

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission AIS Education, Outreach & Communication Strategy

Created to protect the aquatic environment in Montana tributaries to the Columbia River from the threat of AIS in order to protect water resources, downstream interests, and the economic and ecological vitality of the region.

FOUNDATION FOR OUR WORK

Our Background

The UC³ was created in the 2017 legislative session by House Bill 622. This commission was established to foster close cooperation and coordination between international, federal, regional, state, tribal, and local water resource managers to develop and implement comprehensive Upper Columbia River Basin prevention and management measures to prevent the introduction and/or further establishment of AIS.

Our Mission

The mission of the UC³ is to protect the aquatic environment in Montana tributaries to the Columbia River from the threat of AIS in order to protect water resources, downstream interests, and the economic and ecological vitality of the region.



Four Ingredients for a Successful Commission

GREAT LEADERSHIP

We have strong leadership in our executive committee, dedicated commission members, and excellent staff support.

APPROPRIATE TOOLS

We have access to technology and communications tools that allow us to work efficiently and effectively.

A TRUSTED REPUTATION

We have worked hard to be civic minded, share our knowledge widely, and acknowledge and engage all entities addressing AIS.

DEDICATED PARTNERS

The list of organizations working with UC³ is long and diverse including academia, researchers, scientists, agencies, policymakers, and community stakeholders. We continue to engage existing partners and encourage new partnerships to share in our efforts to combat AIS in the Montana portion of the Upper Columbia Basin.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Education & Outreach

- Maintain and utilize three-year Education & Outreach Strategy (per statutory duties)
- Develop annual media plan for UC³ E&O
- Conduct annual industry outreach project
- Provide leadership and support on public, youth and stakeholder engagement
- Assess partner E&O efforts in basin
- Explore options/need for conducting AIS program assessment via online survey biennially
- Enhance knowledge and understanding of UC³'s work, role and responsibilities
- Encourage active engagement of E&O Committee

Monitoring & Citizen Science

- Develop annual monitoring plan (per statutory duties)
- Monitor the aquatic resources of the Columbia River Basin
- Ensure continuity of Upper Columbia Lake Network (UCLN)
- Provide support and information on how to report suspected AIS

Coordination & Collaboration

- Strive to be a source of reliable information on status of AIS in the Upper Columbia Basin
- Connect with partners and stakeholders beyond the basin
- Encourage close cooperation in AIS work among partners throughout the Columbia River Basin
- Emphasize appreciation and recognize exemplary efforts
- Provide support and assistance to state's AIS program
- Provide cooperative, inclusive and open environment to promote coordination
- Explore options for research that adds value to AIS programs

Programmatic Policy & Legislation

- Provide input, feedback and recommendations to the governor and to federal and state agency directors and staff, tribal, provincial, regional and local agencies for reducing the threats from AIS
- Explore and seek to address AIS gaps and challenges for the enhancement of AIS prevention and management in the Upper Columbia Basin and/or Montana

Business & Administration

- Develop annual monitoring plan (per statutory duties)
- Provide accounting and budgeting services
- Follow all applicable agency and board rules and requirements
- Explore options for additional funding

Education & Outreach in our Strategic Work Plan



Goal: Increase public awareness in the Upper Columbia Basin related to AIS impacts, State AIS program rules and personal responsibilities

• 8 specific strategies/actions:

- **Maintain and utilize detailed tactics outlined in a three-year (2020-2023) Education & Outreach Strategy (on website)**
 - AIS campaign messaging, UC³ messaging, target audiences, resources and goals/tactics for all UC³ related communications.
- **Work with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and other partners in the basin to create and update an annual media plan/schedule focused on FWP's AIS and 'Clean, Drain, Dry' campaign messaging**
- **Carry out annual industry outreach project to engage water-based recreation industry (marinas, boat shops, angling/fly shops and outdoor retailers) in AIS prevention**
- **Provide leadership and support on public, youth and stakeholder engagement in coordination with FWP and other partners**
- **Explore options for conducting and communicating results of an AIS Education & Outreach Partner Survey every other year**
- **Enhance understanding of UC³ work, roles and responsibilities**
- **Encourage activity and engagement of Education and Outreach Committee**



