

UPPER COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION (UC³) MEETING

Wednesday, February 16th, 2022

10:00 AM to 4:15 PM (HYBRID)

Virtual

&

Flathead Electric Cooperative

2510 U.S. Hwy 2 East

Kalispell, MT

AGENDA

TIME	TOPIC/QUESTION	PRESENTER(S)	OBJECTIVE & PREPARATION	LINK TO STRATEGIC WORK PLAN
10:00 AM	<p>Welcome & Agenda Overview</p> <p>Meeting Rules</p> <p>Participant Introductions (roll call)</p>	<p>Stacey Schnebel, Chair</p> <p>Tom Woolf, Vice Chair</p> <p>Kate Wilson, UC³ Administrator</p> <p>Cassidy Bender, UC³ Coordinator</p>	<p>Welcome, introductions & meeting etiquette</p> <p>Review agenda and meeting materials in advance</p>	<p>Coordination & Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable AIS information source Connect w/partners & stakeholders Encourage close cooperation
10:15 AM	Public Comment	Stacey Schnebel		
10:20 AM	<p>Staff & Committee Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY22 Budget Update Grants & contracts: BOR & Upper Columbia Lakes Network Education & Outreach strategy: New BSWC member! Upcoming events & announcements <p>ACTIONS: Approve minutes & updated line-item budget</p>	<p>Kate Wilson</p> <p>Cassidy Bender</p> <p>Josh Abrahamson, Big Sky Watershed Corps</p>	<p>Review & approve 10/13/21 minutes</p>	<p>Education & Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize E&O Strategy <p>Monitoring & Citizen Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure continuity of UCLN <p>Coordination & Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage close cooperation <p>Business & Admin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide accounting & budget services
11:05 AM	<p>FWP AIS Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021 season review (watercraft inspection stations, monitoring, 2021 AIS treatment, Edu/outreach, etc.) 2022 season plans (watercraft inspection stations, monitoring, Edu/outreach, etc.) Budget updates: federal/state funding for 2022 Challenges, gaps, ideas 	Tom Woolf	<p>Learn about this season's AIS activity & efforts. Q&A for FWP</p> <p>Review 2021 program summaries; provide feedback</p>	<p>Coordination & Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect w/partners & stakeholders Encourage close cooperation Provide support & assistance <p>Programmatic Policy & Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide input & feedback
11:45 AM	<p>FWP Education & Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 season outreach planning 	Peggy O'Neill, FWP Information Bureau Chief (invited)	Learn about E&O plans. Coordination discussion.	<p>Education & Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop annual media plan Provide leadership and support
12:00 PM	LUNCH (provided for in-person attendees)			

TIME	TOPIC/QUESTION	PRESENTER(S)	OBJECTIVE & PREPARATION	LINK TO STRATEGIC WORK PLAN
1:00 PM	'Member/Partner Highlight'- CSKT Overview of AIS Program (inspections, monitoring, outreach, response, bullfrog project, etc.).	Whisper Means, Katie Finley Squeque)	Learn about CSKT Fisheries & AIS programs and current efforts	Coordination & Collaboration <i>Connect w/partners & stakeholders</i>
1:20 PM	The Great Montana Crayfish Project	Stacy Schmidt, FWP (tentative)	Learn about MT FWP crayfish project	Coordination & Collaboration • <i>Connect w/partners & stakeholders</i>
1:40 PM	Flowering Rush biocontrol project introduction & overview	Melissa Maggio, Missoula County Weed District		Monitoring & Citizen Science • <i>Monitor aquatic resources</i>
2:00 PM	Flowering Rush treatment update – Flathead Lake	Virgil Dupluis, Salish & Kootenai College (tentative)		Coordination & Collaboration • <i>Connect w/partners & stakeholders</i>
2:20 PM	BREAK			
2:35 PM	2022 AIS Monitoring Plan and Committee discussion	Phil Matson, Committee Chair Craig McLane, FWP Cynthia Inglefinger, WLI	Plan for AIS monitoring in the Upper Columbia Basin for the 2022 season	Monitoring & Citizen Science • <i>Develop annual monitoring plan</i> • <i>Monitor aquatic resources</i>
3:00 PM	'Ad Hoc' Legislative Committee discussion	Andrew Gorder, Committee Chair Kate Wilson	Reconvening the legislative committee; discuss future activities/actions	Programmatic Policy & Legislation • <i>Provide input & feedback</i> • <i>Explore and seek to address AIS gaps and challenges</i>
3:20 PM	Update from partner programs & discussion of collaboration opportunities <i>Avista; Blackfeet Nation; Clearwater Resource Council; Conservation Districts; Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes; Glacier National Park; Flathead Lake Biological Station; Missoula-County Weed & AIS District; Montana Invasive Species Council; NRCS; Swan Lakers; Trout Unlimited; USFS; USFWS; Whitefish Lake Institute; etc.</i>	All partners	Learn about AIS activity & efforts from 2021 and plans for 2022 season; Q&A for partners; discussion of collaboration opportunities Prepare a brief update on 2021 season review and plans for 2022 AIS prevention and/or management	Coordination & Collaboration • <i>Connect w/partners & stakeholders</i>
4:10 PM	Public comment	Stacey Schnebel		
4:15 PM	ADJOURN	All		
	POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS (throughout): AIS program recommendations; projects or tasks related to outreach, crayfish, flowering rush and/or partners; standing up of ad hoc Legislative Committee.			

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³)		
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday Feb 16th, 2022	Time:	10:00am-4:15pm
Minutes Prepared By:	Cassidy Bender	Location:	Hybrid: Flathead Electric Coop, Kalispell or Zoom/Call In

List of Acronyms

AIS	Aquatic invasive species	FLBS	Flathead Lake Biological Station
BOR	US Bureau of Reclamation	FWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
BSWC	Big Sky Watershed Corps (AmeriCorps)	GNP	Glacier National Park
CEMIST	Central Eastern MT Invasive Species Team	MCWD	Missoula County Weed District
CFC	Clark Fork Coalition	MISC	Montana Invasive Species Council
CKISS	Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society	NPS	National Park Service
CRB	Columbia River Basin	NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
CRC	Clearwater Resource Council	UCLN	Upper Columbia Lakes Network
CSKT	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality	USFS	US Forest Service
DNRC	Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation	USFWS	US Fish & Wildlife Service
eDNA	Environmental DNA	WLI	Whitefish Lake Institute
E & O	Education & Outreach	WRDA	Water Resources Development Act
EQC	Environmental Quality Council	WRP	Western Regional Panel

1. Welcome and Introductions

<p>Welcome Meeting Rules</p> <p>Stacey Schnebel, UC³Chair-elect, Hydroelectric Cooperatives Rep.</p> <p>Tom Woolf, UC³ Vice Chair; AIS Bureau Chief, MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks; MISC Representative</p> <p>Kate Wilson, UC³ Administrator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting rules were presented (Zoom/Virtual Etiquette) and it was specified that voting for virtual voting members should be done in the chat. The Upper Columbia Conservation Commission acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. Today, we honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come. <p><i>The mission of the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (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.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All commission members and participants introduced themselves including name and organization/interest that they are representing.
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.

2. Attendees

UC³ (voting members underlined): Stacey Schnebel (UC³ Chair/Flathead Electric Cooperative), Tom Woolf (FWP: Vice Chair/ MISC), Rae Lynn Hays (Lincoln CD), Martin Charlo (CSKT Tribal Council), Tom Ray (Private Landowner), Phil Matson (Flathead Lake Biological Station: Member at Large), Onno Wieringa (Flathead River Basin), Paul Bradford (Libby Rod & Gun Club), Arthur Potts (Avista), Andrew Gorder (Clark Fork Coalition, Upper/Middle Clark Fork), Sen. Mike Cuffe (Eureka), Rep. David Fern (Whitefish), Sen. Janet Ellis (Helena), Michelle Cox (USFS Region 1 Invasive Species Coordinator), Theresa Thom (USFWS), Jake Williams (USACE), Chris Downs (Glacier NP), Kate Wilson (Commission Administrator), Cassidy Bender (Commission Coordinator)

Absent members: Larry Lack (Sanders County AIS Task Force Lower Clark Fork), Bruce Vincent (Private Industry), Monica Pokorny (NRCS), Rep. Neil Duram (Libby), Heidi McMaster (BOR)

Committee Members/Partners/Public/Other: Mike Koopal (WLI), Cynthia Ingelfinger (WLI, UCLN), Kate Finley-Squeque (CKST), Liz Lodman (MISC), Russ Hartzell (FWP), Zach Crete (FWP), John O'Bannon (FWP), Craig McLane (FWP), Stephanie Hummel (FLBS), Deb Tirmenstein (Montana Black Dog Services), Ron Catlett (Sen. Daines Office), Stephen Phillips (Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission), Mark Bostrom (DNRC), Peggy O'Neill (FWP Information Bureau Chief), Pat Doyle (FWP Information), Stacy Schmidt (FWP), Virgil Dupluis (Salish & Kootenai College), Melissa Maggio (MCWD), Jayden Duckworth (FWP), Chris Mascari (MCWD), Clayton Elliott (Trout Unlimited), Paul Kusnierz (Avista), Kate Sheridan (Flathead Lakers), Terry Crooks (Flathead Electric Coop), Jake Van Houden (Flathead Electric Coop), Jeff Kemp (Swan Lakers), Dan Jessop (Congressman Matt Rosendale Rep), John McLaughlin (Daily Interlake), Laura Lundquist (Missoula Current), Bernie Azure (Char-Koosta News)

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Presenter	Topic/Discussion
<p>Approval of Minutes Kate Wilson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion: to approve minutes from Oct 13th, 2021, meeting (Onno). Seconded (Tom). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i>
<p>Staff Report Kate Wilson, UC³ Administrator Cassidy Bender, UC³ Coordinator</p>	<p>Staff activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting follow up & planning; Exec Committee planning & participation; BSWC member supervision- Industry Outreach Project (New Member- Josh); Grant & Budget management (writing/reporting/tracking); Tracking AIS in CRB/West; UC³ Annual Monitoring Plan; AIS Monitoring/UCLN Support; EQC/Agency/Gov Office Reporting; Education & Outreach Activities- advertising, tabling, IO project, coordination, etc.; Legislative Committees/Interim meetings and follow up; Annual report development; Crown Managers Partnership (Steering Committee); North American Invasive Species Management Association conference (president); Western Regional Panel; BC Columbia River Basin Steering Committee (member); Pend Oreille Basin Commission (Ex-officio, MT upstream rep); Flathead Basin Commission (50% of staff time); County Assist Team (CAT) Public Information Officer & Liaison (Kate); Graduate school- MPA (Kate); Graphic design coursework (Cassidy) <p>UC³ Operating Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY2021 Budget: \$40,000 Operating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Gov Fiscal Year= July 1-June 30 Expended on member travel, meetings, UC³ materials, staff/office supplies, projects (outreach, events, advertising, CDD materials), BSWC member \$40,000 Expended FY2022 Budget: \$40,000 Operating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Gov Fiscal Year= July 1-June 30 Expended \$20,078 Current balance \$19,922 <p>Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BOR Federal Grant: \$58,255 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding timeline: 2021-2024 (3 years) \$36,750/3 years: Industry Outreach Program/E&O \$15,000/3 years: Upper Columbia Lakes Network (UCLN) continuation/expansion DNRC Indirect (12.73% = \$6,505) Expended \$12,250 Current balance: \$46,005

