having a contest, with the winners Drawing/picture being used for our Outreach.
5. Leverage MISC to expand targeted outreach through Dept of Commerce. Get AIS info and requirements targeted to boaters, but also firewood info, weed info, etc.

Additional Comments/Summary from February Quarterly meeting discussion:

Discussion about trout in the classroom what goes into the permitting process, etc. Highlighted that many local organizers do a good job incorporating AIS messaging in the curriculum. Roll that messaging into the larger curriculum. CBSM workshop targeting invasive plant management in Montana is in the works. Alternatives to ash in regards to EAB planning.

Updates 10/2025, goals identified above. Hosted an intern who visited over 150 sites in 2025 for DMF outreach. Held meeting with FWP and discussed TITC, understanding is that permit language will be updated to say that fish will not be released. Continue to explore NTITC curriculum. Liz made an EHS display that shows massing for tabling events, working with Jason/MDT on a display for Armington Junction rest area.

Quarterly Webinar Series/Ask an expert video series

- Host webinars on high priority topics of interest to our stakeholders and citizens. Topics TBD. Use webinars to build interest or prompt actions.

Council member comments/suggestions:

1. My suggestion is to have really clear goals and objectives for the webinar series (topics, outcomes, measurable effectiveness) prior to launch (even if that's on a year-to-year basis). Some questions I have:
 - Will they incorporate open Q&A?
 - Are these topics value added and not available from other partners? I only bring this up because I've seen webinar series lacking attendance lately.
 - Maybe weigh the value of a long-form quarterly webinar series with a short-form series (YouTube/socials) that occurs more often?
 - Is there something that's currently missing in Montana invasive species communications (e.g., a success story series, a series highlighting invasive species careers/collaborations, focusing on new research or innovations)?

2. Gather list of stakeholder groups to distribute information through. Topics? Include resources available for public in each webinar and where to find them.

Additional Comments/Summary from February Quarterly meeting discussion:

Q&A should be integrated, not just talked to during meetings, make it an open forum. Tell success stories. There are so many webinars out there, look at what already exists and piggy back onto those. Collaborate with other groups and reach new audiences. Check with council members what already exists and be a guest for those. Some discussion about podcasts.

Update 10/25: This has been discussed to work in conjunction with the citizen science workgroup. One of the initial webinars will be citizen science/reporting focused. Would still like to coordinate with other groups on webinars/hold some.

Partnerships

- Continue to invest in partnerships with all stakeholders, attend events, support projects, be a resource, and explore opportunities for collaborative efforts and projects. This task is vital and requires substantial staff time.

Council member comments/suggestions:

1. Partnerships in general. What it takes to create and maintain them. Just a short paragraph in the list that captures this.
2. Help acknowledge AIS efforts and accomplishments through MISC. Especially those on the ground that make invasive species programs successful. Maybe annual MISC awards or recognition? Noxious weed folks provide awards at their annual events. Not sure who else in the invasive world actively acknowledges efforts. This could fit into multiple places on the 4p list.

Additional Comments/Summary from Quarterly meeting discussion:

Citizen Science Workgroup

- Develop program to encourage Montana citizens to report invasive species. Work with partners to determine need and goals. Build webpage with resources for persons interested in being part of the “Montana Invasive Species Detector Network”. Provide both online and in-person training opportunities. Look into potential funding from farm bill.
- This effort could be baseline and structured around building parsci into existing programs if our agency partners would prefer that.

Council member comments/suggestions:

1. I think this is a great idea and to my knowledge not being done comprehensively (all taxa, all demographics) by anyone else in MT.
2. How many species? This could be a full-time position to coordinate...
3. Developing a Community Science Project could be really great. As part of that, maybe develop materials that could be handed off to partners to help expand early detection participation and reporting.

Additional Comments/Summary from February Quarterly meeting discussion:

Underreported species, building awareness to get more reports. Could be a great project for the council to work MTNHP on iNaturalist and other reporting formats, to get information to managers on new reports, and council can build utility of reporting. Montana AG live as an option for building interest.

10/2025 Update: Survey to solicit interest and ideas is out now. First meeting of work group (chaired by Bryce Maxell) will take place in late October.

Species to Watch List Updates

- Check-in with species experts to update invasion curve status as needed.
- Determine fish species to include on list.
- Review species of concern reported at the 2024 MT Invasive Species Summit.

No significant change from previous watch list. Keep thinking of species to add to address unique pathways?

Additional Comments/Summary from Quarterly meeting discussion:

Bucket biology and fish species discussion with FWP, having that conversation is progress.