UC³ 2022 Media Plan

- Augmenting FWP's AIS advertising and outreach efforts
 - **Evoro Billboard** – before Ravalli inspection station
 - **4 Tourism Magazines** – Out of state boater targeted messages
 - American Fly Fishing (Summer and Fall editions)
 - Northwest Montana Outdoors Magazine
 - Northwest Montana Destination Magazine
 - **Advertisements for 2022 Inspector Appreciation Week** – tips for boaters' message
 - 10 Local newspapers throughout Flathead Valley
 - DNRC press release, newsletter, and social media push
- **2022-2023 AIS Video Production**
 - Citizen science monitoring training video
 - Industry 'AIS 101' video
 - Wade angler targeted PSA

Maine: Land Acquisition Preserves Rangeley Region Watersheds
By Lou Zambello

Envision yourself as an angler in Rangeley, Maine, in the late 1800s. Despite the remoteness of the area, you might be wearing a reed jacket and tie, or a long dress, depending on your gender. You would be casting a brace of wet flies while your guide rowed you along the shoreline in a cedar-plank boat. Imagine hooking a mighty brook trout that, when landed and transported back to town, ends up tipping the scale at over 10 pounds.

Today, native brook trout still swim plentifully in these waters, their genetic heritage little changed since the last ice age. Although it doesn't happen every day, anglers still land 3-pound brook trout, and occasionally a photo surfaces of even larger specimens. For these native populations to continue to thrive, spawning habitat in headwater streams must be protected from the impacts of development, timber over-harvesting, and severe weather events

flow, and intact forested riparian areas. One of them is the Kennebagog headwaters, which includes much of the drainage area of the upper Kennebagog River on its way to Little Kennebagog Lake and Kennebagog Lake. The ranges of elevation, complex hydrology, and different forest types help make the Kennebagog headwaters biologically diverse and resilient in the face of climate change. The Kennebagog watershed is one of the few in New England spared

1,731 acres of forest, shoreline, and wetlands, including over 2 miles of undeveloped shoreline and uplands surrounding 190-acre Little Kennebagog Lake and 9 miles of frontage on the upper Kennebagog River, from Crowley Brook to Little Kennebagog Lake. This tract includes the storied inlet of Little Kennebagog Lake that noted angling writer Ray Bergman featured in his 1938 classic, *Trot*.

The RLHT's new acquisition is part of the larger Kennebagog Headwaters Project to conserve what many consider to be the finest wild brook trout resource in the United States and a watershed with exceptional habitat for fish and wildlife. Once complete, the project will permanently conserve a critical 10,300 acres. The recent acquisition follows the purchase last November by project partner Black Brook LLC of over 3,000 adjacent acres, including previously unconserved lands along the shores of Kennebagog Lake and the surrounding wetland known as the Logans.

This conservation victory is one step in a larger and longer process to protect the headwaters of all of the Rangeley-area river systems, including the Magalloway, Cupuptic, and Kennebagog. In the next few years, conservation groups are hopeful that additional land acquisitions can further protect the resource.

Every October, I visit the Kennebagog headwaters and watch the antics and maneuvers of spawning brook trout as they dig redds, jostle for prime positions, chase away rivals, and finally go about the act of laying and fertilizing eggs. It is reassuring to know that my grandkids and their grandkids will hopefully be able to do the same. You can help that hope become reality by donating to RLHT at www.rlht.org.

BRINGING YOUR BOAT TO MONTANA

STOP AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

MONTANA AIS REGULATIONS

- Watercraft transported into Montana from out-of-state must be inspected before launching.
- Stop at all open inspection stations as directed by signs.
- Out-of-state boats with bladders or ballast tanks, such as wakeboard or wake-surfing boats, must obtain a decontamination before launching.
- Inspection is required when traveling west across the Continental Divide or into the Flathead River Basin.
- It is illegal to transport aquatic invasive species, live fish, bait fish or surface water into Montana.