<p>Committee Updates</p> <p>Kate Wilson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOR Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education & Outreach + Industry Outreach Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dev. of materials; engagement of public, stakeholders & partners; webpage dev. & maintenance (Windfall contract) ▪ E&O work/advertising in Upper Columbia Basin ▪ Engagement of water-based businesses in the Upper Columbia Basin; partial support for Big Sky Watershed Corps member; development & dissemination of outreach materials; pilot transferrable to other locations nation-wide ○ Expansion of Monitoring Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen science AIS monitoring expansion through Upper Columbia basin; protocol development; support for monitoring committee ▪ Supplies & equipment <p>FY22 Line-Item Budget (approved 5.12.21): Proposed Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red is expended to date and blue are proposed changes. • \$10,114/20,000 AIS Education & Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Augment FWP/partner AIS advertising in basin ○ Coordinate/fill gaps in annual E&O media plan ○ Targeted outreach & events • \$5,362/5,000 Member travel/meetings & sponsorships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unanticipated purchase of virtual meeting equipment since COVID. ○ +\$1k from monitoring line item ○ +\$1k from staff supplies line item • \$0/5,000 Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Video production (for use statewide) ○ UCLN maintenance (annual) ○ -\$2k to go toward BSWC and member travel line item • \$4,110/5,000 BSWC Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travel/supplies for Industry Outreach ○ Travel costs have been rising across the basin, especially while visiting tourists destinations during peak season. ○ +\$1,000 from monitoring line item • \$80/3,000 Annual Report, Additional Projects, Contingency, etc. • \$411/2,000 Staff supplies/travel/office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ -\$1k to go toward member travel/meetings • TOTAL FUNDS: \$20,077/\$40,000 expended to date <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 annual report being developed, will be printed, posted on our website, distributed at tabling, to the legislature and interim committee. • Video contract (monitoring) RFP responses would be an indicator of how much the video would cost. • PNWER AIS table in Big Sky was a success. PSA and video would be a big priority. • Motion: to approve FY22 budget as amended (Onno). Second (Martin). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> <p>UC³ Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee: Chair, Vice Chair, FWP, staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business/oversight/planning/projects between meetings
--	---

E&O Updates

Cassidy Bender,
UC³ Coordinator

- Meets bi-weekly (Thursdays @ 9:15), open to public
- Early Detection & Monitoring Committee:
 - Objectives:
 - Develop/review/implement annual monitoring plan
 - Develop recommendations for gaps/areas of improvement for AIS monitoring in the UC basin
 - Provide feedback and oversight on the continuance of the Upper Columbia Lakes Network
 - Members: Chair- Phil Matson (FLBS), Chris Downs (GNP), Craig McLane (FWP), Chris Mascari (MCWD), Joann Wallenburn (Missoula AIS District), Cynthia Ingelfinger (WLI), Katie Finley-Squeque (CSKT), Kim Bergstrom (Pinnacle Research), Jake Williams (USACE)
- Education & Outreach Committee:
 - Objectives:
 - Provide feedback on UC³ E&O efforts and associated E&O strategy
 - Support the Industry Outreach Project
 - Provide ideas and a sounding board for future E&O efforts & events
 - Members: Liz Lodman (MISC), Phil Matson (FLBS), Bruce Vincent (Environomics), Kate Finley-Squeque (CSKT), Big Sky Watershed Corps members, staff
- 'Ad Hoc' Legislative Committee
 - Objectives:
 - Assess and prioritize AIS gaps, challenges, and issues
 - Identify and explore potential solutions and make recommendations to commission and/or Montana legislature for action to strengthen AIS prevention and management activities.
 - Members: Chair- Andrew Gorder (Clark Fork Coalition), Phil Matson (FLBS), Tom Woolf (MISC/FWP), Bryce Christiaens (MISC/MCWD), Rep. Neil Duram, Rep. Dave Fern, Sen. Mike Cuffe, Sen. Janet Ellis, FWP & DNRC legal & enforcement staff (as needed)

UC³ Education & Outreach

- Goal: Increase public awareness in the Upper Columbia Basin related to AIS impacts, State AIS program rules and personal responsibilities.
- View our 2020-2023 Education, Outreach, & Communication Strategy [on our website](#).
- Main E&O Strategy Objectives:
 - Annual outreach/media plan to augment FWP's AIS advertising and outreach
 - **Status**: Planning/coordination with FWP for 2022 season TBD (turnover at FWP)
 - Document existing education, outreach, and advertising efforts ('20/'22 survey)
 - **Status**: Partner survey to be implemented fall 2022
 - Industry Outreach Project in the Upper Columbia Basin
 - **Status**: 4th year of project, new BSWC member- Josh Abrahamson
- Previous Season Activities:
 - Billboards: Evaro & Anaconda Billboards- before inspection stations with enforcement/fine message
 - Clean, Drain, Dry Advertisements (western MT) on local radio MTPR, local television ABC/FOX TV, gas station TV, newspapers, social media/digital, etc.
 - Industry Outreach Project -UM Baucus Innovation Challenge 2021 Winners- [View the video here](#).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AIS Community Outreach Events: fly fishing festivals, county fairs, kids' camps/junior ranger days, Watercraft Inspector Appreciation Week (2021), boat shows, BSWC member training (Mar 8-9, 2022), etc. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existing video ideas possibly to implement this year <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 30 second video PSA (similar to the Clearwater Resource Council AIS PSAs) targeted toward wade-anglers. 2. Monitoring training video for citizen science volunteers 3. Short AIS 101 video targeted at industry outreach professionals, citizens, public. <p>Tasks Moving Forward & Upcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2021 Annual Report (fiscal year) ● 2022 Industry Outreach Program (Visits starting in March) ● 2022 AIS Early Detection & Monitoring Plan Development ● 2022 Education & Outreach Planning w/FWP ● Conduct partner AIS E&O survey (Fall 2022) ● Prep for 2023 Legislative Session ● AIS video projects (funding dependent) <p>Upcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Invasive Species Awareness Week (Feb 28-Mar 4, 2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NISAW Website - there are several events and webinars: https://www.nisaw.org/ ● Flathead Basin Commission Winter Meeting (March 2nd) ● Crown Managers Partnership Recreation Forum (March 8th-10th) ● <i>UC³ Spring/Summer Meeting (Jun 1st, 2022) ~ hybrid?</i>
<p>FWP AIS Program Updates</p> <p>Tom Woolf, FWP AIS Bureau Chief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moving to delist Tiber Reservoir from mussel positive status (veligers detected in 2016) Secretary of state has the request now, moving to public comment in mid-March. FWP will be shifting resources from Tiber, Fresno, and Tongue River stations (closed due to minimal high-risk traffic) to continue to improve and address needs. ● Expanding inspection partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New partners: Lincoln, Beaverhead, Bighorn, Powder River CDs ○ Contracted partners: CSKT, Blackfoot, Missoula County, Garfield, McCone. ○ Other partners: City of Whitefish, Swan Lakers, Glacier NP, neighboring states. ● Interceptions in 2021: 61 mussels, 538 weeds, 4 illegal Bait, 5 illegal Fish, 137 Citations, 182 Warnings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every boat transporting mussels in 2021 received at least a warning, and most received citations. Citations are primarily for drive by's. ● MT mussel fouled boat statistics 2018-2021: 128 total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 77% from eastern states (95% of eastern boats never inspected before) ○ 54% recent purchases (90% from the east) ○ 31% commercially hauled ○ 33% destined for MT ● FWP lab processes samples from Missouri Basin states (with grant funding), in addition to FWP collected samples which have increased (637 collected in 2016 – 3,046 collected in 2021). Early detection microscopy samples are only looking for new populations. ● New Detections 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Zealand Mudsnaills- Mitchell Slough, Bitterroot River; Beavertail Pond, near Rock Creek; Big Sheep Creek, near Dell

- Red Rim Melania Snails – Beaverhead rock, near Twin Bridges; Gardiner River
- Mystery Snail – found dead single snail on shore of Flathead Lake, Finley Point
- Eurasian Watermilfoil- Nilan Reservoir near Augusta
- Curlyleaf Pondweed- Big Elk Creek near Two Dot; Shields River near big Timber
- Southern Plains Crayfish- Miles City fish hatchery
- Treatment & Evaluation:
 - Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) diver removal at Beaver Lake (Whitefish Lake Institute)
 - EWM treatment assessment at Noxon (Sanders County Task Force)
 - EWM herbicide treatment at Nilan Reservoir (irrigation district)
 - Fragrant Water Lily removal, Holland Lake (USFS)
 - Corbicula ‘Asian’ clam eradication at Lake Elmo, Billings (Yellowstone CD)
 - Bullfrog and snapping turtle survey and control (CSKT and others)
- Regional AIS coordination:
 - Western Regional Panel (WRP) of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF)- continued AIS funding, moss ball coordination and response, standardization of protocols (new Uniform Minimum Protocols out now)
 - Columbia River Basin Team (CRB) – AIS risk assessments, rapid response, AIS sampling coordination
 - Missouri River Basin Team (MRB) – expanding prevention, WRDA funding coordination, Asian carp coordination
 - Western invasive Species Coordination Effort (WISCE)- commercially transported watercraft (Call Before You Haul program) and AIS hatchery inspection protocols
- MT Invasive Species Council (MISC) Update:
 - Liz Lodman (formerly FWP AIS Information Officer) - new MISC coordinator
 - Wood Pest Pathways Science Advisory Panel coming up
 - Initiating an educational webinar series
 - Invasive species summit to be held October 2022
 - AIS Grant Project Awards so far: Flathead Lake AIS survey (FLBS), Invasive bullfrog/turtle project (CSKT, MCC, FWP), milfoil control in Noxon (Sanders County Task Force), flowering rush biological control (Missoula County), aquatic plant ID guide (MSU)
- Things to look for in 2022: Similar program operations, continued focus on QA/QC, coordinate on targeting used boat sales and commercial haulers, expanded partner involvement, continued crayfish works.
- Over ½ the invasive species that are identified nationally are not found by the agency that is tasked with looking for them; citizen science and partnerships are VERY important and the more people we have out looking for these species the more likely we are to finding them.
- TIP-MONT hotline is the poaching hotline, answered 24 hours a day and has access to law enforcement staff, that is the number to call for drive by’s and seeing mussels on boats. Specific to FWP violations.
- Report invasive species on FWP website [here](#).
- **Action:** Follow up with Ron Catlett with DEQ reporting tool and information on HABs.
 - Blue/Green Algae- Trevor Selch, FWP works on that issue. Nutrient driven issue, not an invasive species. Manifest under specific conditions in any waterbody.
- **Action:** Set up presentation on Canada/BC/Alberta’s AIS management and prevention efforts for the next meeting (CKISS and other councils).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Kate to send the BC/Alberta watercraft inspection stations stats to commission • Outreach ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conservation Districts have a connection to realtors through 310 permitting. ○ Arthur Potts, Avista does on call outreach to the realtors in the Noxon areas. ○ Columbia Falls has a relocation guide for new homeowners. ○ Flathead homeowners/living guide in development: reaching new residents with AIS information (Dillon Tabish, FWP involved). <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees: out of state boat fees and out of state fishing licenses equal ~5 million and all money is matched with WRDA (2 million for next year). Allows us to maintain what we have been doing. • What do we spend over 5 years at Tiber? Estimated cost of mussels? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publication completed in 2019 by Nanette Nelson at Flathead Biological Station looking at the potential economic costs of Dreissenid mussels in Montana, but it is not specific to Tiber Reservoir http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/docs/misac-docs/dnrc_economic_cost_dreisseid_mussels_0119.pdf • REVISIT: Statutory action that can target the responsibility the individual should have when testing and purchasing a boat from an out of state seller? • Canada update: Alberta lost funding for half their stations and are very focused on the east side (stations between BC and Alberta) they are focused on highest risk, and that is the Saskatchewan border. • FWP E&O limited this year from Liz Lodman (FWP AIS information officer) leaving. The position will not be filled and FWP will not be able to attend/host as many face to face events as they used to. Currently identifying events (possibility of getting 2022 AmeriCorps volunteer to increase E&O capacity).
<p>FWP AIS Education & Outreach Update</p> <p>Peggy O’Neill, FWP Information Bureau Chief</p> <p>Pat Doyle, FWP Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With no designated AIS Information Officer this year, outreach will become a team approach/all hands-on deck. The seven regional managers will be helping with local community outreach. • Spread word through FWP social media and Protect Our Waters Facebook page • AIS Marketing Plan this year is heavily focused on digital marketing with lots of social media, retargeting and geofencing (targeting in state residents, out of state visitors, bringing boats, strategic on what those messages are). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Streaming OTT- targeting boat owners, living in a certain place, if they reserved a place on Airbnb recently from another state, if they have engaged with FWP recently, engaged with other travel planning, etc. ○ Email marketing based on email and IP addresses, able to narrow down to a small block. • Traditional: radio, print publications, billboard all continuing this year. • Spending a tad bit more in 2022 than 2021, budget is more or less the same. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage our commission dollars to not overlap with FWP, possibly focus on video project PSAs instead of marketing/advertising. • Action: Reach out to Peggy and Pat to plan for western MT outreach efforts.
<p>Partner Highlight- Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes</p>	<p>CSKT information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mussel Walk held at the FLBS (2022 date TBD) for middle schoolers ○ River Honoring Day- biggest event with the tribes - 4th and 5th graders