Workshops and Science Advisory Panels on Priority Issues

- Changing Climate and Invasive Species workshop?
- Communication Workshop
- Science Advisory Panel topic for 2026
- Summit 2026 (Pathways)
- Review past SAP recommendations and capture additional needed follow-up.

Council member comments/suggestions:

1. We had the Spatial Analysis Lab from MSU speak at a woody invasives meeting. It was higher level content than what I was hoping for, but I think understanding and applying remote sensing/satellite imaging for invasive species could be a really good topic, especially highlighting applications from various taxa.
2. Great idea. Have you talked to Jane Mangold? She wants to start giving communication trainings.

Additional Comments/Summary from February Quarterly meeting discussion:

We don't want to lose sight of climate change as an issue, keep it on the radar.

Jane Mangold will be a good contact on the communications workshop.

Not mandated to hold a SAP but have typically held every year. Change in land use/population increase and impacts to invasive species. Specific discussion on noxious weed expansions that could be related to land use and population growth.

Additional Comments/Summary from February Quarterly meeting discussion:

Recommended to review the workplan annually or at each meeting.

DRAFT

Science Advisory Panel Process

"When the panel ends, the work begins."

Amy Gannon, Chair for the May 2022 Firewood SAP.

Phase 1

Start: MISC Council confirms the topic at a council meeting.

- The topic is refined and focused in discussion.
- A lead Council member is identified.
 - The lead identifies a planning team.
 - The planning team identifies the potential participants or areas of expertise that would benefit the discussion.

Scope:

- Discussions with the potential panel participants are used to develop specific questions to focus the discussion.
 - The Council approves the scope and confirms the goal for the SAP. This can include an application for an action like releasing a biological control organism, a best practices document, or other management focused outcome.
 - The questions are developed into a request for written responses from the panelists and sent out.

Phase 2

Logistics:

- Participating panelists are identified and commit to attending. Fall, winter, and early spring panels avoid the field season from April through September.
 - Panelists and the discussion team suggest moderators and the moderator is engaged as part of the planning team.
 - The location is decided and the venue is booked. If there is a substantial international component to the meeting Zoom worked well to reduce travel costs and allow accommodations for shorter meetings over a week-long period to spread out the discussion.
 - An after-hours or informal venue is suggested (this was a popular part of the Firewood SAP).

Process:

- The panelist's written answers to the questions are compiled anonymously into a background document. The planning team reviews and approves a draft to be sent out to the panel. The team picks a set of questions to focus the live discussion.
 - The agenda is built around the discussion questions.
 - Public meeting notices and invitations are sent.
 - Final logistics: panelist's lodging, catering, meeting supplies.

Phase 3

Outcome:

- Panel meeting: notes and summary drafted and added to the compiled panelist written responses as the basis of the final report.
 - Report drafting, follow up questions with the panelists and planning team.
 - Draft report is presented to MISC for approval.

End: MISC approves the recommendations and distributes them to partners.

Montana Invasive Species Council

2022 Summit
October 25 & 26, 2022

WORK SESSION #3: Science Advisory Panels.

Question: What topics would benefit from a Science Advisory Panel review?

- Climate Change, will the risk for known invasive species change and will native species shift their behavior
- Invasive annual grass impacts, including the benefits of control, landowner buy-in, impacts to recreation, secondary invasions
- Developing effective messages to change behavior
- Best practices from integrated weed management through revegetation
- Noxious weed pathways: identifying the vectors and improving prevention
- Feral hogs: What is the plan
- Feral cat impacts from urban areas to rural populations
- Data sharing and standards
- Impacts of aquatic invasive plant control with herbicides on aquatic plant communities
- Effective techniques for vehicle decontamination from terrestrial weeds and pests
- eDNA technology has evolved, beyond mussels, how can it be used
- Legislative tools and regulatory harmonization
- Best practices for roadside vegetation management
 - Balance best practices for weed control with providing pollinator habitat and not attracting herbivores to the road
- Frontiers in control: What has changed that can improve management
- Praying mantis

Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan

2025



Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan – Page 55

September 22, 2025 - review with Tom Wolf, Steve Wanderaas, Russ Hartzell and Liz Lodman

Objective G: Evaluation of Laws and Rules

Montana's existing AIS statutes and rules were enacted over multiple years. This has helped to build a strong and effective program to address the AIS issue, however gaps and needs remain.

The MISC conducted an invasive species law review in 2018 which identified several gaps and needs related to AIS. These issues were discussed at the AIS Summit and these changes were supported by summit participants.

Strategy G.1: Regularly review laws to determine gaps and needs that could be changed to improve the efficacy and efficiency of the AIS program.