PREVENTION IS OUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST AIS!

PROTECT OUR WATERS | **CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.**
CleanDrainDryMT.com

14 AMERICAN FLY FISHING • July/August 2022

www.americanflyfishing.com • CONSERVATION 15

Community Engagement

- **Clean Drain Dry Drink Coasters**

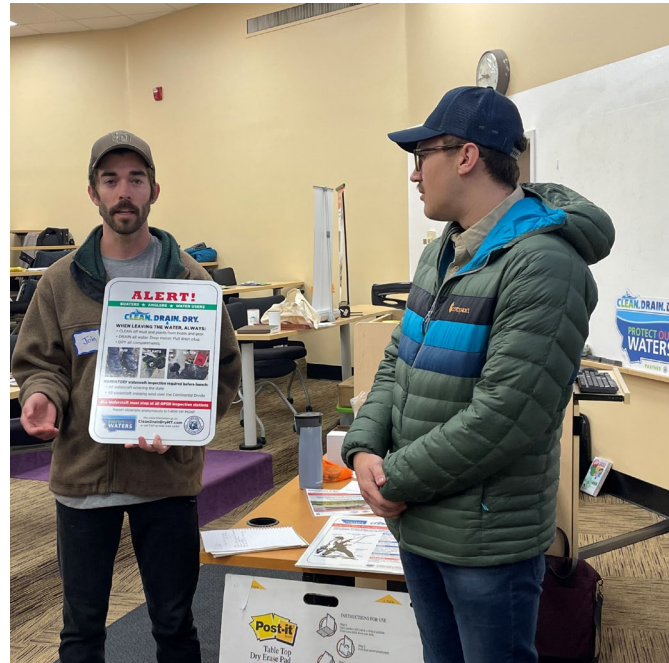
- Distributed ~\$15,000 coasters to restaurants & breweries

- **AIS Education @ BSWC Member Training in March**

- AIS 101; Community Based Social Marketing; Mock Inspections; Outreach Skill Practice

- **AIS Outreach Events**

- Earth Day @ University of Montana
- Inspector Appreciation Week & Clearwater Inspection Station cookout
- Family Forestry Expo in Kalispell
- Backcountry Hunters & Anglers Rendezvous in Missoula
- Bigfork Whitewater Festival
- CFWEF Youth Flyfishing camp
- Western MT Fair in Missoula
- **2023 AIS Legislative Info Session**





ALERT!
BOATERS ★ ANGLERS ★ WATER USERS

CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.

WHEN LEAVING THE WATER, ALWAYS:

- CLEAN off mud and plants from boats and gear.
- DRAIN all water. Drop motor. Pull drain plug.
- DRY all compartments.

MUD

PLANTS

WATER

MANDATORY watercraft inspection required before launch:

- All watercraft entering the state
- All watercraft crossing west over the Continental Divide

ALL watercraft must stop at all OPEN inspection stations

Learn more at CleanDrainDryMT.com or call 406-444-2440.
Report violations anonymously to 1-800-TIP-MONT.

Industry Outreach 2022

- BOR Grant (2021-2024) BSWC for 3 years
 - Josh Abrahamson- 2022 AmeriCorps Member
 - Shared with MCWD- field work during the summer
- **Activities**
 - Industry Outreach: visiting 120+ businesses across UC Basin with AIS info/materials
 - AIS boat ramp and DLL signage inventory (replaced ~67 signs)
 - Coordinating with other AmeriCorps members: Yaak Valley Forest Council & FWP
 - AIS outreach @ community events
 - AIS E&O Partner Survey & Report
- **4th year of Industry Outreach Project**
 - Full staff AIS Presentations: REI, Glacier Guides
 - Expanding site visits: breweries/restaurants, visitor centers, Chambers of Commerce, etc.