<p>Katie Finley-Squeque, AIS Program Coordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lake Honoring Day- Blue Bay event with wildlife managers and fisheries staff-high school students ● Steph Gillen, CSKT information specialist- hosted AIS PSAs on Anderson Broadcasting-30 second on several stations in the Flathead and Mission Valleys ● Watercraft Inspection Stations- Ravalli & Thompson Falls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ravalli: Over 1,046 drive by's, 674 interviews, intercepted 4 mussel boats ○ Thompson Falls: 4,266 interviews, 214 drive by's, shut Thompson Falls down a few times in summer 2021 for air quality hazard. ○ Locals dropped off treats to inspectors during the 911 Remembrance Day. ○ Inspector Appreciation Week- goodies and honks from locals, Friday cookout with families and CEO of Energy Keepers dropped off swag and gave out awards to most improved, most dedicated inspectors and inspectors to take newbies under their wing, along with a speech and songs. ○ CSKT Natural Resource Dept. has annual barbeque for all employees, inspectors couldn't leave the station to attend, appreciation week made up for that. ○ Wardens on duty- 58 citations, 255 warnings, 368 drive by's. Sometimes they track drive by's all the way to Polson and bring them back to the station. ● Early Detection monitoring with Phil at FLBS- eDNA and microscopy samples. ● Action: Reach out to Katie and Steph Gillen at CSKT on the outreach plan for this season. ● Action: Add Natl Bison Range and St. Ignatius visitor centers to the industry outreach list and drop off materials.
<p>The Great MT Crayfish Project</p> <p>Stacy Schmidt, FWP AIS Scientist Supervisor</p>	<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rusty and Red Swamp crayfish are the highest priority invasive crayfish species, neither are currently present in MT. ● Virile crayfish (native east of the divide/spreading west) and northern crayfish (native west/ spreading east) are the predominant species in MT. ● Southern plains crayfish species was found while sampling at the Miles City Fish Hatchery in September of 2021: one of the more common crayfish species of the south-central US. Next steps: population delineation, investigate introduction and spread, hatchery mitigation. ● Impacts of non-native crayfish: impacts ecosystems because they are non-discriminatory feeders, an unusual species that eat everything and get eaten by everything (plants, bacteria, algae, each other, fish, etc.), can impact habitat with burrowing and feeding behavior, wipe out entire beds of plants, and we don't know how they interact with other species beyond that yet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Crayfish are also considered "ecosystem engineers", especially in headwater streams. They can severely modify aquatic macrophyte densities. ● Pathways of spread: people are starting to catch and consume them, moving them around leads to the potential introduction of non-native species, red swamp crayfish are most commonly farmed (when you order crayfish on the internet for food or pets, they don't tell you what species they are), historically FWP moved around the virile crayfish to be used as a forage species for bass (no longer). ● Collaborated with USFS, FWP, FLBS, CSKT, Blackfeet Nation, University of Idaho, national and private sectors. <p>Project Goals & Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal- learn about crayfish resources in MT, identify questions that need more focused attention to guide management

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives 1) Preliminary snapshot of current crayfish species distributions to provide baseline, 2) inform managers about nonnative crayfish species in the state, 3) hopefully address questions about the native ranges of 3 crayfish species, and 4) address questions about human health concerns (e.g., mercury levels) related to crayfish consumption <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All gathered information will go into FWP report and DEQ report on fish contaminants and will be publicly available. • 2022 Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of Idaho graduate student project 2022: creating an environmental monitoring program that uses crayfish as an indicator organism for 6ppd-quinone and tire wear particles throughout the Columbia River Basin. ○ Looking through voucher samples collected in 2021 ○ Deliverables: crayfish ID, publish papers, etc. ○ Other mysteries to investigate crayfish disease testing, signal crayfish differences between drainages. ○ Comparing sampling methods and native vs. nonnative in MT • You can help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chimneys are formations in the sand/waterbody floor where crayfish burrow and build a ‘chimney’ shelter. If you see a large, especially in eastern MT, it is an indicator of a crayfish. Record the exact date, latitude/longitude, take photos and report to FWP. ○ Blackfeet Nation: we’d like to get permission/access to sample east of glacier ○ CSKT: We’d like to sample again <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions about distribution of virile and signal crayfish downstream of Flathead Lake, Jocko ▪ Local knowledge of crayfish observations ▪ Add crayfish sampling to AIS permit ○ FLBS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 species observed in Flathead? ▪ Look for evidence of signal crayfish there ▪ Look at historic records of crayfish sampling in Flathead? ▪ Voucher samples of crayfish found there ▪ Go out with class for crayfish sampling or use boat to sample more sites ○ USFS: Susie will be in contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vouchers or more sites of interest?
<p>Flowering Rush Biocontrol Project</p> <p>Melissa Maggio, MCWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Montana Biocontrol Coordination Project (MTBCP) is a grassroots effort initiated in 2013 by federal, state, county, non-profit, and private land managers throughout Montana who saw a need for increased coordination within the state’s weed biocontrol program. Program assessments are conducted every 5 years to ensure deliverables are being provided that MT land managers need. • <u>MTBCP mission:</u> Provide the leadership, coordination, and education necessary to enable land managers across Montana to successfully incorporate biological weed control into their noxious weed management programs. • 2021 by the numbers: http://www.mtbiocontrol.org/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 in person workshops/presentations ○ 12 virtual workshops/presentations ○ 44 days spent collecting ○ 374 collection day participants ○ 24,650 miles traveled for workshops and collections

- 10 insect species released, and 9 insect species collected
- 11,172 acres treated
- 138 sites monitored
- 40 counties and 9 states received insects
- 1,226,397 insects distributed
- \$338,512 market value of those insects
- Classical biological control of invasive weeds is the deliberate release of specialized natural enemies from the weed's native range to reduce the weeds abundance or spread in its introduced range.
- Successful biocontrol after the target plant species is greatly stunted, allows the native and beneficial vegetation to thrive.
- The agents go through immense testing (20+ years) to ensure confidence that they will not move to other plants. They are tested on over 100 similar plants and the similar plants list.
- The agent prep takes 20+ years and then the release and effect takes 3-5 years. After testing, there are no additional costs, there are a number of collection days and biocontrol agents are shared with neighbors.
- Flowering Rush overview:
 - Flowering Rush is a non-native, aggressive freshwater invasive that rapidly colonizes wetlands, lakes, slow-moving rivers, canals, and irrigation ditches.
 - Impact on the environment from Flowering Rush: clog irrigation ditches, difficult to manage, dense monocultures, pushes shorelines and recreation areas, cannot boat in it, in severe cases it is too dense for fish to get through.
 - The upper most population of flowering rush in the Columbia Basin is in Montana- we are the upstream source of downstream flowering rush.
 - Discovered in Flathead Lake in 1964. By 2008, flowering rush had infested over 2,000 acres of the lake and has since dispersed up the main tributary.
 - Current management options include herbicide, covering, hand-pulling, digging, diver assisted suction, and dredging. It is an excellent candidate for biocontrol because it is the only species within the Butomaceae family.
 - Primary insect candidate is a leaf and rhizome-mining beetle, adults live mainly underwater, larvae develop in leaves & rhizomes (May-September), larvae leave plants and swim to other plants, overwinter as adults.
- Final drafting of the petition (summary of research findings) will be submitted in April 2022. Rearing will begin in 2022 in Sidney, MT along with site surveys on and around Flathead Lake (2022). Pre-release monitoring will begin in 2023 once the most ideal sites are selected from the 2022 surveys (selecting 6 sites but will release at 2-3 sites).
- **Seeking partnerships and assistance:**
 - Potential site identification (Peter Rice, UC³?)
 - Monitoring protocol development (impacts to plants in these system)
 - Pre-release monitoring & post-release monitoring
 - Site maintenance
- Canada will be co-submitting the petition; their review process moves much quicker, and they will potentially release this year.

Discussion:

- Flowering Rush surveys on Flathead Lake have been done but no management up to this point. There is flowering rush and EWM in Noxon reservoir.
- **Action:** Follow up with monitoring committee on flowering rush biocontrol project assistance and invite Melissa to next committee meeting.

<p>Flowering Rush Treatment Update- Flathead Lake</p> <p>Virgil Dupluis, Salish & Kootenai College</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View Flathead Lake Flowering Rush Controls Project story map here. • Planning process for 2022 work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meetings with the public, CSKT resource/cultural specialists, and landowners ○ Completed environmental assessment (EA) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) reports in May 2021 ○ Developing Flathead Lake Pesticide Handling Plan • Current tasks to complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pesticide use permit ○ Advertise for contractors ○ Implement mid-March 2022 • Priority areas to be treated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flathead River above the dam 2. High traffic areas, public access sites, marinas 3. Small spot infestations and leading edge of large infestations 4. Large patches (yellow bay and lake currents line up very closely with the plant deposits) • Flowering Rush Impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A concern with flowering rush is that it forms dense vegetation in previously unvegetated or only sparsely vegetated littoral zones of lakes and rivers, altering the habitat and water flow (reduction), evident in Flathead Lake. ○ Creates a habitat that is suitable for spawning and rearing of northern pike, facilitating other invasive species introductions. ○ Dense flowering rush causes swimmers itch and algae, swimming and recreation is reduced. ○ Dense populations reduce property values. • 300 potential individual sites identified totaling 100 acres (does not include large patches of several hundreds of acres in South, Elmo, and Big Arm bays. • Tribes wanted adjacent landowners to be involved, 1 opposing response out of 300 contacts regarding loss of duck habitats. However, biologists did not feel that loss of grazing habitat for birds was significant. • 2022 planned treatments: 54 polygons, 102 points, total area of selected treatment 17.8 acres. • Bear harbor marina case study- 1-acre $\frac{3}{4}$ full of FR, high priority with 40 boats going in and out of that marina that travel around the lake. • Items to complete cultural clearance: January 15th annual plan submission deadline for cultural review, likely delayed or reduced sites treated in 2022 as an onsite cultural review is required and cannot be completed in time for treatments to start in April 2022 (prioritizing marinas, high traffic areas, and adjacent areas to facilitate review). • Other to complete: EPA pesticide use permit, advertise for applicator, baseline monitoring data (USACE grant to implement first part of project). • North end of the lake, long term it will need to be addressed. There are large patches up the river as well, emerging through the oxbows.
	<p>AIS Monitoring in the Upper Columbia Basin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 Upper Columbia AIS Monitoring Plan due April <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual, coordinated plan (required in statute) ○ Partner monitoring survey (launch in March) to inform the 2022 plan. ○ Chair/Staff completed 2021 Monitoring Plan – view it on our website. • Upper Columbia Lakes Network (https://ucln.net/) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuity/expansion identified as priority

