



Montana Invasive Species Council

Meeting Materials Packet for February 20, 2025

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MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

MEETING AGENDA

Note: The agenda is subject to change and times are approximate. Actual times may vary by up to one hour.

Montana Wild – Helena, MT | Hybrid Meeting
2668 Broadwater Ave, Helena, MT 59602

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

8:30 am – 8:45 am	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS *ACTION: Approve November Meeting Minutes
8:45 am – 10:00 am	MISC STAFF UPDATE
10:00 am – 10:15 am	BREAK
10:15 am – 10:45 am	MISC PARTNERSHIPS Steve Wanderaas, Montana Invasive Species Council Chair
10:45 am – 11:30 am	MISC WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES Liz Lodman & Russ Hartzell, Montana Invasive Species Council
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	MISC OPEN SEAT DISCUSSION & VOTE *ACTION: Vote on Co-Vice Chair Position *ACTION: Vote on Private Landowner Representative Position
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	LUNCH
12:45 pm – 1:15 pm	LEGISLATIVE UPDATE Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council
1:15 pm – 1:45 pm	INVASIVE GRASSES & PHRAGMITES UPDATE Josh Wagoner, Montana Department of Agriculture
1:45 pm – 2:30 pm	BULLFROG UPDATE Torrey Ritter, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Cara Thompson, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm	BREAK
2:45 pm – 3:45 pm	MISC MEMBER UPDATES
3:45 pm – 4:00	WRAP UP & ADJOURN *Public Comment Location of Next Meeting

This meeting is open to the public. The most current meeting information and meeting materials are available on the MISC website at: invasivespecies.mt.gov/misc/meetings-schedule. Persons who wish to attend the meeting in person or virtually must register before noon on February 18, 2025, by contacting Anna Connerton at anna.connerton@mt.gov or at https://mtdnrc.formstack.com/forms/2025_february_misc_meeting_registration.

*Public comment will be available during times the Council acts on items as indicated on the agenda and during the end of the meeting. To provide public comment, participants may "raise their hand" and participate after being recognized by the presiding officer or Zoom manager. Comments will be taken in order. Written public comments may be sent via email in advance of the meeting to anna.connerton@mt.gov and will be provided to council members. Any oral or written public comment provided to the committee is a public record that is recorded and archived.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this public meeting. For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations, contact Anna Connerton at 406-444-2613 or anna.connerton@mt.gov as soon as possible before the meeting date.

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:	November 12, 2024	Time:	9:30 am
Minutes Prepared By:	Anna Connerton	Location:	Delta Hotel, Helena Zoom
Attendees:			
<p><i>MISC:</i> <u>Dylan Brown</u>, Steve Wanderaas, Tom Woolf, <u>Andy Welch</u>, Sara Ricklefs, Jasmine Chaffee, Jake Chadwell, Pam Schwend, Gary Adams, Jessica Zarate, Michelle Cox, Robert Thompson</p> <p><i>MISC Staff:</i> Liz Lodman, Anna Connerton, Russ Hartzell</p> <p><i>Other:</i> Amy Gannon, Asta Bowen, Eliza McLaughlin, Dr. Heidi Hildahl, Jessica Bushnell, Mark Bostrom, Megan Evans, Ronald Koontz, Rose Picklo, Shayna Jones, Becky Kington, Chris Craft, Erin Bjorklund, Jennifer Riddle, Josh Wagoner, Megan Hoyer, Phil Matson, Sara Owen, Lori Witham, Ian Foley</p> <p>*MISC voting members are underlined.</p>			
Agenda & Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome & Introductions	<p>Steve Wanderaas (Chair) opened the meeting at 9:30 am. Wanderaas conducted a roll call and confirmed the quorum. Attendees introduced themselves.</p> <p>*Action: Approval of July 2024 Meeting Minutes Motion: Pam Schwend Second: Sara Ricklefs Motion Passed Unanimously.</p>		
MISC Staff Update	<p>Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council</p> <p>Update from the 2022 Summit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Invasive Species to Watch</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Created the watch list from information gathered at the 2022 Summit. This information was presented to Legislature at the 2023 Rotunda event as well as others. Are there updates that need to be made to this list? Changes to invasion curve colors, still missing a fish. • <i>Fact Sheets</i> • <i>StoryMap with MTHNP (in progress)</i> • <i>MISC Workplan</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Created the 2023-2026 MISC Work Plan based on 2022 Summit input. ○ Woody Invasives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with vested stakeholders to develop long-term, on-the-ground solutions to salt cedar, Russian olive, and other woody invasive species impacting riparian areas in Central and Eastern Montana. ▪ The “10 Invasive Species to Watch” list developed at the 2022 Montana Invasive Species Summit will be used to identify cumulative impacts and management gaps. ○ <i>Communications Workshop for Natural Resource Professionals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide land management professionals with the tools necessary to effectively communicate the importance of invasive species management to new and diverse audiences. ○ <i>Science Advisory Panel – Access Invasiveness of a Species</i> 		

- To develop a process to assess the potential invasiveness of a species by effectively quantifying its impact to Montana's economy and environment.
- Committee: Bryce Christiaens, Gary Adams, Tom Woolf, Michelle Cox, and Leigh Greenwood.
- *Compliance with Regulations*
 - Continue its work to improve compliance with existing statewide regulations.
- *Changing Climate Workshop*
 - Engage regional experts in a workshop addressing the impact of a changing climate on the spread of invasive species.

Rotunda & Legislative Session

- *2023 Rotunda – February 22, 2023*
 - The 2023 Rotunda event was co-hosted with UC3. Legislators were provided with lunch.
 - Invited partners to attend and have a booth: CEMIST, ISAN, MDA, FWP, MSU Extension-Schutter Lab, MWCA, TNC
- *2023 Legislature*
 - Senate Bill 293 – Requires a poster relevant to invasive species be displayed at MDT rest areas.
 - Carried by Representative Mark Noland.
 - These posters were mailed to tourism organizations, visitor centers, and chambers of commerce as well.
- *2025 Rotunda – February 12, 2025*
 - MISC members are invited to attend to interact with legislators.
 - Planning and next steps will begin soon.

