

PARTNERS IN MANAGING AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES 2018-2019 REPORT



UPPER COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION



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.

DELIVERABLES & OBJECTIVES

- ◇ Monitor the condition of aquatic resources in the tributaries to the Columbia River and coordinate development of an annual monitoring plan that uses a cooperative strategy among all water management agencies within the Columbia River Basin in Montana;
- ◇ Encourage the close cooperation and coordination between international, federal, tribal, state, regional, and local water resource managers for establishment of comprehensive monitoring, data collection, and interpretation;
- ◇ Encourage and work for international cooperation and coordination between the state of Montana and the Canadian province of British Columbia;
- ◇ Encourage and work towards close partnerships with downstream Columbia River Basin states and adjacent provinces to improve coordination and protect the water resources of the region;
- ◇ Develop and implement an AIS education and outreach strategy specifically for the Upper Columbia River Basin in Montana;
- ◇ Encourage economic development by reducing threats from AIS and conducting restoration and infestation control measures;
- ◇ Provide an annual report to the governor, director of DNRC and the Environmental Quality Council that includes a summary of information gathered, information on monitoring activities within the Montana portion of the Columbia River Basin in Montana, an account of all money received and expended by source and purpose for the period of the report.

Note from the Chair

The UC³ provides an assembly in which to discuss, debate, coordinate, plan and implement aquatic invasive species programming for the Montana portion of the Upper Columbia Basin across international borders, on tribal lands, regionally, statewide, and locally. While the cooperation has so far been both affirming and encouraging, it is a great responsibility and the UC³ is still evolving as an organization.

As this is the first year for this commission and so much research and information gathering was required, much of our work will best serve to inform the AIS leadership community as we prepare for the 2019 recreation season and beyond.

It has been my hope since the formation of this commission that we would become highly functional, would help minimize the duplication of efforts amongst partners, maximize productivity and the reach of limited funds, connect members and followers with the bigger issues so we might discuss and better understand them, and that we would create an environment that recognizes our natural and cultural histories that honors the generations to come. I believe that by addressing AIS issues thoughtfully and respectfully, the UC³ is beginning to do all of those things. — Lori Curtis

MEMBERS

The UC³ is comprised of nine (9) voting members appointed by Governor Bullock, and several federal agency ex-officio members. The members are:

Lori Curtis, Whitefish. UC³ Chair. Representative of conservation districts. Curtis is the Flathead Conservation District Supervisor and the Director of Science and Education at the Whitefish Lake Institute.

Dennis Clairmont, Pablo. Representative of Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). Clairmont represents the Pablo District on the CSKT Tribal Council.

Mike Koopal, Whitefish. Member-at-large. Koopal is the Executive Director of the Whitefish Lake Institute.

Paul Kusnierz, Noxon. Representative of the hydropower utility industry. Kusnierz is a fisheries biologist at Avista Utilities.

Tom Woolf, Helena. Representative of the Montana Invasive Species Council. Woolf is the Chief of the Aquatic Invasive Species Bureau at the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Phil Matson, Columbia Falls. Representative of private landowners in the Upper Columbia Basin. Matson is a research specialist at the Flathead Lake Biological Station.

Brian 'BJ' Johnson, Kalispell. Representative of recreation organizations. Johnson is the owner and lead guide for 'Sea Me Paddle' kayaking tours.

Chris Parrott, Kalispell. Representative of private industry. Parrott is the general manager for Jesco Marine.

Stacey Schnebel, Coram. Representative of electric cooperatives in the Upper Columbia Basin. Schnebel is on the board of the Flathead Electric Co-op and also represents the Flathead Electric Co-op and the Montana Electric Cooperatives Association.

Ex officio (non-voting): US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Northwest Power Planning & Conservation Council, National Park Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Kate Wilson, Commission Administrator, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). Wilson provides support and extensive AIS expertise to both the UC³ and the Flathead Basin Commission.

MEETINGS

The UC³ has met 5 times & co-hosted an Inspection & Monitoring Workshop. Attendance has been excellent by commission members, federal partners, and partners from the Blackfeet Nation, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, Glacier & Waterton National Parks, federal, state, and municipal agencies, counties, and private organizations.

2017

October	UC ³ Meeting 1	Missoula
December	AIS Inspection & Monitoring Workshop Co-hosted with CSKT	Polson

2018

January	UC ³ Meeting 2	Kalispell
March	UC ³ Meeting 3	Missoula
June	UC ³ Meeting 4	Polson
Sept	UC ³ Meeting 5	West Glacier



COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

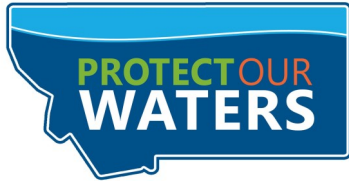
Four committees were established to address the work of the commission.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



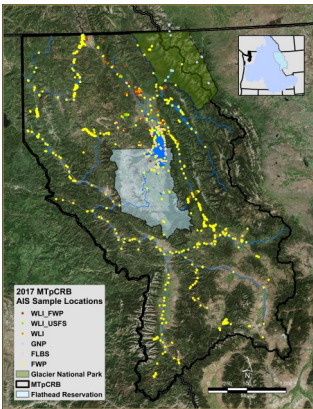
Established to develop a UC³ Education and Outreach Strategy and Plan; Inventorying existing partner materials; Coordinate AIS education efforts amongst partners; Conduct outreach to publicly influential audiences; Develop

educational materials programs and events including a UC³ website; Provide UC³ representation and collaboration at Columbia River Basin/100th Meridian, PNWER, Western Regional Panel on ANS, Invasive Species Action Network (ISAN) and other cross boundary group (states and provinces) meetings and events; Provide direction and interface with partners to ensure consistent AIS messaging.