<p>2022 AIS Monitoring Plan and Committee Discussion</p> <p>Kate Wilson</p> <p>Phil Matson, ED & Monitoring Committee Chair</p> <p>Craig McLane, FWP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BOR funds at \$5k/annually (3 years) ○ Additional operating funds be committed ○ Assist with training video production ○ Continue outreach to bring in additional citizen scientists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan based on last year’s plan, ZQM action plan, Annual winter FWP AIS meeting, FWP monitoring meeting (FLBS, FWP, WLI, CSKT), partner survey (March 1, 2022). ● Traditional monitoring meeting/workshop to be held every other year. ● All data by partners surveys are entered into the survey 123, https://www.westernais.org/monitoring that deposits all the samples. ● Plan to address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where the gaps are, overlay survey results with the monitoring map of MT ○ New cases studies (not mussels) ○ UC Basin neighboring plans ○ Identify commonalities ○ Needs help/monitoring issues, questions, lack of preservatives, etc. ○ Updated protocols, vinegar vs. bleach, decontamination, etc. ● Action: Draft monitoring survey questions to monitoring committee chair for review. ● Action: Schedule monitoring committee discussion for 2022 plan. <p>FWP Mussel Invasion Potential Preliminary Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mussel invasion potential final designation score 1-10 (1- highest risk, 10- very low risk), used social pressure, habitat suitability, and all available parameters possible. ● Social pressure criteria used: angling pressure, proximity to mussel-positive water, waterbody size (acres/river length), waterbody type, and location in watershed. ● Habitat suitability criteria used: pH, calcium, hardness, conductivity, substrate, dissolved oxygen, and water velocity. ● Reach out to Craig McLane (cmclane@mt.gov) if you would like the full spreadsheet and map results. ● Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work through invasion potential results with partners and FWP biologists (Adjust water ranking where necessary) ○ Crosswalk with water access (no access will likely remove from further consideration in sampling plan) ○ Build 2022 FWP sampling plan based on (invasion potential results, past effort, other AIS threats (plants, snails, crayfish, etc.) ● 2022 sampling plans: similar overall intensity to past efforts (3 - 2 person crews), localized intensity could change based upon invasion potential results, special sampling project at select thermal areas.
<p>‘Ad Hoc’ Legislative Committee Discussion</p> <p>Kate Wilson</p>	<p>‘Ad Hoc’ Legislative Committee Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Priorities: Assess and prioritize AIS gaps, challenges, and issues; identify and explore potential solutions and make recommendations to commission and/or Montana legislature for action to strengthen AIS prevention and management activities. ● Committee Members: Chair- Andrew Gorder (Clark Fork Coalition), Phil Matson (FLBS), Tom Woolf (MISC/FWP), Bryce Christiaens (MISC/MCWD), Rep. Neil Duram, Rep. Dave Fern, Sen. Mike Cuffe, Sen. Janet Ellis, and FWP & DNRC legal & enforcement staff (as needed). ● Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare for 2023 legislative session with AIS education & awareness? ○ Would we like the committee to stand up? ○ What kind of things would you like the committee to focus on?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure we focus our efforts on large impactful things so we don't open a can of worms. • Ideas: Provide participants trainings for providing testimony, focus on key messages as partners, info session/rotunda event/coincide with PNWER event, executive summary (one pager, AIS 101, impacts, how it spreads, testimonies, etc.), quick informal video on AIS information, detailed timeline, and process (providing testimony was too last-minute last session), etc. • Monitor bill draft requests at the beginning of the session (Senators can submit a bill request at any time, others as early as March 15th and all the way up until 2nd-3rd week of the session). • Emphasize all the great work being done in MT, the successes, and the strong program. • Motion to stand up the legislative committee (Rae Lynn). Second (Phil). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> • Action: Add Martin, Stacey, and Rae Lynn to the legislative committee. • Action: Review testimonies from the funding hearings in the 2021 session and prepare the committee to address those issues. • Action: Doodle poll and compile research (links from the 2021 testimonies, topics to cover, current laws on felt soled waders, etc.) for the legislative committee meeting.
<p>Update from partner programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theresa Thom, USFWS- Still in a continuing resolution for the budget; however, the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) plan notice of funding opportunity should be posted soon. We anticipate a similar level of funding for this grant program (approximately \$90K per state) to fund ANSTF approved state-wide ANS plan implementation. Watching the spend plans coming out of the partisan infrastructure law to help fund high priority work. ○ Chris Downs, GNP- Glacier will be continuing existing surveys for QZM on park lakes that allow motorized boating (eDNA and veliger sampling). They continue to provide a relatively small amount of direct NPS financial support to Blackfeet and CSKT AIS programs in recognition of the importance these stations play in protecting the park and the larger northwest Montana watersheds. GNP will also have some "dog days" for use at partner AIS stations as they have in previous years. Current rules: 30-day quarantine required for motorized boats, accept seals from partners, non-motorized inspections but no quarantine required. ○ Rae Lynn, Conservation Districts- busy contracting with FWP to take over a few inspection stations. ○ Martin Charlo, CSKT- elected 5 new Tribal Council members, Tom McDonald as new chair, Leonard Twoteeth as new vice chair, secretary, and treasurer. Watercraft inspection stations opening in March and will be a little more involved in the outreach and monitoring this year. ○ Phil Matson, FLBS- Increasing sampling on Flathead Lake from 3-4 rounds around the lake, large tow sampling filtering 7k liters of water for every 1 sample, looking for veligers, eDNA and visual monitoring for all taxa. Mussel Walk- 3 events, field trips in the summer, AIS trunk checked out a lot for the spring as well, AIS curriculum on the website. ○ Kate Sheridan, Flathead Lakers- Partnering with FLBS and CSKT on the Mussel Walk, working with state parks to get training for campground hosts and park employees to be the last point of contact for boats getting into the water, training for marinas and campgrounds around the lake. ○ Tom Woolf, MISC- Liz Lodman now coordinating MISC (formerly FWP AIS Information Bureau Chief). DNRC AIS Grant program cycle open- March 13th ○ Cynthia Ingelfinger, WLI- Contract with City of Whitefish to conduct eDNA microscopy sampling, 6 sites on whitefish lake and shoreline surveys. NWMLN continuing with 41 lakes and 50 sites, 1-3 samples for lake microscopy. Coordinating with FWP on the annual volunteer training for plant identification with crayfish rocks and turtles. UCLN- 9 groups

	<p>with 15 volunteers doing microscopy sampling. Received USFS resource advisory council grant for 2022 (previous 2019) eDNA and microscopy on 4 different lakes. Whitefish Lake decontamination station improvements and CDD stencil at Whitefish City Beach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris Mascari, MCWD/AIS District- AIS district strategic plan in development (goals, priorities, etc.), thermal profiling for peak mussel spawning periods in Missoula County, increasing to 8 rounds of sampling on identified lakes, fragrant waterlily research and treatments, risk analysis of AIS vectors (working with Michelle Cox at the USFS), herbicide sampling in the water columns (issues with landowner dumping), AIS short course planning with partners in the region. ○ Ron Catlett, Senator Daines Office- Agreement on overall framework for budget to pass continuing resolution to keep the government running through March 11 and then will agree on the budget for this fiscal year. Rosendale and Daines are focusing on prioritizing AIS in WRDA funding. Increase funding for BOR grants (bill by Daines is part of a larger bill sponsored by Sen Veraso and Senator out of Idaho), prioritizing mine reclamation. ○ Sheena Pate, Flathead Rivers Alliance- getting members involved at boat launches and outreach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q: Inspections of self-bailing rafts- water will be drained on its own, quick inspections but they are known to catch weeds, not a high risk since they drain well but do have potential to move vegetation around more than anything. ○ Arthur Pots, Avista and Sanders County Aquatic Plant Task Force- EWM treatment assessment at Noxon- widely distributed in Noxon and Cabinet Gorge, with a new management program now focusing on boat ramps and keeping boats from moving EWM to other lakes. There were approximately 457 acres of EWM beds mapped in Noxon in 2021.
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public comment.
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting June 2022 location TBD. • Topic Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Augmenting science and developing control methods available for the day we have an introduction. ○ Presentation detailing developing research and the science side (what would we do if we had more money). ○ Invite Colorado and BOR, as they are working on things like this (economic impacts to hydro that is new). • Motion: To adjourn the UC³ Spring Meeting (Onno). Seconded (Phil). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> • Adjourned at 4:05pm.

4. Action Items				
	Action:	Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Draft minutes and send to members	Cassidy Bender		Complete
2	Follow up with Ron Catlett with DEQ reporting tool and information on HABs.	Kate Wilson		
3	Set up presentation on Canada/BC/Alberta's AIS management and prevention efforts for the next meeting (CKISS and other councils).	Kate Wilson		
4	Kate to send the BC/Alberta watercraft inspection stations stats to commission	Kate Wilson/Cassidy Bender		
5	Reach out to Peggy and Pat (FWP) to plan for western MT outreach efforts.	Cassidy Bender		In progress

6	Reach out to Katie and Steph Gillen at CSKT on the outreach plan for this season.	Cassidy Bender		
7	Add Natl Bison Range and St. Ignatius visitor centers to the industry outreach list and drop off materials.	Cassidy Bender		Complete
8	Follow up with monitoring committee on flowering rush biocontrol project assistance and invite Melissa to next committee meeting.	Kate Wilson		
9	Draft monitoring survey questions to monitoring committee chair for review.	Cassidy Bender		Complete
10	Schedule monitoring committee discussion for 2022 plan.	Kate Wilson	April 2022	
11	Add Martin, Stacey, and Rae Lynn to the legislative committee.	Cassidy Bender		Complete
12	Review testimonies from the funding hearings in the 2021 session and prepare the committee to address those issues.	Kate Wilson		
13	Doodle poll and compile research (links from the 2021 testimonies, topics to cover, current laws on felt soled waders, etc.) for the legislative committee meeting.	Kate Wilson		
EXISTING ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS				
14	Kate to follow up with Nate Owens on the Utah's boater program.	Kate Wilson		
15	Contact FWP for Clean Drain Dry rack cards, kids' activity books, AIS materials, etc. or if you would like to assist with placement and distribution of the AIS species signs at infected waterbodies.	All	On-going	
16	Send anything you would like to share or add to the new UC ³ website (i.e., photos) to Kate Wilson or Cassidy Bender	All	On-going	
17	Look into railway transport of watercraft as potential high-risk vector	Tom Woolf		



Location: Flathead Lake Biological Station
(32001-32125 Bio Station Ln. Polson, MT)



Date: June 15, 2022



Time: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM



UC³

PARTNERS IN MANAGING AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

UPPER COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION 6/15/22 Meeting Agenda

10:00 am: Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Overview – Stacey Schnebel, Chair; Tom Woolf, Vice Chair; Kate Wilson, Commission Administrator; Cassidy Bender, Commission Coordinator; All (name/organization or affiliation)

10:15 am: Public Comment – Stacey Schnebel, Chair

10:20 am: Staff & Committee Reports – Kate Wilson; Cassidy Bender; Josh Abrahamson, BSWC

- FY22 & FY23 Budgets
- Grants & contracts: BOR & Upper Columbia Lakes Network
- Project & committee updates & information
- Upcoming events & announcements
- ACTION: Review/Approve Minutes (02/16/22)
- ACTION: Discussion/Approval FY23 Operating Budget

11:00 am: Partner Updates & Discussion of Collaboration Opportunities – Avista; Blackfeet Nation; Clearwater Resource Council; Conservation Districts; Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes; Flathead Lakers; Flathead Lake Biological Station; Glacier National Park; Missoula-County Weed & AIS District; Montana Invasive Species Council; NRCS; Swan Lakers; Trout Unlimited; USFS; USFWS; Whitefish Lake Institute; Yaak Valley Forest Council, etc.

12:00 pm: LUNCH (provided for in-person attendees)

12:45 pm: FWP AIS Report – Tom Woolf, FWP AIS Bureau Chief

1:05 pm: Quagga/Zebra Mussel Control PRESENTATION: QZM control & eradication methodologies, research, and economic impacts on hydropower facilities – Sherri Pucherelli, Bureau of Reclamation Biologist

1:35 pm: Overview and discussion on a mussel response & considerations in the Upper Columbia Basin – Tom Woolf, FWP AIS Bureau Chief

2:00 pm: ADJOURN MEETING for Field Trip – All

2:00 – 5:00pm: AIS Field Trip in local area—details to come.