Woody Invasive Species

- December 2022 – Kickoff Meeting
- 2023 – Working Group Formed
 - NWTF grant to ISAN
- MISC Funds Science Advisory Panels
 - \$10,000, term ends December 31, 2024.
 - November 20, 2023
 - October 17, 2023
- MISC Funds Impact Report
 - \$22,000, term ends October 30, 2026.

Feral Swine – Squeal on Pigs

- Created a new fact sheet with the new logo.
- Feral Swine Tour – MSU Extension and County Extension Agents
 - The following towns were presented in: Havre, Chinook, Malta, Glasgow/Ft Peck, Scobey, Plentywood, and Sidney.
 - Jared Beaver, APHIS – WS, and MDOL presented to 340 people.
 - MISC helped write news release and paid for radio spots on Northern Ag Network.
- MISC received a grant from APHIS – WS to support the PNWER Summit in Boise, ID.

eDNA and AIS

- MISC Environmental DNA Panel Discussion – September 14, 2023, in Missoula
- *Panel Speakers:*
 - John Amberg: USGS, Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center

- Gordon Luikart: University of Montana, Flathead Biological Station
- Taylor Wilcox: USFS, Rocky Mountain Research Station
- *Panel Objectives*
 - Provide information on what eDNA and metabarcoding are and how they used.
 - Identify strengths and challenges of using molecular tools for AIS early detection.
 - Identify gaps and needs where MISC AIS funding could potentially support the development of the science.

Firewood Science Advisory Panel

- *Challenges:*
 - Firewood transported long distances poses a risk of spreading non-native insects and diseases to our forests.
 - Out-of-state firewood can be brought in by visitors or returning residents for use at campsites or homes.
 - Montana hosts about 12.5 million visitors per year.
 - About 24% of visitors said they would camp; many would use more than one campsite.
 - Introduced insects and diseases are difficult to control and have ongoing impacts.
 - Pests are moved between states in many ways although several pathways are dominant:
 - Firewood
 - Solid wood packing material
 - Infested nursery stock
- *Recommendations*
 - *Markets*
 - *Explore Firewood Scout or Stacked.camp to determine if either website could effectively promote local businesses selling firewood.*
 - *Coordination*
 - *Partner with visitMT.com, Recreate Responsibly, and other tourism sites to include firewood messaging.*
 - *Update outreach to campgrounds (federal, state, local and private) & distribute consistent messaging.*
 - *Communication*
 - *Reach visitors to Montana prior to departure (from their home state) during their trip planning stage (includes ORV pass purchases, hunting tags, campground reservations, RV publications).*
 - *Use partners to distribute uniform information about firewood.*
 - *Commit to educating front line partners (people who interact with out of state visitors) about threats posed by out-of-state firewood so they communicate the consistent message.*

Don't Move Firewood Outreach

- *Outreach Planning Partners:*
 - DNRC – Forestry: Amy Gannon
 - USFS – Michelle Cox and Mara Newcomb
 - The Nature Conservancy – Don't Move Firewood Campaign: Leigh Greenwood
- *MISC AmeriCorps Member*
 - Fern McBride – originally from California
 - Built the program and conducted outreach

- Added to Stacked.camp during his travels
- Visited 97 campgrounds
- Needs:
 - MISC host another intern to visit more campgrounds
 - Interns continue to add to Stacked.camp
 - Intern to conduct more outreach at public events
 - Host fee funded by USFS grant
 - Partner with visitMT.com, Recreate Responsibly, and other tourism sites to include firewood messaging
 - Reach visitors to Montana prior to departure from their home state.

Eastern Heath Snails

- Eastern Heath Snails were discovered in Lewistown.
- Worked closely with CEMIST, Fergus Conservation District, Montana Department of Agriculture, and other partners responding to a new detection of Eastern Heath Snails in Fergus County.
- Increased Education and Outreach efforts on Eastern Heath Snail.
- After action report and working group will inform future responses and next steps for Eastern Heath Snails.

Incident Command Training

- Coordinating a joint training and exercise for next spring
- Lots of interest from agencies and other entities
 - Working with APHIS, Schutter Diagnostic Lab, Montana Department of Agriculture, and Montan DES to conduct the training.
- Montana Disaster and Emergency Services to assist with development and delivery

North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA)

- NAISMA Conference – October 1-3, 2024, Missoula, MT
- Planning Team:
 - MISC: Liz Lodman, Anna Connerton, Russ Hartzell, Jasmine Chaffee, Pam Schwend, Jason Allen, Michelle Cox.
 - MCDEE: Bryce Christiaens, Melissa Maggio, Stephany Rogge
 - Weed Districts: Jill Allen, Karen Laitala
 - Canadians: Meagn Evans, Paige Kuczmarski, Kelly Cooley
 - Other: Leigh Greenwood, Julie Kraft, Kate Wilson
- 459 registered
 - 39 states
 - 4 Canadian Provinces
 - 4 Countries (U.S., Canada, Switzerland, Australia)
- 114 from Montana (25%)
 - 36 Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant
 - Weed Districts, Conservation Districts, Extension Agents

Much More in 2024

- 54 MISC News e-Bulletins
- Questions from the public have increased
- 119 meetings and outreach events attended
- APHIS – WS Feral Swine Grant - \$23,216 (complete)
- Forest Service Invasive Species Grant - \$39,000 (on-going)
- Hired MISC program coordinator to build capacity and support