- G.1.1** Review feasibility of legislative action to define roles and responsibilities more clearly between state agencies responsible for AIS through Title 80 to ensure effective and efficient program coordination and implementation. Currently AIS responsibilities in statute are shared between FWP, MDA, MDT and DNRC with roles and responsibilities defined in MOU.
- G.1.2** Review feasibility of creating an AIS species list that would provide a single list of aquatic invasive plants and animals that provides clear management authority.
- G.1.2.1** Identify additional species to be added to the prohibited species list.
- G.1.3** Review the feasibility and need for a pull the plug requirement for watercraft.
- G.1.4** Review the feasibility and need for increased penalties for watercraft that fail to stop at inspection stations.
- G.1.5** Evaluate the effectiveness and utility of the AIS Trust Fund.
- G.1.6** Review and clarify overlapping AIS responsibilities shared by the WMCC and the state-wide AIS program managed by FWP.
- G.1.7** Evaluate statutory requirements for integrating technology-based requirements to help ensure boaters meet inspection before launch requirements.

- G.1.1** Review feasibility of legislative action to define roles and responsibilities more clearly between state agencies responsible for AIS through [Title 80](#) to ensure effective and efficient program coordination and implementation. Currently AIS responsibilities in statute are shared between FWP, MDA, MDT and DNRC with roles and responsibilities defined in MOU.

Action: NO ACTION

Notes: Take no action unless a bill is introduced that would impact Title 80. The MOU is sufficient for now.

- G.1.2** Review feasibility of creating an AIS species list that would provide a single list of aquatic invasive plants and animals that provides clear management authority.

Action: FWP add Dept of Agriculture listed aquatic invasive plants by reference.

Action: FWP add more aquatic plants to list so to prohibit their sales in Montana.

Notes: Ask Jasmine to provide an update at exe comm.

- G.1.2.1** Identify additional species to be added to the prohibited species list.

Action: FWP to present additional species to Classification Review Committee.

Notes: FWP intends to present invasive mussels (zebra, quagga, and golden) by genus to the committee in winter of 2025-2026. This will cover any other non-native mussels that could be introduced in the future. The Classification Review Committee is outlined in [87-5-708](#), and is composed of at least one representative from:

- (a) the department (FWP);
- (b) the department of public health and human services;
- (c) the department of livestock;
- (d) the department of agriculture;
- (e) a business that breeds or exhibits exotic wildlife; and
- (f) the general public who has an interest in fish or wildlife.

If approved by Classification Review Committee recommendations go to the Fish and Wildlife Commission for consideration and approval.

MISC will support this effort.

G.1.3 Review the feasibility and need for a pull the plug requirement for watercraft.

Action: MISC will investigate current 'pull the plug' laws using Sea Grant Law Center information. [2024 Sea Grant Law Center Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Programs, Legislative and Regulatory Update.](#)

Note: [HB 152](#) was passed and signed by the Governor in 2021. The language was altered after push back to allow for drain plugs to be reengaged for transport after draining. [Original HB 152 language.](#)

Notes: Discuss practicability/need of introducing a bill at 2027 legislature. Produce a [white paper](#). Ask Ben Holen to share information about North Dakota's 'pull the plug' law at the October MISC meeting.

G.1.4 Review the feasibility and need for increased penalties for watercraft that fail to stop at inspection stations.

Action: NO ACTION

Notes: Penalties for failure to stop were increased by the 2025 Legislature. [HB 242 language.](#)

G.1.5 Evaluate the effectiveness and utility of the AIS Trust Fund.

Action: MISC will investigate the history of the AIS Trust Fund and the current balance.

Notes: Work with [OBPP staff](#). Questions: (1) How does the AIS Trust Fund compare to other Trust Funds. (2) Who can use the trust fund. (3) Feasibility of lowering the cap so funds can be used sooner. (4) Does Sea Grant Law Center have information about other states' trust funds. Plan to have trust expert present at the December MISC meeting.

G.1.6 Review and clarify overlapping AIS responsibilities shared by the WMCC and the state-wide AIS program managed by FWP.

Action: FWP will initiate a meeting between directors of FWP and DNRC.

Notes: [WMCC](#), has AIS duties outlined in statute [85-1-904](#). Includes: *support, promote, and ensure the continuation of a comprehensive aquatic invasive species prevention program in western Montana*. Funds utilized by WMCC for AIS are intended to enhance the work of FWP and fill gaps where needed. WMCC is also charged with *monitoring* the existing condition of natural resources and coordinate development of a 5 year monitoring strategy.