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³)		
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday June 15th, 2022	Time:	10:00am-5:00pm
Minutes Prepared By:	Cassidy Bender	Location:	Hybrid: Flathead Lake Biological Station or Zoom/Call In
List of Acronyms			
AIS	Aquatic invasive species	FLBS	Flathead Lake Biological Station
BOR	US Bureau of Reclamation	FWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
BSWC	Big Sky Watershed Corps (AmeriCorps)	GNP	Glacier National Park
CEMIST	Central Eastern MT Invasive Species Team	MCWD	Missoula County Weed District
CFC	Clark Fork Coalition	MISC	Montana Invasive Species Council
CKISS	Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society	NPS	National Park Service
CRB	Columbia River Basin	NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
CRC	Clearwater Resource Council	UCLN	Upper Columbia Lakes Network
CSKT	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality	USFS	US Forest Service
DNRC	Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation	USFWS	US Fish & Wildlife Service
eDNA	Environmental DNA	WLI	Whitefish Lake Institute
E & O	Education & Outreach	WRDA	Water Resources Development Act
EQC	Environmental Quality Council	WRP	Western Regional Panel
1. Welcome and Introductions			
<p>Welcome Meeting Rules</p> <p>Stacey Schnebel, UC³Chair-elect, Hydroelectric Cooperatives Rep.</p> <p>Tom Woolf, UC³ Vice Chair; AIS Bureau Chief, MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks; MISC Representative</p> <p>Kate Wilson, UC³ Administrator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting rules were presented (Zoom/Virtual Etiquette) and it was specified that voting for virtual voting members should be done in the chat. The Upper Columbia Conservation Commission acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. Today, we honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come. <p><i>The mission of the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (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.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All commission members and participants introduced themselves including name and organization/interest that they are representing. Agenda overview and meeting rules. 		
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. 		
2. Attendees			
<p>UC³ (voting members underlined): <u>Stacey Schnebel</u> (UC³ Chair/Flathead Electric Cooperative), <u>Tom Woolf</u> (FWP: Vice Chair/ MISC), <u>Larry Lack</u> (Sanders County AIS Task Force Lower Clark Fork), <u>Phil Matson</u> (Flathead Lake Biological Station: Member at Large), <u>Onno Wieringa</u> (Flathead River Basin), <u>Arthur Potts</u> (Avista), Rep. David Fern (Whitefish), Rep. Neil Duram (Libby), Jake Williams (USACE), Kate Wilson (Commission Administrator), Cassidy Bender (Commission Coordinator), Josh Abrahamson (UC³ BSWC Member)</p> <p>Virtual Members: <u>Paul Bradford</u> (Libby Rod & Gun Club), <u>Bruce Vincent</u> (Private Industry), Theresa Thom (USFWS), Michelle Cox (USFS Region 1 Invasive Species Coordinator), <u>Andrew Gorder</u> (Clark Fork Coalition, Upper/Middle Clark Fork), <u>Tom Ray</u> (Private Landowner), Heidi McMaster (BOR),</p>			

Absent members: Rae Lynn Hays (Lincoln CD), Martin Charlo (CSKT Tribal Council), Sen. Mike Cuffe (Eureka), Sen. Janet Ellis (Helena), Monica Pokorny (NRCS), Chris Downs (Glacier NP),
Committee Members/Partners/Public/Other: Mike Koopal (WLI), Kate Finley-Squeque (CKST), John O’Bannon (FWP), Stephen Phillips (Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission), Kate Sheridan (Flathead Lakers), Bernie Azure (Char-Koosta News), Brian McKeon (GNP), Sherri Pucherelli (BOR), Katie McCahan (Yaak Valley Forest Council), Nic Zurfluh (Idaho Dept. of Ag), Jim Baker (FLMR), Laura Lundquist (Missoula Current), Emily Moran (MISC), Asta Bowen (WLI Intern), Jim Elser (FLBS), Pat Klever (FLBS), Whisper Means (CSKT), Carol (CSKT), Dan McClure (CSKT), Tayler Templin (FWP), Sam Bennick (WLI), Justina McDirmid (FWP)

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Presenter	Topic/Discussion
<p>Approval of Minutes Kate Wilson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion: to approve minutes from February 16th, 2022, meeting (Phil). Second (Onno). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i>
<p>Staff Report Kate Wilson, UC³ Administrator Cassidy Bender, UC³ Coordinator</p>	<p>Staff activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting follow up & planning; Exec Committee planning & participation; BSWC member supervision- Industry Outreach Project (Josh Abrahamson); Grant & Budget management (writing/reporting/tracking); Tracking AIS in CRB/West; UC³ Annual Monitoring Plan; AIS Monitoring/UCLN Support; EQC/Agency/Gov Office Reporting; Education & Outreach Activities- advertising, tabling, IO project, coordination, etc.; Legislative Committees/Interim meetings and follow up; Annual report development; Crown Managers Partnership (Steering Committee); North American Invasive Species Management Association conference (president); Western Regional Panel; BC Columbia River Basin Steering Committee (member); Pend Oreille Basin Commission (Ex-officio, MT upstream rep); Flathead Basin Commission (50% of staff time); County Assist Team (CAT) Public Information Officer & Liaison (Kate); Graduate school- MPA (Kate); Graphic design coursework (Cassidy) <p>UC³ Operating Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>FY2021 Budget:</u> \$40,000 Operating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State Gov Fiscal Year= July 1-June 30 ○ Expended on member travel, meetings, UC³ materials, staff/office supplies, projects (outreach, events, advertising, CDD materials), BSWC member ○ <u>\$40,000 Expended</u> • <u>FY2022 Budget:</u> \$40,000 Operating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State Gov Fiscal Year= July 1-June 30 ○ Expended \$36,874 ○ <u>Current balance \$3,126</u> <p>Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>BOR Federal Grant:</u> \$58,255 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding timeline: 2021-2024 (3 years) ○ \$36,750/3 years: Industry Outreach Program/E&O ○ \$15,000/3 years: Upper Columbia Lakes Network (UCLN) continuation/expansion ○ DNRC Indirect (12.73% = \$6,505) ○ Expended \$12,250 ○ <u>Current balance: \$46,005</u> • BOR Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education & Outreach + Industry Outreach Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement of water-based businesses in the Upper Columbia Basin; partial support for Big Sky Watershed Corps member; development &

<p>Budget Updates</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">dissemination of outreach materials; pilot transferrable to other locations nation-wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expansion of Monitoring Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen science AIS monitoring expansion through Upper Columbia basin; protocol development; support for monitoring committee ▪ Supplies & equipment <p>FY22 Line-Item Budget (approved 5.12.21)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red is expended to date. • \$19,460/20,000 AIS Education & Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Augment FWP/partner AIS advertising in basin ○ Coordinate/fill gaps in annual E&O media plan ○ Targeted outreach & events • \$7,000/7,000 Member travel/meetings & sponsorships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unanticipated purchase of virtual meeting equipment since COVID. • \$802/3,000 Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Video production (for use statewide) ○ UCLN maintenance (annual) • \$6,000/6,000 BSWC Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travel/supplies for Industry Outreach ○ Travel costs have been rising across the basin, especially while visiting tourists destinations during peak season. • \$3,000/3,000 Annual Report, Additional Projects, Contingency, etc. • \$612/1,000 Staff supplies/travel/office • TOTAL FUNDS: \$36,874/\$40,000 expended to date • Remaining \$3,126 to be spent on BSWC travel & outreach (advertisements & materials). <p>FY23 Proposed Line-Item Budget (for approval)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20,000 AIS Education & Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Augment FWP/partner AIS advertising in basin ○ Coordinate/fill gaps in annual E&O media plan ○ Targeted outreach & events • \$7,000 Member travel/meetings & sponsorships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unanticipated purchase of virtual meeting equipment since COVID. • \$3,000 Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Video production (for use statewide) development in 2022-2023 ○ UCLN maintenance (annual) • \$5,000 BSWC Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travel/supplies for Industry Outreach ○ Travel costs have been rising across the basin, especially while visiting tourists destinations during peak season. • \$4,000 Annual Report, Additional Projects, Contingency, etc. • \$1,000 Staff supplies/travel/office • TOTAL FUNDS: \$40,000 <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the process for figuring out what is needed in our future budget, especially with inflation? Pot of money that funds UC³ also funds MISC, AIS special revenue (angler, bed tax, general fund, AIS prevention pass). If we need more, we can work through
------------------------------	---

<p>Committee Updates</p> <p>Kate Wilson</p>	<p>DNRC and the agencies. Amount of allocations is outlined in statute but how it gets dispersed is a little flexible (AIS grants set in statute).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Distribute 2021 UC³ annual report to all legislators before the next session. • Monitoring video RFP review team volunteers: Phil Matson, Katie Finley, and Paul Bradford. • Asking MCWD to contribute to the BSWC travel budget for FY23 (keeping it at \$5,000 for the proposed budget). • Motion: to approve FY23 proposed budget (Phil). Second (Onno). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> <p>UC³ Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee: Chair, Vice Chair, FWP, staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business/oversight/planning/projects between meetings ○ Meets bi-weekly (Thursdays @ 9:15), open to public • Early Detection & Monitoring Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop/review/implement annual monitoring plan ▪ Develop recommendations for gaps/areas of improvement for AIS monitoring in the UC basin ▪ Provide feedback and oversight on the continuance of the Upper Columbia Lakes Network ○ Members: Chair- Phil Matson (FLBS), Chris Downs (GNP), Craig McLane (FWP), Chris Mascari (MCWD), Tom Woolf (FWP), Joann Wallenburn (Missoula AIS District), Cynthia Ingelfinger (WLI), Katie Finley-Squeque (CSKT), Kim Bergstrom (Pinnacle Research), Jake Williams (USACE), UC³ Staff, UC³ BSWC member • Education & Outreach Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide feedback on UC³ E&O efforts and associated E&O strategy ▪ Support the Industry Outreach Project ▪ Provide ideas and a sounding board for future E&O efforts & events ○ Members: Liz Lodman (MISC), Phil Matson (FLBS), Bruce Vincent (Environomics), Kate Finley-Squeque (CSKT), Justina McDirmid (FWP BSWC), UC³ Staff, UC³ BSWC member, FWP information staff (as needed) • 'Ad Hoc' Legislative Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess and prioritize AIS gaps, challenges, and issues ▪ Identify and explore potential solutions and make recommendations to commission and/or Montana legislature for action to strengthen AIS prevention and management activities. ○ Members: Chair- Andrew Gorder (Clark Fork Coalition), Phil Matson (FLBS), Tom Woolf (MISC/FWP), Bryce Christiaens (MISC/MCWD), Martin Charlo (CSKT), Stacey Schnebel (Flathead Electric Coop), Rep. Neil Duram, Rep. Dave Fern, Sen. Mike Cuffe, Sen. Janet Ellis, Justina McDirmid (FWP BSWC), UC³ Staff, UC³ BSWC member, FWP & DNRC legal & enforcement staff (as needed)
<p>E&O Updates</p> <p>Cassidy Bender, UC³ Coordinator</p>	<p>UC³ Education & Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Goal:</u> Increase public awareness in the Upper Columbia Basin related to AIS impacts, State AIS program rules and personal responsibilities. • View our 2020-2023 Education, Outreach, & Communication Strategy on our website. • Main E&O Strategy Objectives:

Committee Updates cont.

Kate Wilson

- Annual outreach/media plan to augment FWP’s AIS advertising and outreach
 - Evaro Billboard (CDD message similar to last year)
 - Advertisements in 4 tourism magazines
 - Advertisements for Inspector Appreciation Week (August 1-7)
- Document existing education, outreach, and advertising efforts (‘20/’22 survey)
 - Partner survey to be implemented fall 2022 and compiled into outreach report
- Industry Outreach Project in the Upper Columbia Basin
 - BSWC member- Josh Abrahamson
 - Josh has visited a large portion of businesses this spring including full staff presentations for REI, Glacier Guides, and more.
 - Josh is also conducting a signage inventory of the AIS and DLL signage across the Upper Columbia Basin (he is replaces old ‘Mussel Alert’ signs with the new ‘Clean Drain Dry’ signs).
 - Coordination with other AmeriCorps members is underway including FP and Yaak Valley Forest Council.
- Other Activities:
 - 2022-2023 Video Production RFP: Monitoring training video, Industry AIS 101 video and wade angler PSA. Contract in process.
 - AIS Community Outreach Events: fly fishing festivals, Earth Day at U of M, Mussel Walks, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers Rendezvous, Bigfork Whitewater Festival, Family Forestry Expo, Watercraft Inspector Appreciation Week (2021), Clearwater Inspection Station cookout, BSWC member training- led by UC³/MISC/FWP (Mar 8-9, 2022), etc.
 - Clean Drain Dry coasters produced and ready for distribution at breweries, bars, and restaurants. Josh will be handing them out while on his site visits and field workdays for MCWD. We are taking volunteers to distribute in their local area. 10k coasters ordered in first round, likely to order another 10k in FY23.

Discussion:

- There are 7 guiding permits operating out of Libby Dam (Jake Williams) with a stipulation on their permit that they have to stop at an AIS inspection station, and they have to educate their clients (opportunity to include more packet info).
- Targeting the guide community, FWP received approval from FOAM to incorporate AIS information in the annual guide training and coursework.
- ISAN and FWP focusing on Don’t Let it Loose outreach, targeting pet owners.
- Videos that will be included in the RFP proposal:
 1. 30 second video PSA (similar to the Clearwater Resource Council AIS PSAs) targeted toward wade-anglers.
 2. Monitoring training video for citizen science volunteers
 3. Short AIS 101 video targeted at industry outreach professionals, citizens, public.