What's Next?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve compliance with existing statewide regulations ○ Host Changing Climate Workshop ○ Host Invasive Species Communications Workshop ○ Host Don't Move Firewood Intern for 2025 ○ Hold webinars on Montana/regional topics quarterly ○ Review and prioritize species in need of additional efforts ○ Redesign invasivespecies.mt.gov website ○ Get Facebook and Instagram accounts ○ Promote community science reporting of invasive species ○ Continue to collaborate with partners ○ Swag
<p>Committee Reports</p>	<p>Sara Ricklefs, Invasive Species Action Network</p> <p>Woody Invasives Science Advisory Panel: The most recent science advisory panel was last month, and it was here in Helena. This was a hybrid meeting. There were about 40 attendees and there were representatives from every time zone in the continuous U.S. There was a lot of good discussions, there were experts on each species. We hope to have a report to the core planning group by December 1st and then one to MISC by the end of the year as per our contract deadline. We had a lot of buy in from partners, \$10,000 from MISC and \$13,000 from ISAN or other partners. For the impact report we have contracted with Nanette Nelson and other researchers out of Flathead Lake Biostation, we put out a bid and got two bids.</p> <p>Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council for Bryce Christiaens, Missoula County Department of Ecology & Extension</p> <p>Process to Access Invasiveness of a Species Science Advisory Panel: Have a contract with Leah Elwell to be the facilitator and moderator for the science advisory panel. They have a list of presenters that they are vetting. As of now they are trying to identify processes by which you can identify invasiveness of a species across the board.</p> <p>Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council</p> <p>Communications Workshop: We are working on getting this off the ground, we are thinking about potentially doing two workshops, one in the east and one in the west, it would be for natural resource professionals who maybe don't have a background in communication like conservation districts personnel who don't understand communicating with the public.</p>
<p>2025 Legislative Session</p>	<p>Mark Bostrom, Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation</p> <p>The 2025 Legislative Session is coming up and we just had an election. There will be a little more play on the topics that we see this year. There will be a lot of pressure on funding, there are eight invasive species related bill drafts, so there is potential that there will be a bill come up this next session that is related to invasive species. If there is a bill or something like that that MISC wants to make a testimony on, make sure to come through the director's office. The administration has the same view as MISC, but if they are to say no then you must follow that. The nature of administrative attachment in government stems from the 1972 Constitutional Convention there used to be 160 agencies, which was like herding cats. And so, the executive was this huge 160 agency thing. In fact, I think one of the campaign slogans that they had in authorizing that constitutional convention was 20 is plenty, and so here became 20 primary agencies, and all the boards and commissions that</p>

were operating as independent agencies were then attached to those 20. So, all the communication thus flows from those administrative attachments through to the executive branch Governor's office. based on that, you know, they'll talk to the Cabinet or natural resource advisor, or whatever take a position on a particular bill that may come through and then someone, usually the chair, or often the executive director would have opportunity to go up and do testimony, I just want to make sure that we are clear on this as I have had issues in the past with other commissions. Whoever goes up, you represent yourself as a member of an organization not as the organization itself. We watch the list of bills that drop every day, we have a meeting at 10 am every day during legislation.

Liz Lodman: During the last legislative session, I always put the bills pertaining to invasive species in our newsletters with links to the language to keep everyone informed. Last year was the first time I testified in front of the legislature, and I had to write down my script and have it approved.

Questions:
Steve Wanderaas: Say I am going in front of a committee; how do I make sure that I am on the same page as the director.
Mark Bostrom: By talking directly to the director, or Liz could talk with the director.

[Ian Foley, Montana Department of Agriculture](#)

History of Detection

- Sample collected on 7/28/2012
- Confirmed ID on 8/9/2012
- MDA communicated find to Governor's Office, FWP, and Dept of Livestock, on 8/14/2024
- MDA press release published on 8/15/2012
- National Agriculture Pest Information System (NAPIS) data entered on 8/15/2012
- MSU Extension Ag Alert 8/15/2012
- Front Page of Great Falls Tribune multiple times in 2012-13
- NAPPO Alert 9/14/2024

Montana Exports

- State of Montana is 3rd nationally in wheat production
 - Choteau County is top 5 wheat producing county in the US
 - 2nd in Barley production
 - 1st in lentils and dry peas
 - ~80% of total grain production is exported

MDA Quarantine Authority

- The Montana Quarantine and Pest Management Act [80-7-401 through 80-7-404 MCA] allows for the adoption of intra- and interstate quarantines to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests, procedures to investigate and enforce quarantines, develop pest management standards and procedures for controlling plant pests, and riles for the recovery of expenses and imposition of penalties.
- By departmental rule Montana could impose a quarantine to prevent the importation of commodities or conveyances from other states that may contain invasive gastropods. It could also impose a quarantine on a specific county or geographic area within Montana to prevent the spread of an invasive species.

Current MDA Quarantines

- Emerald Ash Borer – Ash nursery stock and untreated ash wood

Eastern Heath Snail
History & Status

- European Pine Shoot Moth – Pine nursery stock and Christmas trees from the eastern US
- Japanese Beetle – interior and exterior, nursery stock, and sod from eastern US and within Yellowstone County
- Late Blight – seed potatoes and tomato plants. Certified potato seed only.
- Other considerations:
 - Federal pre-emption
 - Commerce Clause and US Constitution

Belt, Montana

- 2010 population of 597
- One of Montana’s first coal mines
- 1910 population was over 2,000
 - More than 15 European nationalities
- On the railroad since the early 1900’s
- Harvest Moon Brewing Company opened in 1997
- Today, new home construction on Belt Creek, 25 miles to Great Falls

Molluscicide Treatments

- USDA Record of Categorical Exclusion signed in 2014 for NEPA
- Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment published for comments by MDA in 2014 for MEPA
- Allowed for chemical treatments on ~22,000 acres
- Acknowledgement of potential mollusk species of concern including western NA endemics in genus *Oreohelix*
- Iron phosphate (Sluggo, EPA EPA Reg. No. 67702-24)
- Metaldehyde 4% (Deadline M-P’s, EPA Reg. No. 548-511)