Sharing information (reports) about FWP's education and outreach plans/efforts would aid WMCC in their planning and vice versa. Ensure that FWP is referenced and/or the FWP logo is included in all O/E materials as the lead organization, acknowledging at all opportunities FWP role as the lead agency will strengthen clarity.

G.1.7 Evaluate statutory requirements for integrating technology-based requirements to help ensure boaters meet inspection before launch requirements.

Action: FWP and MISC will monitor new developments.

Notes: Utah is the leader in technology. Legislation is needed to require or enforce any new technology.

Non-Management Plan Tasks

Action: Explore ways to promote acknowledgement of AIS staff through awards, recognition, appreciation.

Notes: Could MISC be a good avenue to move forward with more formal process? Peer-to-peer nominations, surveys, etc. Or driven by management staff nomination. This could be discussed at partner meeting in Great Falls.

Commerce + MISC Opportunities

- **Statewide Resiliency Plan**

- Imperative 1 - Responsibly Position Montana for Prosperity
 - We promote the pursuit of economic prosperity that is held in balance with the needs and best interests of local heritage and culture, community quality of life, **and the natural environment**.
 - Analyze opportunities to support MISC through Resiliency efforts; what else in plan aligns.

https://commerce.mt.gov/_shared/brand/docs/Resilience-Plans/Statewide_ResiliencePlan_4.16.24.pdf

- **Quarterly MISC Meetings (in-person)**

- Rotated areas around the state, but always in a Tourism Region – opportunity to create better relationship with the partners in that specific region while in their backyard.
 - Invite Region rep to meeting or if there are any social tours or gatherings, to connect in person or for them to hear directly threats to their landscapes/invasive species to watch, etc.
 - Or could be a simple stop at their office to connect in person briefly – easier to get response once connected personally.
 - Drop off stickers, swag, coloring books, etc. to visitor centers, chambers, or DMOs to have as visitors come through (I can help with this is my own work travels as well).
 - Holding a MISC meeting onsite at the chamber or one of their offices if they have the space to bridge the gap and get them more involved.

<https://commerce.mt.gov/Business/Programs-and-Services/Tourism-Marketing/Regions-DMOs-and-CVBs/>

- **Film Office**

- There might be interest in the film office staying connected with MISC and how to take better care of land as film crews are onsite in Montana – could be as simple as attending or zooming in to one of their staff meetings to help educate so they can better prepare their film crews and talent.
- Or providing them with resources to hand out onsite as well, can also discuss further with the film office directly.

- **Webinar(s)**

- 1st concept: “Resources to Resiliently Prepare Visitors to Protect Montana’s Natural Assets”
 - High level overview and resource sharing to bring awareness for Tourism Partners as they prepare for peak tourist season
 - **Purpose:** To continue resilient efforts to protect the state of Montana and share updated resources and marketing materials for partners to use in campaigns, visitor guides, etc. and be partners with other state agencies.
 - Prepare in winter when there are less conferences/events, etc. so more focus time and so they have time to include in their plans and messaging – would a webinar in January or February work? What is the best timing?
 - Speakers: MISC reps and FWP? Who makes sense?
 - Potential Topics:
 - Don’t Move Firewood Campaign + How to help get MISC messaging posted on campsites and accommodations
 - Current Invasive Species to Watch/Most important threats to date
 - How to prepare Airbnb’s/Accommodations guests when staying in Montana
 - MISC Education + Outreach Swag or Materials that Regions can leverage in their visitor centers



COMMERCE

- Or even a small open forum to hear what the partners may think is helpful information for them to stay connected with

****final topics influenced by MISC and needs for tourism****

- **Airbnb's/Accommodations**

- Area to leverage relationships to potentially get accommodations to share MISC messaging at rentals as visitors are passing through; this was mentioned by Michelle Cox at July meeting in person.
- Would need to get buy in from tourism partners as they are better connected with these types of entities.
- MLHA connection? Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association
 - Has there ever been a connection so they can better prepare visitors?

- **Other**

- Destination MT Education + Outreach
 - Division working on toolkits and booth set-ups for 2026 education and outreach – should anything be incorporated from MISC?
- Governor's Conference on Tourism
 - Speakers? Breakout sessions? Attendance? MISC booth?
 - Other conferences?
 - Agritourism
 - MT Outdoor Rec

Nashua Watercraft Inspection Station Visit

When: Friday, October 17th, 9am

Where: Nashua Watercraft Inspection Station,
14 Nashua Rd, Nashua, MT 59248



Join us for a tour and Q&A session about operating a watercraft inspection station, the state Aquatic Invasive Species Program, and partnerships in invasive species management.