Monitoring Committee Updates

- UC³ Monitoring duties include:
 - Developing an annual monitoring plan (2022 DRAFT version out for comments)
 - Annual monitoring workshop and/or survey to compile efforts and coordinate
 - Develop recommendations for gaps/areas of improvement for AIS monitoring in the UC Basin
- Upper Columbia Lakes Network- contract signed
 - Continuity/expansion identified as a priority
 - BOR funds at \$5k/annually (3 years)
 - Assist with training video production

- Continue outreach to bring in additional citizen scientists
- 2022 AIS Monitoring Partner Survey Results
 - In lieu of a monitoring workshop this year, we conducted an online survey on monitoring partners in and adjacent to the Upper Columbia Basin.
 - Out of ~20 partners engaged, we had 12 total responses including 7 from Montana groups (USFS, WLI, MCWD, FLBS, FWP, Little Bitterroot Lake, and Sanders County Task Force) and 5 from British Columbia and Alberta groups (EKISC, Alberta Enviro. & Parks, Parks Canada, Elk River Alliance, Lake Windermere).
 - The full survey results can be found in our 2022 annual monitoring plan, to be posted on our website when complete.
 - Recommendations & Gaps identified in the survey:
 - FWP trainings offered to the public and more training for new volunteers
 - Increased monitoring of Echo Lake
 - Coordination with existing programs
 - Lack of funds and capacity with rising costs
 - More volunteer support (mailing samples)
 - When asked if they would like to attend a monitoring workshop in the future 33% said yes and preferred in person, 42% said yes and preferred a virtual option, and 25% said no they would rather complete a survey.

Discussion:

- Have we discussed agricultural representation, participation, and impacts on the commission and committee work?
- **Action:** FWP to present on AIS at CSKT Water Board, specifically to discuss agricultural impacts.

Legislative Committee

- 'Ad Hoc' Legislative Committee Priorities
 - Assess and prioritize AIS gaps, challenges, and issues
 - Identify and explore potential solutions and make recommendations to commission and/or Montana legislature for action to strengthen AIS prevention and management activities.
- Ways to prepare for 2023 Legislative Session
 - Research from 2021 session
 - Focus on maintaining AIS Program funding
 - Legislator information- **February 22nd, 2023, Invasive Species Rotunda Event**
 - Prepare and Share: key messages, AIS talking points & testimony training for 2023 session

Discussion:

- Lunch to be provided at the Invasive Species Rotunda Event in Helena.
- **Action:** Prepare and Share: key messages, AIS talking points and testimony training for 2023 session (send links to testimony from last session).
- **Action:** Schedule an ad-hoc committee meeting (September) and seek Tribal representation.

Tasks Moving Forward

- 2022 Industry Outreach Continuation (Josh through November)
- Finalize 2022 AIS Early Detection & Monitoring Plan
- AIS video projects (RFP currently out)
- Conduct partner AIS E&O survey (Fall 2022)
- 2022 Annual Report (fiscal year)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep for 2023 Legislative Session <p>Upcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia River Basin AIS Meeting- Virtual (June 22-23rd) • Watercraft Inspector Appreciation Week (August 1st-7th) • Flathead Waterways Clean Up Event (August 13th) • Montana Invasive Species Council Meeting (September 7th) • <i>UC³ Fall Meeting (TBD) ~ hybrid</i> • Western Regional Panel- Anchorage, AK (September 21-23rd) • North American Invasive Species Management Association Annual Conference- Fort Myers, Florida (November 7th – 11th)
<p>Partner Program Roundtable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theresa Thom, USFWS- Funding update – Infrastructure Act \$100M/5 years for invasive species work. Funding opportunity available now (\$1.8M grant administered by USFWS, due June 22) – landscape level prevention activities. State ANS plan funds as well (\$95k). FY22 QZAP funds (grant) \$2.25M – opportunity open now. Coordinated through R2 (due in July). Inter-agency agreement (4 natural resource agencies) contribute funds to agreement (\$250k) funds watercraft inspection database and training (PSMFC). Happy birthday to national fish hatcheries (150th anniversary this month). eDNA sampling at 6 PNW hatcheries (NZ Mudsnaills, Q/Z mussels, northern pike, carp) – no detections so far. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Press Release highlighting the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded Ecosystem Restoration projects for FY22 is available here (note it includes all the activities, not just invasive species): https://doi.gov/pressreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-more-68-million-bipartisan-infrastructure-law ▪ Link for the list of funded projects for FY22 https://doi.gov/priorities/investing-america-infrastructure/ecosystem-restoration/projects ▪ The Funding Opportunity for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife QZAP FY2022 has officially been posted. This opportunity will be open for application through July 20, 2022. The funding announcement number is F22AS00373 and the full title is "FY2022 Implementation of the Quagga and Zebra Mussel Action Plan (QZAP) in the Western United States". Please feel free to reach out to barak_shemai@fws.gov. The opportunity can also be found at grants.gov but applications may NOT be submitted through grants.gov https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=340550 ○ Brian McKeon, GNP- Monitoring update (Chris Downs): completed eDNA on front country lakes this spring, start veliger sampling in same lakes in August. Inspection stations update: west side Lake McDonald station up and running in Apgar, north fork at Polebridge doing inspections again this year on Bowman or Kintla lakes and launching from park side of North Fork, east side with Many Glacier up and running at the ranger station (nonmotorized boating only) and lastly, St. Mary’s is the most complicated with no motorized boating available in 2022, no inspections over there so you would have to be inspected in Apgar and drive over the going to the sun road to launch in St. Mary’s. Cut back on some locations due to employee attrition and inability to hire/house. Motorized and nonmotorized boating is not available in Two Medicine in 2022. ○ Katie Finley-Squeque, CSKT- Implementing Anderson radio ads (Kerry Country, Q Country, Big 100, Star Today’s hits, the River) on AIS emphasizing that we are protecting a lot more than just Flathead Lake. Working to make it a part of the messaging that we are protecting a much larger part of the watershed from this threat. There are still people that do not understand this threat. Assisted with the three mussel walks (Big Fork- 75 students, Two Eagle- 25 students, Polson- 160 students). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ravalli WIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating hours: 24 hours

- Total inspections: 2,712
- Decontaminations: 21 (2 full, 19 standing water, 4 plants)
- Out of State inspections: 494 (29 from mussel positive waters)
- Thompson Falls
 - Operating hours: 7am-8pm
 - Total inspections: 625
 - Decontaminations: 10 (0 full, 5 standing water, 5 plants)
 - Out of State inspections: 105 (1 from mussel positive waters)
- **Phil Matson, FLBS-** CMP database manager, 31 sites around Flathead Lake for 4 years (plankton tow monitoring mostly looking for mussels, this year expanding to all taxa). Continuing 6-year partnership with CSKT, picking up new BSWC members this year. Mostly targeting shoreline samples at hot spots with boat activity (interacted with 80 public citizens during sampling in 2021 and helped train 30 interns, students, and professionals). Open water sites targeting thermocline. Half samples end up with FWP lab in Helena (microscopy) and other half for DNA gets sent to UofM lab. MISC grant funded project to validate last year's findings for decontamination in more real-world scenarios using 5% bleach for 5 minutes vs. vinegar as complete replacement for bleach (2021 results showed an unofficial soak in vinegar for 4 hours was effective, testing it officially this year aiming to eliminate bleach all together). eDNA training session in June 13th, 2022 brought 18 participants from 8 different affiliations, focusing on large volume plankton tow sampling (interested in doing this next year as well). Bio station discontinuing partnership with FWP at Tiber reservoir (due to delisting of reservoir from mussel positive status), moving resources to Flathead Lake sites (expanding from 3 to 4 sites).
- **Kate Sheridan, Flathead Lakers-** Working to install signs at public and private sites around Flathead Lake 'Tiny Critters, Huge Threat', contact Kate if you have a site you would like to put up a sign. State parks just did their first volunteer AIS training that FWP led, Flathead Lakers will be continuing to work with FWP with outreach to the state parks this summer. Working with Katie at CSKT to provide coolers and hydration at Ravalli and Thompson Falls inspection stations. Working with Tom/FWP to cover the marinas on Flathead Lake more heavily, making sure they are asking for inspections, etc.
- **Tom Wolf, MISC-**
 - Wood Pest Pathways Science Advisory Panel report out now.
 - Feral Swine Rapid Response Exercise June 30th.
 - Invasive Species Summit: Oct 25th
 - AIS Grant Project Awards:
 - AIS survey and education. Yaak Valley Forest Council.
 - AIS survey. CRC.
 - eDNA decontamination. FBS.
 - Upgrade decontamination equipment. Whitefish Lake Institute.
 - Flowering rush biocontrol site surveys. Missoula County.
- **Mike Koopal, WLI-** eDNA sampling for multiple species in the basin. Whitefish Early Detection and Rapid Response monitoring (annually, throughout season). WLI coordinates and administers the Northwest Montana Lakes Network (41 lakes in NW Montana, training volunteers to also look for AIS) and the Upper Columbia Lakes Network (trains and provides equipment to new watershed groups in the UC Basin to conduct citizen science monitoring). Received a DNRC AIS grant for an on-demand hot water wash unit (replacing portable station). Trout Unlimited happy to loan CDD stencil for the boat ramp at the Whitefish City Beach. If AIS are found on watercraft at Whitefish inspection stations the staff calls FWP for enforcement/quarantine may be required.
- **Arthur Pots, Avista-** Eurasian Water Milfoil collected, hauled on shore to dry, and burned. Proposal from state highway department to use their burn permit. Rate of eradication from

	<p>year to year determined by checking 6 months and one year after treatment, rotating treatment spots based on size/need whether to skip or treat the spot again. Working closely with FWP on this project, not eradication project because EWM is hard to kill completely, it is mostly a management and containment project. Focused on high use areas to keep it from spreading outward (boat ramps). 457 acres mapped in Noxon reservoir ¼ of that was able to be treated. Not enough funding or capacity available to treat everything. As of Monday, spilling at Noxon haven't reached peak yet. August will include collecting veliger sampling at fore bays on Noxon and Cabinet Gorge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the funding gap, if we had full funding what would that yield? The best scientist in the nation have been working on Noxon and we have found ways to kill it but to keep it killed is the problem, management and containment is the priority. ○ Larry Lack, Sanders County Aquatic Plant Task Force- Very large areas to treat with minimal funds. Focus is on creating edges for harvesting. Will be putting up a sign on Thompson Falls Road to inform travelers that boat inspections are mandatory. Treating in the first week of August, without Avista the task force would not be able to do as much with their funding. ○ Nic Zurfluh, Idaho Department of Agriculture- Prevention focused, lot of education, monitoring and action control programs. Standing up Watercraft Inspection Stations across the state, even remote areas (challenges in staffing, hiring, pay rate, etc.) but overall doing a fine job. Just around 22,000 inspections, which is an uptick in the last few years with inspection numbers and mussel boats. Lower this year with volume of inspections with expanded inspection hours. Continuing to network and communicate with state partners, MT FWP helped several times already this year with mussel boats moving across the west and likewise with MT bound boats. Monitoring- busy July and August due to wet spring, same with aquatic plant monitoring and control program. E&O efforts are focusing on larger scale mass media, social media, billboards, radio, and collaboration with local groups at the boat ramps/launches. Northbound inspections in the Henry's Lake area update: operating both of those stations northbound but mainly focused on southbound. ○ Michelle Cox, USFS- E&O gaps identified with MCWD/AIS District (Missoula, Lolo, and Bitterroot). Collaborating with USFWS for a QZAPP grant to increase program and analyzing samples within Region 1. Northern Rockies Coordinating Group working to update their AIS Fire Protocols on how to decontaminate fire equipment (Kate Wilson is writing and assisting). Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee grant to design and develop a prototype of fire hose to decontaminate foot valves (with no chemicals). QZAPP grant to have multiple prototypes of the hose developed. Wild-Spotter citizen science app to submit photos from all national forests and grasslands across the country. Infrastructure funding 25million (5mil over 5 years) through America the Beautiful Grant (USFS has to go through a partner to apply). Invasive species management funding available through NFWF grant.
<p>FWP AIS Report</p> <p>Tom Woolf, FWP AIS Bureau Chief</p>	<p>2022 Program Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiber officially delisted as mussel positive status and restrictions lifted. Will be closing mandatory inspection stations around Tiber and moving resources to enhance/expand other high-risk areas/stations. • Watercraft Inspections update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over 20,000 inspections. ○ 27 mussel fouled vessels: (8 coming to MT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Polson, Somers, Dayton & Whitefish. ▪ June 11th intercepted commercially hauled new purchase from Leech Lake, MN to Polson that was in mussel positive water 3 days prior. ○ Found weeds, corbicula clams and mystery snails. ○ View the AIS Inspections Dashboard for more information. • Other AIS Prevention News:

- Will be printing receipts at stations in 2022.
- Upgrading decontamination equipment.
- MOU for inspections with private businesses.
- Ballast decontamination trailer to be circulating for training this year.
- Clean Drain Dry training in coordination with the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana (FOAM) at their annual guide training.
- Fire equipment AIS protocols are being developed and adopted.
- Inspection MOU with Alberta in progress.
- Early Detection Survey
 - There are standard protocols for fish disease (whirling disease) but not for all AIS. Working to get these protocols standardized across the state. Bluewater hatchery by Bridger has another New Zealand Mudsnails (NZM) detection. Measures are taken to ensure NZM don't contaminate the hatchery with the creek a stone's throw away NZM population and they can move easy (muskrat, bird, survive indigestion).
 - Over 20 people trained for AIS early detection and sampling.
 - Over 300 early detection samples collected and analyzed (no new detections so far).
 - View the [Monitoring Dashboard](#) for more information.
- Treatment & Evaluation
 - EWM Diver removal at Beaver Lake (Whitefish Lake Institute)
 - EWM treatment assessment planned for Noxon (Sanders County TF)
 - Fragrant Water Lily removal follow-up planned for Holland Lake (USFS)
 - Bullfrog & Snapping turtle survey and control (CSKT and others).
 - Corbicula claims eradicated from Elmo.
 - Joint WA & MT AIS dive training.
 - Working to standardize AIS hatchery inspection protocols.
 - Bluewater hatchery decontamination.
 - Crayfish survey ongoing in 2022.
- AIS Education & Outreach:
 - State-wide marketing campaign, coordination with Dept Commerce, targeted info for State Parks users, and events and workshops.
 - When reserving a campsite on Flathead Lake the camper receives a notification of the AIS information and requirements.
 - FWP funding to support videos through UC³.
 - AmeriCorps member 2022- Justina McDirmid is working on getting info to parks staff and other parks throughout the state.
- Don't Let it Loose signage and outreach coordination with ISAN.
- FWP social media presence including the Montana Outdoor Report, Fisheries Friday on Facebook, press releases, short video content, and native content (looks like news article but it is paid ad).
- Call Before you Haul program in effect for commercially hauled vehicles transporting boats through Washington, Oregon, Idaho, or Montana.
- Snapping turtle and bullfrog control project continuing in 2022, FWP seeking help from citizens to report sightings of snapping turtles.

Montana Mussel Detection & Rapid Response Background

- Invasive Mussel Larvae detected in Tiber and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs in November 2016. Governor declared a Natural Resource Emergency, incident command team put in place, and 2017 legislative session focused on response measures.
- Mussel response in 2017: provided containment at mussel detected waters, expanded inspections and early detection monitoring, statute increased requirements, created

	<p>staff positions with the FWP AIS program (bureau chief, managers, inspectors, monitoring, lab, etc.), increased funding that is now ongoing, and created the UC³ and MISC in statute.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montana Dreissenid Mussel Response Guidelines (2018) detailed how to approach detection, who/how we communicate, is guiding document for future mussel response. • Rapid response exercises funded by USFWS and coordinated with PSMFC in September 2018 (Flathead Lake, Somers) and September 2021 (Fort Peck). • Deployed dive team at response exercise (Lake County dive team) to delineate, train, and look for mussels. Now they are a resource to come out and help when it actually happens. • CRBDIRT.com (Columbia Basin Incident Response Toolkit).
<p>Quagga/Zebra Mussel Control & Eradication Methodologies and Research</p> <p>Sherri Pucherelli, Bureau of Reclamation Biologist</p>	<p>Mussel Impacts and Control at the Bureau of Reclamation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mussel Impacts at Hydropower Plants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased maintenance and unplanned outages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mussel attachment: low velocity, 4.5 feet per second or less ▪ Effects intakes, gates, instrumentation, small diameter pipes ▪ Shell debris in strainers and screens • Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quantifying the impacts at our hydropower plants, it is not easy to track all maintenance and costs. ○ Preparing for potential infestations is difficult and different for every facility. • Case Study Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compiled case studies describing plant experiences with mussels- interviewed 13 hydropower plants with mussel infestations (4 BOR, 3 other USACAE, TVA and NY Power Authority and 6 Canadian power plants). ○ Purpose was to understand impacts at Reclamation plants and gather information for managers preparing or considering changes to existing approaches. • Questions asked included information about design and operation of plant, mussel infestation timeline, response planning and monitoring, mussel impacts to systems/components impacted, design aspects that prevented or reduced mussel impacts, unplanned or forced outages, control methods utilized or examined, and expenses associated with mussels. • Plant differences included design, use of raw water in the plant, different sizes (2-36 generator units) and mussel infestation timelines (anywhere from 1-31 years). • Hoover Dam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thrust bearing cooler plugging has resulted in 1-3 unplanned outages a year (3-5 days per outage) with 8-12 people working on the outage, costing \$20,000 per day of lost production and unrealized revenue. ○ Estimated cost for 1 outage= \$44,000-\$80,000 ○ Preventative control measures included conversion to tail bay water- \$500,000 and planned HOD UV installation- \$2.1 million • Parker Dam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prior to UV, 8 weeks of labor per year to clean mussels off equipment and biofilm out of heat exchangers • Glen Canyon Dam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mussel settlement of fixed wheel gates (pull up every 8 years and takes 2 extra days to remove mussels, makes them heavier which could be a problem). ○ Maintenance changes from yearly to quarterly and then from quarterly to monthly.

- HOD UV installation planned.
- Ontario Power generation (4 plants) first detected in 1990
 - 10-day chlorine treatment once per year has controlled fouling in cooling system but required a capital investment of \$250,000- \$1.3 million and yearly costs from \$7,000- \$24,000
- Wilson Hydropower Plant
 - Operated by TVA in Alabama, has 21 generator units with mussels detected in the early 1990's and no chemical treatments permitted.
 - Mussel fouling most significant on units 1-8 (intake 14-45ft below surface) which is the service water source.
 - Cleaning header units costs \$500,000 per cleaning, had 12 forced outages per year that included cutting into pipes and hydro-blasting, now with optimized backwash flushing and temp/flow monitoring that is down to 3 unplanned and 10 planned maintenance outages per month.
 - Swapped out generator air coolers when overheating occurred, purchased 4 replacement coolers at \$72,000. This requires outages, additional staff, and overtime= \$4,000-\$5,000 per swap.
- Results from study:
 - Impact
 - Significant: 2 plants
 - Moderate: 8 plants
 - Little to none: 3 plants
 - Severity of impact
 - Design and how raw water is used
 - Not size or number of generators
 - Mussel population cycles
 - 5 of 13 plants had experienced unplanned outages
 - Mussel fouling expenses are not commonly recorded
- Control Approaches:
 - Preventative treatments: 8 plants
 - Chlorine \$100,000- \$1.3 million
 - HOD UV \$1 million- \$2.1 million
 - Increased cleaning and operational changes: 5 plants
- Chemical Control: Infrastructure
 - Chlorine (chlorine gas, hypochlorite, chloramine, chlorine dioxide)
 - Copper ion generators and liquid copper
 - Bromine
 - Hydrogen peroxide
 - Ozone
 - Potassium salts, potassium permanganate
 - Ferrate
 - Zequanox
 - CO²
- Physical/Mechanical Control: Infrastructure
 - HOD UV
 - Antifouling and foul release coatings
 - Filtration, centrifugal separation
 - Desiccation
 - Galvanizing
 - Mechanical cleaning
 - Design changes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acoustics- ultrasound ○ Electrical currents ● Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Risk assessment ○ Implement monitoring plan ○ Facility vulnerability assessment ○ Response plan ● Control Tools for Open Water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Few successful efforts in small, closed systems ○ Eradication has relied on potash, calcium, or copper compounds ○ Challenges: scalability, cost, species specificity, and environmental impact. ● Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chemical: Vary in specificity and impacts to the environment; efficacy can be impacted by environmental conditions; temperature effects minimum lethal concentration or time to mortality. ○ Biological: Wide variety of organisms have been documented to prey on and parasitize Dreissenid mussels; fish species, birds, crayfish, blue crabs, turtles, colonial hydroid; predation pressure may decrease numbers, but no evidence of long-term reduction; parasites are host specific and most promising for biocontrol development. ○ Physical/mechanical: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desiccation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winter draw down of reservoirs of has been conducted in several locations ● Temporary decreases in mussel populations have been observed ● Populations have generally rebounded within a few years ● May provide a temporary control, but is unlikely to result in permanent eradication ● Structural instability in shorelines is possible when water is drawn down ▪ Manual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winter draw down of reservoirs of has been conducted in several locations ● Temporary decreases in mussel populations have been observed ● Populations have generally rebounded within a few years ● May provide a temporary control, but is unlikely to result in permanent eradication ● Structural instability in shorelines is possible when water is drawn down
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next meeting TBD. ● Topic Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Augmenting science and developing control methods available for the day we have an introduction. ○ BC/Alberta presentation. ● Motion: To adjourn the UC³ June 15th Meeting (Onno). Second (Tom). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> ● Adjourned at 4:05pm.

4. Action Items				
Action:		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Draft minutes and send to members	Cassidy Bender	7/11/2022	Complete
2	Distribute 2021 UC3 annual report to all legislators before the next session.	UC ³ staff	Jan/Feb 2023	In progress
3	Prepare and Share: key messages, AIS talking points and testimony training for 2023 session- send links to testimony.	UC ³ staff	Fall 2022	On hold
4	Schedule an ad-hoc committee meeting (September) and seek Tribal representation.	Kate Wilson	Sept 2022	Complete
5	Set up presentation on Canada/BC/Alberta's AIS management and prevention efforts for the next meeting (CKISS and other councils).	Kate Wilson	Fall 2022	On hold
EXISTING ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS				
7	Follow up with Ron Catlett with DEQ reporting tool and information on HABs.	Kate Wilson		
8	Follow up with monitoring committee on flowering rush biocontrol project assistance and invite Melissa to next committee meeting.	Kate Wilson	2022	
9	Contact FWP for Clean Drain Dry rack cards, kids' activity books, AIS materials, etc. or if you would like to assist with placement and distribution of the AIS species signs at infected waterbodies.	All	On-going	
10	Send anything you would like to share or add to the new UC ³ website (i.e., photos) to Kate Wilson or Cassidy Bender	All	On-going	
11	Look into railway transport of watercraft as potential high-risk vector	Tom Woolf		



 **Location:** Great Northern Best Western Hotel
 835 Great Northern Blvd. Helena, MT
 **Date:** October 27, 2022
 **Time:** 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM



**UPPER COLUMBIA
 CONSERVATION COMMISSION**
 PARTNERS IN MANAGING AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³) 10/27/22 Meeting Agenda

TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER(S)
8:30 AM	Welcome & Agenda Overview: meeting rules and participant introductions (roll call)	Stacey Schnebel , Chair; Tom Woolf , Vice Chair; Kate Wilson , UC ³ Administrator
8:45 AM	Public Comment	Stacey Schnebel
8:50 AM	Commission Consolidation Concept: Presentation & Discussion	Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras ; Kerry Davant , DNRC Deputy Director; Mark Bostrom , DNRC CARD Division Administrator; Kate Wilson , Commission Administrator
10:15 AM	Staff & Committee Reports: FY23 Budget, Grants & contracts: BOR, Upper Columbia Lakes Network, Conservation Media, project/committee updates, legislative session 2023, etc. <i>Actions:</i> Approve minutes, FY23 budget, & South Dakota letter.	Kate Wilson ; Cassidy Bender , Commission Coordinator; Josh Abrahamson , Big Sky Watershed Corps
11:15 AM	Partner Updates: status of partner programs and discussion of collaboration opportunities	All partners: <i>Avista; Blackfeet Nation; Conservation Districts; CSKT; Glacier National Park; Flathead Lake Biological Station; Missoula-County Weed & AIS District; Montana Invasive Species Council; NRCS; Swan Lakers; Trout Unlimited; USFS; USFWS; Whitefish Lake Institute; Yaak Valley Forest Council, etc.</i>
12:00 PM	FWP AIS Program: 2022 season summary, South Dakota mussel detection, Looking forward to 2023 <i>Action:</i> Approve concept/process for South Dakota letter from Montana	Tom Woolf , AIS Bureau Chief (FWP)
12:30 PM	Adjourn Meeting Bagged lunch (provided for in-person attendees)	