Treatment & Control

- Chemical Control (Molluscicides)
 - ~~Boric Acid (organic)~~
 - ~~Iron Phosphate (organic)~~
 - Metaldehyde (liquid and baits)
- Hand picking
- Mechanical: rolling, mowing, cabling, burning
- Since Montana has few mollusk pests, most Ag formulations were not labeled for use in the state

Ongoing Activities

- Annual detection surveys for *Xerloenta* (and other invasive mollusks) in areas not known to be infested in Montana
- Support MSU and other research activities
- Transfer best management strategies to farmers, ranchers, and land managers
- Outreach and education on best management practices to prevent human assisted spread (primarily in MDA regulated pathways: nursery stock, beehives, certified forage and gravel, commodity exports)

Questions:

Russ Hartzell: Question on those pathways of authority. How often are snails found on those things that you are doing? Those routine inspections?

Ian Foley: Rarely. When we find snails such as garden snails or European snails, we just document that they have been found.

Russ Hartzell: On those alerts that you did initially, is there requirements to update those based on range expansion? Or is there anything that would require you to go back out and do an update?

Ian Foley: We have added all the new counties nationally, but the NAPO alerts are reserved for first in state detections.

To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Ian Foley, please view 1:37:00 – 2:10:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](#).

Liz Lodman, Montana Invasive Species Council

We just want this on everyone’s radar as there are quite a few council members whose terms end in 2025. I haven’t done this before with state agencies, but I assume that the state agencies will just have their directors re-appoint or appoint someone else. As for the others, do we ask them if they would like to stay on or if they would like to step down and appoint someone else. I will check with the Governors office and see how we can move forward with this and let everyone know. See list below with terms for the council members.

We do have a few vacant spots, one of which we may have a solution to. Pam Schwend is retiring from her position as weed coordinator and we discussed her stepping into the roll of private landowner position and have someone else fill the county weed districts position. This will need further discussion and cooperation from the governor’s office.

MISC Membership

Council Member	Representing	Term Start	Term End
Dennis Longknife	Fort Belknap Indian Community	5/1/2021	4/30/2025
Tracy Tyner	Rocky Boy Representative	12/15/2023	5/1/2025
Mike Bias	Fishing Organization Representative	6/15/2021	5/31/2025
Martin Charlo	CSKT Representative	6/15/2021	5/31/2025
Charles Headdress	Fort Peck Representative	6/15/2021	5/31/2025
Paul Rossignol	Wildlife Organization Representative	6/15/2021	5/31/2025
Andy Welch	Hydropower Representative	6/15/2021	5/31/2025
Tom Woolf	Montana FWP Designee	6/15/2021	5/31/2025
Jenny Pelej	Dept of Commerce Designee	7/14/2023	6/1/2025
Jason Allen	Dept of Transportation Designee	12/15/2023	5/1/2027
Jared Beaver	MSU Extension	12/15/2023	5/1/2027
Jasmine Chaffee	Dept of Agriculture Designee	12/15/2023	5/1/2027
Sean Fritzler	Crow Nation Representative	12/15/2023	5/1/2027
Sara Ricklefs	Conservation Organization Representative	7/25/2023	5/1/2027
Pam Schwend	County Weed Districts Representative	12/15/2023	5/1/2027
Steve Wanderaas	Conservation Districts Representative	7/25/2023	5/1/2027
Dylan Brown	Agriculture Representative	Unknown	Unknown
Jacob Chadwell	DNRC Designee	Unknown	Unknown
Vacant	Blackfeet Nation Representative	Vacant	Vacant
Vacant	Little Shell Tribal Government	Vacant	Vacant
Vacant	Northern Cheyenne Government	Vacant	Vacant
Vacant	Private Landowner Representative	Vacant	Vacant

Feral Swine Update **Dr. Heidi Hildahl, Montana Department of Livestock**

The MDOL is fully staffed as of now, MDOL is made up of four veterinarians:

- Tahnee Szymanski (DVM) – State Veterinarian
- Heidi Hildahl (DVM, PhD) – Veterinarian Supervisor
- Brad DeGroot (DVM, PhD) – Brucellosis
- Brenee Peterson (DVM) – Emergency Preparedness
- 6 Compliant Technicians
- 2 District Investigator Supervisors
- 17 District Brand Investigators

A sounder is a group of pigs, we also call them harems because there are multiple females and piglets. The boar has a very long nose, spiny hairs on top, long legs, and a hairy chest. It only takes two generations for a domestic pig to mate with a wild pig to look like a wild boar.

- Feral pigs are domestic pigs that have escaped or been released into the wild.
- True wild pigs are native to Eurasia and parts of North Africa.
- Wild pigs were introduced into the U.S. by Spanish Explorers in 1539.

Feral Hog Sounder:

- Boars join the sounder to breed, but typically live alone or in small bachelor groups
- Undisturbed, sounders typically stay within a five square mile area
- Sounders are territorial but will become cooperative if food sources are ample
- Food = Bigger sows = More piglets
- Sows can have 2 litters per year under ideal conditions

Super Omnivore

- They eat peanuts, corn, or other crops overnight
- They eat acorns, berries, roots, seeds, salamanders, and young lambs or calves
- They eat eggs – whether of ground-nesting birds or sea turtles
- They eat trash – landfills are all-you-can-eat buffets

Invasive Species Profile

- Property damage
- Erosion to the river/Habitat damage
- Predatory
- Consumption and destruction of field crops
- Damage to natural resources
- Able to carry or transmit 30 diseases and 37 parasites transmissible to livestock, people, pets, and wildlife

Diseases Carried by Feral Swine

- Swine brucellosis (*Brucella suis*)*
- Pseudorabies
- Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRSv)
- Swine influenza virus
- Porcine circovirus-associated diseases
- Foot and mouth disease (FMD)
- Classical Swine Fever (CSF)
- African Swine Fever (ASF)
- Tuberculosis*
- Trichinellosis*

- Leptospirosis*
- Hepatitis E*
- Q Fever*
- Tularemia*
- Toxoplasmosis

**Zoonotic*

Definition MCA 81-29-101: A hog, or pig that appears to be untamed, undomesticated, or in a wild state that appears to be contained for commercial hunting or trapping.