EARLY DETECTION MONITORING

Established to create consistent and coordinated monitoring efforts and protocols among partners; Hold a post-season monitoring workshop to assess areas for improvement; Develop shared monitoring database and repository; Develop annual AIS monitoring plan for the Upper Columbia River Basin.



WATERCRAFT INSPECTIONS

Established to assess and improve watercraft inspection programs; Host inspection and monitoring workshop to review 2017 and prepare for 2018;



Coordinate watercraft inspection protocols and training amongst partners; Review station locations and hours to identify needs for moving or adding stations.

RAPID RESPONSE & PREPAREDNESS

Established to Develop Upper Columbia specific response plan; Review case studies from successful states/jurisdictions, Columbia River Basin Rapid Response Plan and State of Montana Rapid Response Plan, and supplement for UC³, Participate with multi-agency team to develop guidelines for rapid response exercise plan; Coordinate and convene regular rapid response exercises with partners to refine preparedness; Map the Upper Columbia River Basin overlaying AIS inspection and monitoring efforts to identify land and air (floatplanes) entry point holes; Create overlays of known AIS populations and hydroelectric facilities.



The Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³) was created in the 2017 legislative session by House Bill 622.

The 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 that prevent the introduction and/or further establishment of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2017	
November 27 & 28	Participated in Columbia River Basin 100 th Meridian Team Meeting
Through Nov 2018	Participated in Invasive Species Law Review
December 11 & 12	Co-Hosted with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Aquatic Invasive Species Inspection and Monitoring Workshop.
2018	
January 30	Made formal recommendations to MFWP regarding AIS containment at Tiber and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs
April 16 & 17	Presented at the Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins Annual Meeting
April 17 & 18	Participated in eDNA Science Advisory Panel
April 25 & 26	Participated in MFWP Watercraft Inspection Training
June 5-7	Participated in Columbia River Basin 100 th Meridian Team Meeting
June	Finalized mandatory AIS protocols for wildfire equipment
June 19	Hosted AIS Workshop for Natural Resource Educators
July 9	Conducted training for DNRC wildfire operations
July 25 & 26	Presented at Environmental Quality Council Meeting
July 25	Co-chaired Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Invasive Species Session
Ongoing	Working with seaplane industry on better addressing seaplanes as a AIS vector Working on Geographic Response Plan to augment state mussel response guidelines.

COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

UC³'s four committees have been actively cultivating relationships, addressing goals of the commission, and contributing to building a trusted reputation for the UC³.

Education & Outreach Committee Chair: Lori Curtis

- Produced Education & Outreach Plan, including inventory of outreach materials and events
- Participated in an AIS Training for educators
- Website and marketing materials under development

Watercraft Inspections Chair: Tom Woolf

- All watercraft inspection stations statewide and in Alberta and British Columbia contribute to this committee.
- Developed extensive maps & lists that include not only MFWP stations, but also partner and state border stations
- Developed a Call Tree which will include the contact info, direct numbers at all stations, station dates and hours of operation

Early Detection & Monitoring Chair: Mike Koopal

- Gathered data on AIS sample locations by partner and type (eDNA & microscopy). Data is now spatially represented on GIS maps and informs stakeholders where data collection gaps occur, and reduces sampling redundancy
- The final monitoring plan will incorporate all early detection sampling information, including sample type and equipment decontamination protocols
- The MFWP Data App was launched and is being used throughout the state including a test site with the Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network (funded by MFWP and managed by the Whitefish Lake Institute) collecting water quality and AIS information on 41 lakes in Northwest Montana

Response & Preparedness Chair: Erik Hansen

- Reviewed and provided feedback to MFWP on the Montana Dreissenid Mussel Rapid Response Guidelines. This plan directs the process, protocols and coordinated effort the state of Montana will use to respond to new dreissenid mussel detections.

FINANCIALS

Income

Montana State Biennial Allocation	10,000
DNRC AIS grant	15,000
US Bureau of Reclamation grant (pending)	<u>120,000</u>
	\$145,000

Expenditures

Member Travel	3,500	
Meetings	300	
Website & Materials	<u>15,600*</u>	*\$600 spent,
	\$ 19,400	\$15,000 committed

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/montana-invasive-species-program/uc3>

Executive Committee

Chair: Lori Curtis lori@whitefishlake.org 406.862.4327

Commission Coordinator: Kate Wilson kate.wilson@mt.gov 406.542.4282

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks AIS Bureau Chief: Thomas Woolf Thomas.woolf@mt.gov