This is misleading as we do not allow hunting or trapping in our state. North Dakota has a better definition: North Dakota Century Code 36-26-01, “feral swine” are swine which appear to be untamed or undomesticated, appears to have reverted from a domesticated to a wild state, and is free roaming.

Montana Regulations:

The following actions are prohibited

- Importing, transporting, or possessing live feral swine
- Intentionally, knowingly, or negligently allowing swine to live in a feral state
- Hunting, trapping, or killing feral swine or assisting in hunting, trapping, or killing feral swine
- Intentionally feeding a feral swine
- Expanding the range of a feral swine
- Profiting from the release, hunting, trapping, or killing of feral swine

Other Montana Regulations:

- Limits on who is allowed to control or eradicate feral swine
- Mandatory reporting to MDOL
- Penalties and violations
 - A fine of at least \$2,000 but not more than \$10,000 for each violation
 - Repayment of costs incurred by a state or federal agency for the persons control or eradication of a feral swine as a result of a person’s violation
- Funding for control or eradication
- 81-4-201 Animals running at large

Why isn’t hunting allowed in Montana?

Due to their reproductive efficiency, and movement behavior, swine cannot be effectively controlled by simple hunting practices.

- Hunting pressure that fails to eliminate all animals in a group (sounder) can result in further dispersion of animals.
- Feral swine that have been hunted learn behaviors to avoid hunting pressure making them harder to eradicate.
- Hunting fosters the development of a hunting constituency.
- All reports of potential feral swine in Montana involving live animals have been owned animals.

Feral Swine Response:

Response to reports of feral swine will vary depending on the type of initial report.

- Damage consistent with feral swine
- Loose pigs outside of urban-rural interface
- Pig carcass with feral swine features

Feral Response Guidelines:

1. Dept of Livestock is the authority for feral swine per MCA 81-29-101
2. Only those entities authorized by Livestock may take feral swine on public lands
3. Private land *landowners* or private land *lessees* may take feral swine on private lands they own or lease.
4. If FWP receives a report of feral swine the details should be recorded by FWP and relayed to the Dept of Livestock ASAP (406-444-2976) or via email to the Feral Swine Notification List.
5. If USDA Wildlife Services receives a report of feral swine, the details should be recorded by WS and relayed to the Dept of Livestock ASAP (406-444-2976) or via email to the Feral Swine Notification List.
6. If Livestock receives a report of a feral swine, the details should be recorded by Livestock and relayed to Feral Swine Notification List.
7. Livestock Executive Officer will relay information to Governors' office as appropriate land based upon the substance and validity of the potential report.
8. Livestock will deploy to ALL reports of potential feral swine involving live animals to ensure that swine are not owned animals.
9. Authorization of FWP staff to take feral swine will be defined on a case-by-case basis. This determination will include confirmation/communication from Livestock personnel regarding the potential for stray swine in this area. Specific situations where additional authority may be proactively granted are currently being explored by Livestock.
10. USDA Wildlife Services may be authorized by Livestock to take feral swine. Livestock would initiate that communication.
11. See response scenario for additional guidance.

Response Scenarios:*Damage consistent with feral swine.*

1. *If reported damage is on land outside MDOL jurisdiction, MDOL will contact jurisdiction for coordination response.*
2. *Livestock or other field personnel (FWP, WS) will respond to look for evidence of feral swine and document damage.*
3. *WS will evaluate reported damage to determine if it is consistent with presence of feral swine.*
4. *If damage is consistent with feral swine, some or all the following may be done:*
 - a. *Survey of local landowners to determine swine ownership*
 - b. *Survey of local area to look for presence of feral swine*
 - i. *WS aerial surveillance*
 - ii. *Ground surveillance through game cameras or human surveillance*
 - c. *Public meetings to increase awareness of feral swine regulations*
 - d. *Communication to local landowners regarding feral swine awareness*

Pig carcass with feral swine features

1. *If reported damage is on land outside MDOL jurisdiction, MDOL will contact jurisdiction for coordination of response.*
2. *Livestock or other personnel (FWP, WS) will respond to:*
 - a. *Canvass local landowners to identify swine ownership in area*
 - b. *Survey of local area to look for presence of feral swine*
 - i. *WS aerial surveillance*
 - ii. *Ground surveillance through game cameras or human surveillance*
 - c. *Public meetings to increase awareness of feral swine regulations*
3. *Coordinate with WS on potential genetic testing of carcass*

There have been 6 reports of feral swine in 2024. They have all been found to be owned animals.

General Talking Points:

- Feral swine sounders are currently NOT present in Montana.
- Montana is working to keep feral swine out of the state.
- Prevention includes strong laws that prohibit the establishment of populations in Montana.
- Risk of introduction of feral swine in Montana include:
 - Movement into Montana from Canada.
 - Deliberate introduction by humans wanting to create hunting opportunities.
 - Establishment of populations from free-roaming domestic pigs.
- Sightings or signs of feral swine should be reported immediately to MDOL.
- Landowners can kill feral swine on their own property if immediate threat of danger exists, but the landowner must report to MDOL.

Hunting Talking Points:

- All reports of feral swine in Montana have proven to be owned animals.
- Due to reproductive efficiency and movement behavior, swine cannot be effectively controlled by simple hunting practices.
- Hunting pressure fails to eliminate all animals in a sounder can result in the establishment of multiple sounders.
- Feral swine that have been hunted learn to avoid hunting pressure making them harder to eradicate.
- Should hunting constituency build, competing interests will want ongoing opportunities to hunt feral swine.

Questions:

Brenda Witkowski: How does it work on federal land when you find one? Is there an MOU in place? Is there a point of contact?

Dr. Heidi Hildahl: I believe so, I haven't dug into our MOUs yet, but I've seen it in action. We stick to the state side and communicate with each other and USDA is more in contact with the federal side. As far as the point of contact, we are currently working on a list now.

To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Dr. Hildahl, please view 3:12:00 – 3:50:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](#).

[Megan Evans, Alberta Invasive Species Council](#)

Liz asked me to talk a little bit about the Alberta Invasive Species Council and how we've structured our funding that sort of thing, what we do because it is quite a bit. We do a lot of similar things. But we're structured very differently than some of the Invasive Species Council. So, this is what we kind of cheat a little bit. We're a low manpower organization.

2023 In Review:

- AISC at a Glance
 - 4 staff members
 - 15 board members
 - 33 sponsor organizations across Alberta
 - 222 Individual & Student members
- Outreach Events
 - 45 in-person
 - 5 virtual

Alberta Invasive
Species Council

- 76 Biocontrol Releases
- 1,501 Reports
 - 69 different species
 - 66,205 infested acres
 - 124 reporters
- Social Media
 - 1,700 newsletter subscribers
 - 433 posts
 - 650,000+ reach
 - 500+ new followers
- Weed Free Forage
 - 21 participating counties
- 10,000 Weed ID Guides printed
- 8 Campaigns
 - Squeal on Pigs, Don't Let it Loose, Don't Move Firewood, EDD MapS, Certified Weed Free Forage, grow me instead, Play Clean Go, and Clean.Drain.Dry.
- 150+ Fact Sheets
 - 45+ videos
 - 200+ photos
- 10th Annual Conference
 - 2 days, in-person
 - 7 applicator credits offered
 - 15+ hours of content
 - 293 attendees
 - 20 speakers

Feral Swine in Canada:

Wild Boar Farming in Canada:

- Producers were encouraged to farm them
- Introduced in the 1980s for meat production
- First complaints of damage were in the late 1990s.

Timeline:

- 2003-2015 – Ear Bounty Program
- 2018 – Minimum Containment Standards
- 2019 – Wild Boar Control Program
- 2021 – ‘Squeal on Pigs!’ Campaign Launched
- 2022 – Crop Insurance covers wild boar damage

Wild Boar Control Program

- 4 contractors
- 9 corral traps
- Piloting a Pig Brig
- Research at U Calgary on disease spread, distribution, abundance, etc.
- Work with producers to put trail cameras and report sightings

Gaps:

- Legal to hunt without seasons or limits
- Legal to open a new wild boar farm in Alberta*

Rats:

Alberta is considered the largest rat free jurisdiction in the world. We get challenged on that all the time because we do get rats that come in, but we do not allow them to establish

permanently, and we are always on the low end of the invasion curve. We have a rat control zone that is 600 meters by 30 meters and every piece of infrastructure in that zone is inspected every year. We do get about 500 or so reports a year but most of them are muskrats, about 5% of them are rats. The reason we are talking about rats is because we just launched a new campaign because we need renewed vigilance. They are hitchhiking on vehicles that are coming from the more urban cities; therefore, we need more people to be vigilant and ‘Rat on Rats’.

Questions:
Liz Lodman: What did they use to kill the rats to start out with in the 50s?
Megan Evans: They were doing areal spraying, they ended up killing livestock. They did have some issues. They have gotten it going better, they use traps and poison.
Steve Wanderaas: What invasive grasses are you concerned about?
Megan Evans: We came down here this summer with Jasmine and some other folks to the Libby area and we looked at some grasses that we are very concerned about. We don’t have Ventenata or Medusahead, also Japanese Brome is off the charts but also Cheatgrass. I don’t think we have any invasive grasses that you guys don’t, so I think were worried about them coming up at this point.
Pam Schwend: When you were going over the laws of the provincial laws, I didn’t catch whether you said that there were fines for that as well, I know you did for fisheries but what about the weed act?
Megan Evans: There are a group of weeds that must be eradicated and a group that must be controlled. A weed inspector can issue a notice to someone to have the weeds controlled. If you don’t control the weed, you get a fine and if you don’t pay the fine it gets put on your property tax.

To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Megan Evans, please view 3:56:00 – 4:31:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](#).

Amy Gannon, Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

MT Invasive First and Tree Pests:
Established:

- Larch casebearer
- White pine blister rust
- Balsam wooly adelgid

Threats:

- Spongy moth
- Asian longhorned beetle
- Emerald ash borer

Larch Casebearer – *Cleophora laricella*:

- Western larch
- Introduced from Europe – Idaho in 1957
- Similar to other native pests
- Defoliates western larch (deciduous)
- Controlled by parasitic wasp, *Agathis pumila*

White Pine Blister Rust – *Cronartium ribicola*:

- 5-needle pines
- Whitebark pine
- Limber pine
- Western white pine

Forest Pest Update

Impacts:

- Branch/tree mortality
- Forest composition change
- Species decline
- Whitebark listed as “threatened”

Management:

- Conservation strategies
- Resistance breeding (WWP, WBP)
- Identify “plus trees”
- Planting
- Direct seeding
- Pruning western white pine
- Removal of intermediate hosts unsuccessful

Limber Pine Status Survey:

- Rocky Mountain Front
- Plots installed 2017-2018
- 10-yr revisit planned
- Re-entry in 2024-2025

Install Budget

- The Nature Conservancy - \$10,000
- DNRC - \$11,552
- USFS Addition - \$10,000
- USFS FHM EM - \$19,300

Balsam Woody Adelgid – *Adelges piceae*:

- Grand and subalpine fur
- Origin – Europe
- Intro to Pacific NW in 1930s

Distribution Surveys

- Presence Absence
- Initially roadsides
- Targeted backcountry

Impact Studies

- Permanent plots from across the region
- Intermountain west

Species Confirmation

- Samples taken for each drainage
- Nathan Havill confirmation
- Confirmation for all counties submitted to MDA

Spongy Moth – *Lymantria dispar*:

- Diverse host range: >300 species (larch, maple, oak, apple)
- European, intro to North America in 1869

Impacts:

- Severe defoliation
- Nuisance
- EDRR: Statewide trapping program

Spongy Moth Delimitation Surveys:

- Egg mass surveys
- Grid pattern around the previous year's detection

Detection - Lewistown:

- 2021 – PPQ Detection
- 2022 – Multiple-party egg mass survey
- 2022 – PPQ Delamination

Detection – Cabin Creek – Hebgen Lake:

- 2022 USFS Detection
- 2023 PPQ Delamination
 - 2nd Delimitation in Glacier National Park
 - No additional finds.

Detection – Hyalite:

- 2023 USFS Detection
- 2023 USFS egg mass survey
- 2024 USFS Delimitation

Detection – Sha-Ron Missoula:

- 2023 DNRC detection
- 2024 DNRC+USFS delimitation
 - No catches

Detection – Beartooth – Red Lodge:

- 2024 confirmed from trap photo

Current Success:

- Interagency Contingency Plan for Action Against Spongy Moth in Montana

Asian Longhorned Beetle – *Anoplophora glabripennis*:

- Host – maple
- Origin – Aisa

Impact:

- Tree mortality
- Community plantings
- Sugar bushes
- Native pine sawyer look-alike

Emerald Ash Borer – *Agilus planipennis*:

- Host – ash species (*Fraxinus* sp.)
- Origin – Aisa

Impact:

- Tree mortality
- Brittle hazardous removal
- Communities largely planted in ash

Ash Distributions in Montana

- Riparian corridors
- Planted ash trees in communities

EAB Detection/Monitoring:

- Traps ineffective for early detection
- Symptomatic trees
 - Baseline condition of ash in MT
- Often undetected until outbreak
- Informed observers

Destructive Sampling:

- Arborist and tree care professionals
- In conjunction with ash pruning
- Training sessions
 - Pesticide applicator credits

- ISA credits
- Networking
- Draw knives

Don't Move Firewood:

Firewood as a Pathway:

- Long-distance transport
- Insects and diseases hidden in bark and deep wood
- Emerge and infest the surrounding forest

Regional Challenge:

- Duplicating outreach for each pest
- Pathway focus
- Multistate effort
- Goal: Consistent message for interstate travelers

Partnership with the Nature Conservancy:

- Existing message and graphic design
- Consistent national message
- Tailored products
- Demonstrated outreach knowledge

Project Funding:

- MT Department of Agriculture
 - \$4,000 – initial postcard mailings to non-resident hunters
- USFS State and Private Forestry – Competitive Redesign Grant
 - Multistate: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho
 - \$300,000 total (\$75,000/state)
- USDS State and Private Forestry – Consolidated Grant
 - \$27,933 – outreach addressing the transport of EAB via firewood

Ad Space:

- MT Hunting & Fishing Regulations
- Billboards
- Publications
- Posters

AIS Stations:

- Mandatory watercraft stops
- Signs bolted to sheds at each station
- Inspector training
- NOT inspecting or enforcing

Questions:

Sara Ricklefs: I recently joined the Lewistown Community Board, and we are looking at coming up with a pruning management plan. Is that something that we could reach out to you, and have you help with?

Amy Gannon: Yes! That is something we would be very happy to help with.

Lori Witham: Do you guys have a presence on social media with your messaging? Or are you not able to do that?

Jake Chadwell: We can but the comments are always difficult to maintain as someone always must tell you that you're wrong, it just opens it up for more than we need and can deal with.

Dylan Brown: How far did you sample limber pine?

Amy Gannon: We went throughout the host range, there were at least 30 plots.

To view the PowerPoint presentation done by Amy Gannon, please view 4:41:00 – 5:23:00 of the MISC meeting recording [here](#).

Tom Woolf – Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Have done about 120,000 inspections this year, it's about the same as what we saw at this time last year. We are still getting numbers together, but we saw about 47 mussel fouled vessels which is a bit behind last year but still about the same range. They are coming from the same places, most of them from the Midwest as used boat sales and then some from the Southwest from places like Lake Havasu. There have been no mussel detections in the state again this year, no evidence of mussels with DNA or through our microscopy labs. There are new populations of mud snails and other little things that popped up this year but nothing too alarming. More concerning is what is going on regionally, Idaho just completed their second eradication treatment of aquatic mussels in the Snake River a few weeks ago. They detected mussels above their water treatment area this year, last year they treated 16 miles, so they went back and surveyed, they had another detection in September above where they treated last year. They did sample with eDNA which they haven't done a lot of. Also, of interest in the western United States, there is a new detection of Golden Mussels, they come from Southeast Asia, they have a lower calcium so they can survive in areas with lower calcium levels. They reproduce like crazy; they are in the Sacramento area right now. Currently, Montana doesn't list them as prohibited so that would be a good thing for us to do soon just to kind of raise awareness.

Sara Ricklefs – Invasive Species Action Network:

Just had our first rehoming event in Billings, we were able to rehome 8 pets. Majority of them went to Treasure State Aquarium, two of which are well known invasive species; two mystery snails and a red eared slider (housed at ZooMontana). We are going to have our second pet rehoming event in Missoula, and we will do it during dead week (April 29th) so that the fish that are currently being housed in dorms hopefully don't become housed through sewage systems or in local ponds. If anyone is interested in volunteering, reach out to us and let us know. Aside from that, I will be talking about a few of our outreach initiatives at the Summit, but I wanted to put it out there that we have funding from the GYCC to do a "Know Before You Go" campaign for visitors to the Great Yellowstone Ecosystem, so if any of you have reach with visitors, please reach out to us. This will basically be an electronic toolkit for spreading the message, we have reached out to a log of land management agencies, the state departments of commerce, and the parks.

Jake Chadwell – Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

You touched on a lot of the things that we have been working on. We did check station trainings, spongy moth trap pick ups (no detections). We did a delimitation for that boar ramp area where we had a detection last year, put up about 40 traps in that area. Right now, we are ramping up efforts to do surveys in Missoula/French Town area. We added Rose Picklo to the team also.

Jasmine Chaffee – Montana Department of Agriculture

This is kind of our slow season, not too much going on. We are attending conferences, meetings, and doing a lot of tabling's this winter. Megan with the species program is going a steering committee and Josh Wagoner with EDRR does fall and spring webinars and talking about EDRR species in Montana and the other half will be Megan talking about education. Our AgCorps members are done this week, and we will have three more come on next year to help. Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grants are due January 6th, grant hearings are mid-March.

Lori Witham – APHIS PPQ

We heard from APHIS FWS that we had an illegal importation of the moss balls come into Florida from the Ukraine and moved on to 19 states, 49 locations in those states, Montana

MISC Member Update

was not one of these locations. We were in contact with US Customs and Border Protection, and they were asking what they can do and why it is regulated this way. If Montana had been a state, we would've known that we had a location and gotten the company, gotten the names of purchasers and went to see them and see if they still had them. If they go to a pet store, they can be hard to track as someone can use cash.

Jessica Zarate – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services

We put together some large-scale invasive species pesticide applicator trainings with funds this past year. Next year they will be eligible to most people in all 8 states to get education credits and those trainings are generally located centrally within our regions, we did one in North Dakota last year and one in Colorado. I don't know if were going to add another one so there is less travel for some of the people, but it is a weeklong training. It is very well received.

Gary Adams – APHIS PPQ

We covered almost everything but for future meetings, we should talk about the national honeybee survey where they look for mites and diseases that are affecting our honeybee population.

Andy Welch – Northwestern Energy

We inventory our entire mystic project, which is up in the Beartooth Mountains, this is done every ten years. We did not find any new infestations of weeds up there so no new ones to tackle. I'm on the board of the Northwest Hydroelectric Association, and I have a panel put together on the Idaho infestation of mussels there next year for annual meeting in February. It's kind of cool to talk to those folks and get an update at that point in time probably going to be a lot of changes over this winter until the water runs up. They still do a bunch more monitoring. But it'll be kind of here good to hear their perspectives from Idaho Department of Ag, Idaho Power, and we're also having someone come up from further down south that already has infestations of mussels, on their hydro projects to kind of talked about how they manage them and those sorts of things. So, a hot topic in the Western US for hydropower companies to see what happens with this infestation.

Pam Schwend – County Weed Districts

At the meeting in Billings, I talked about how we were hoping to get invasive species included in the indigenous learning curriculum. Since then we have actually gone post that, I have had conversations with principals and teachers, I've gone to the adult learning education in Billings and Megan Hoyer spoke with some of the teachers that are actually involved in putting together the Indian learning at MEA and we got nothing but positive response from this so we actually took it one step further and on Monday we have a Zoom meeting with the director of the Ace Consortium and their group is involved with setting the standards, so we have gone through all of the science standards from K-12 and have done a document where invasive species could be inserted into what is already a standard, just the conversation that I already had with her she is very excited about this so we are really chose to getting invasive species education as part of our science standards for the State of Montana, I will update you all after Monday and see what happens.

Becky Kington – Montana Weed Control Association

We have awards through MWCA for many things, I would encourage anyone who is sitting around the table who has done something cool with weeds to please nominate them, the nominations end this Friday. MWCA has our conference January 28-30, 2024, Gary Adams is a keynote and bringing back Ken Kington who is a popular comedian. Registration is live at MT.Weed.Org. We are hoping to begin to strengthen partnerships, and I am looking forward to working closely with you.

<p>Wrap Up & Adjourn</p>	<p>Location of next meeting: A meeting location was not decided.</p> <p>Final Discussion: None Public Comment: None</p> <p>*Action: Motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion: Andy Welch Second: Jasmine Chaffee Motion Passed Unanimously.</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.</p>
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FY25 AIS Grant Applications

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Grant Title</i>	<i>Ask</i>	<i>Type</i>
Beaverhead Conservation District	Statewide WIS Training Lead	\$ 45,688.00	E&O
Flathead Lakers	Targeted AIS Prevention: Reducing Risks through Data-Driven Outreach	\$ 42,575.00	E&O
Grow Wild	Clean Drain Dry in Upper Gallatin Watershed	\$ 20,708.00	E&O
Invasive Species Action Network	Aquatic Pet Rehoming	\$ 16,090.00	E&O
Montana State Library - Montana Natural Heritage Program	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	\$ 40,050.00	E&O
Salish Kootenai College	Flathead Lake Flowering Rush Controls	\$ 43,005.00	OTG
Sanders County	Invasive Milfoil Management	\$ 40,000.00	OTG
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	EWM Treatment for Pablo Reservoir	\$ 22,173.00	OTG
Clearwater Resource Council	AIS Monitoring in Clearwater Valley	\$ 19,943.00	OTG
Yaak Valley Forest Council	YVFC Early Detection and Clean.Drain.Dry. E&O	\$ 26,593.00	OTG
Missoula County	2025 Missoula County Flowering Rush Biocontrol	\$ 19,800.00	R
		<i>Amount Asked for FY25</i>	\$ 336,625.00
		<i>Amount Available for FY25</i>	\$ 278,580.00