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³)		
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, October 27, 2022	Time:	8:30am-12:30pm
Minutes Prepared By:	Cassidy Bender	Location:	Hybrid: Best Western Helena or Zoom/Call In

List of Acronyms

AIS	Aquatic invasive species	FLBS	Flathead Lake Biological Station
BOR	US Bureau of Reclamation	FWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
BSWC	Big Sky Watershed Corps (AmeriCorps)	GNP	Glacier National Park
CEMIST	Central Eastern MT Invasive Species Team	MCWD	Missoula County Weed District
CFC	Clark Fork Coalition	MISC	Montana Invasive Species Council
CKISS	Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society	NPS	National Park Service
CRB	Columbia River Basin	NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
CRC	Clearwater Resource Council	UCLN	Upper Columbia Lakes Network
CSKT	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality	USFS	US Forest Service
DNRC	Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation	USFWS	US Fish & Wildlife Service
eDNA	Environmental DNA	WLI	Whitefish Lake Institute
E & O	Education & Outreach	WRDA	Water Resources Development Act
EQC	Environmental Quality Council	WRP	Western Regional Panel

1. Welcome and Introductions

<p>Welcome Meeting Rules</p> <p>Stacey Schnebel, UC³ Chair, Hydroelectric Cooperatives Rep.</p> <p>Kate Wilson, UC³ Administrator</p>	<p><i>The mission of the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (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.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All commission members and participants introduced themselves including name and organization/interest that they are representing. Agenda overview: Commission Consolidation Concept; Staff & Committee Reports; Partner Updates; FWP AIS Program Updates.
<p>Public Comment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.

2. Attendees

UC³ (voting members underlined): Stacey Schnebel (UC³ Chair/Flathead Electric Cooperative), Tom Woolf (FWP: Vice Chair/MISC), Larry Lack (Sanders County AIS Task Force Lower Clark Fork), Phil Matson (Flathead Lake Biological Station: Member at Large), Onno Wieringa (Flathead River Basin), Arthur Potts (Avista), Rae Lynn Hays (Lincoln CD), Martin Charlo (CSKT Tribal Council), Paul Bradford (Libby Rod & Gun Club), Bruce Vincent (Private Industry), Tom Ray (Private Landowner), Rep. David Fern (Whitefish), Rep. Neil Duram (Libby), Sen. Mike Cuffe (Eureka), Sen. Janet Ellis (Helena), Monica Pokorny (NRCS), Chris Downs (Glacier NP), Theresa Thom (USFWS), Michelle Cox (USFS Region 1 Invasive Species Coordinator), Heidi McMaster (BOR), Kate Wilson (Commission Administrator), Cassidy Bender (Commission Coordinator), Josh Abrahamson (UC³ BSWC Member)

Absent members: Jake Williams (USACE), Andrew Gorder (Clark Fork Coalition, Upper/Middle Clark Fork)

Partners & Guests: Kristen Juras (Lt. Governor), Amanda Kaster (DNRC Director), Kerry Davant (DNRC Director), Emilie Henry (DNRC/FBC), Casey Lewis (FBC/City of Kalispell), Kate Finley-Squeque (CKST), Whisper Means (CSKT), Rich Janssen (CSKT NRD Director), Russ Hartzell (FWP), John O'Bannon (FWP), Tayler Templin (FWP), Justina McDirmid (FWP), Craig McLane (FWP),

Stacy Schmidt (FWP), Austin Jaynes (FWP), Quentin Kujala (FWP Chief of Staff), Andrew Rivers (FWP), Jayden Duckworth (FWP), Liz Lodman (DNRC/MISC), Anna Passage (DNRC/MISC), Jennifer Riddle (ISAN), Bryce Christaens (MCWD), Chris Mascari (MCAD), Zachary Lewis (MCWD), Jacob Bradford (BOR), Mark Lambrecht (Flathead Electric Coop), Brett Slaughter (Senator Daines Office), Paul Kusnierz (Avista), Clayton Elliot (Trout Unlimited), Samantha Chilcote (Attorney), Deb Tirmenstein (MT Black Dog Services), Hilary Robison (Yellowstone Center for Resources), Sue Mills (Yellowstone NP), Hayden Blackford (Daily Interlake)

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Presenter	Topic/Discussion
<p>Commission Consolidation Concept Presentation & Discussion</p> <p>Kristen Juras, Lieutenant Governor</p> <p>Amanda Kaster, DNRC Director</p> <p>Kate Wilson, UC³ Administrator</p>	<p><u>Introduction from Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you to commission members for your dedication and service. • Concept arose from Governor Gianforte’s Red Tape Initiative. The Governor’s team is reviewing the State’s 160+ boards and commissions. They have identified and are approaching 24-25 boards and commissions to ask for consideration for consolidation. The goal is to provide more efficient government and improve/streamline operations while continuing to provide the best service to citizens. • Bill to consolidate the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC³) and the Flathead Basin Commission (FBC). These two commissions are the largest and most active in the state of Montana. <p><u>Introduction and Overview from Director Amanda Kaster</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for your dedication and commitment to serving as a valued member of the UC³. Your service, expertise, and passion are very much appreciated by DNRC and the Governor’s Office. • The Commission has played a pivotal role in the last five years in bringing together diverse stakeholders to bolster and support AIS prevention efforts to protect not only the prolific waters of western Montana, but also the entire Columbia River Basin – examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ raising public and awareness of AIS threats, impacts, and Montana specific rules; ○ developing champions and increased support among water-based industries such as boat shops, outdoor retailers, fly shops, and marinas; ○ enhancing citizen science monitoring for AIS in the Upper Columbia basin; and ○ engaging legislators not only during the session but in the interim, helping to prioritize AIS prevention now and for the future. • DNRC is home to many administrative attachments, all doing great work. The UC³ and the FBC are no exception – they both are serving vital needs in western Montana. • However, we do see some areas where we can gain efficiencies, offer more support to watersheds in the Montana portion of the Columbia River Basin headwaters, and still ensure a focus on AIS issues while also providing more support and protection for all of our aquatic resources of western Montana. • The UC³ currently has two ½ time FTEs, a Commission Administrator, and a Program Coordinator; the FBC shares these positions with UC³, but also has a Nonpoint Source Coordinator – Kate, Cassidy, and Emilie. Two of these three positions already serve both Commissions. • The annual operating budget of the UC³ is currently \$40,000, which includes funds for staff salaries and benefits, outreach and education, citizen science programs, member travel, meetings, and supplies. The annual operating budget of the FBC is currently

\$281,511. We are not proposing that this decrease, but that the current operating budget for both Commissions be consolidated.

- The mission of the FBC is to “protect the existing high quality of the Flathead Lake aquatic environment; the waters that flow into, out of, or are tributary to the Lake and; the natural resources and environment of the Flathead Basin..”
- The FBC has become a model of successful citizen and inter-agency cooperation in a watershed characterized by its overall pristine character, international dimensions, and multi-jurisdictional nature. The Commission has played a pivotal role in the last 39 years in natural resource protection and meeting community needs – examples include but not limited to:
 - the signing of an MOU between Montana and British Columbia establishing a moratorium on mining and oil and gas development in the headwaters of the Flathead;
 - establishing long term water quality monitoring in the basin;
 - and now tackling the very real issue of nonpoint source pollution head on.
- The UC³ has also been extremely beneficial to the Upper Columbia Basin. When it was created by the legislature in the 2017 session, AIS was a huge issue facing Montana’s aquatic resources and native species. It still is. But things have also changed since 2017 – as you know, FWP has made enormous improvements to the AIS program that further protect our waters from harmful AIS. They are doing a phenomenal job.
- The UC³ has worked closely with FWP to ensure that this comprehensive program is preventing AIS to the best of Montana’s ability. It is proposed that this would continue with the new **Western Montana Conservation Commission** as AIS remains a specific duty in statute.
- The Columbia River Basin is of utmost importance to the west – it supports hydropower generation across the Pacific Northwest; irrigation for crops; municipal drinking water; and more. It remains that last major river drainage known to be free of zebra and quagga mussels. We intend to continue our fight to protect our waters with the standing up the new Commission this session – perhaps in new and creative ways given that the Columbia River Basin also suffers from water quality issues in many areas.
- We believe that this would be a great opportunity not only to gain efficiencies for staffing, but also to provide the adaptability to assess the needs of the many important watersheds of western Montana, and to be positioned well to support, assist, and lead projects needed by the individual basins and/or communities therein.
- This would allow for the Commission to focus on protecting and conserving aquatic resources across the board in western Montana, and being a convener, a facilitator, and an umbrella to support and assist our western watersheds.
- We could gain efficiencies in staffing, appointments, technical services, and administrative oversight with the combining of the UC³ with the duties of the FBC.
- This consolidation would combine UC³’s critical AIS focused mission with the FBC’s natural resource and water quality emphasis, and both track records of community-focused important projects to be of service to the entire Upper Columbia Basin. And provides the ability to be more adaptive in assessing the individual needs of each watershed and providing support for water quality protection and improvement, while still doing your good work to support FWP’s AIS Program – arguably the most protective AIS prevention program around.

Overview of Draft Bill from Kate Wilson

- Bill would repeal both existing commissions and stand up the Western Montana Conservation Commission in their place.

- Currently UC³ has 12 voting members and 2 vacancies.
- New bill proposes 15 voting members. Governor shall appoint 8 of the voting members and remaining 7 voting members shall be “self-selected.”
 - Idea behind “self-selected” members is that the sectors/organizations making appointments know which representatives would be most interested and engaged, promotes participation.
- 8 governor-appointed members shall represent: the hydropower utility industry or an electric cooperative; a private landowner who is a member of an irrigation district; a private citizen who is at-large; a representative of a private industry; and a director, officer, staff, or member of a natural resource, conservation, or recreation organization representing different geographic areas, including upper Clark Fork River basin, lower Clark Fork River basin, Kootenai River basin, and Flathead River basin.
- 7 “self-selected” members shall be appointed by and represent the following sectors: MACO (one representative from county larger than 100,000 residents and one representative from county smaller than 100,000 residents), MACD (2 CD representatives), MT League of Cities and Towns (one wastewater utility representative from municipality greater than 20,000 residents), MT Rural Water Association (one representative from local water and sewer district), and CSKT Natural Resource Dept.
- Both FBC and UC³ have a CSKT voting member. In this bill we specify Natural Resource Dept.-appointed by CSKT tribal council. Martin Charlo, tribal council member, is the representative on UC³.
- Ex officio members (non-voting) representing: DEQ; DNRC; FWP; department of transportation (DOT); department of commerce (DOC); UM; EPA; USDA, NRCS; USDA, USFS Region 1; DOI, BOR; DOI, USGS; and BPA.
 - DOT – owns a lot of stormwater infrastructure and would improve communication with them
 - DOC – conducts studies/research on population and growth trends in MT
 - UM – FLBS is a key partner on many projects but have never had an official seat, would be self-selected.
 - USFS - Does not specific position in agency in new bill, just specifies region.
- Commission members would have staggered terms, but everyone would be appointed at the same time. To ensure there’s continuity in the transition, two current commission members from both commissions (FBC and UC³) will be appointed to the new commission. Current commission members would be appointed by the two commissions, and a request would be sent to the governor to appoint these members to the new commission.
- New Mission: *To protect the existing high quality of Western MT’s aquatic environment and the natural resources and environment of Western MT.*
- “Aquatic resources” – definition incorporates AIS with water quality duties
- “Western Montana” – all land west of the continental divide. The intention is to keep the same boundaries of the UC³ so it wouldn’t change our existing group area (**suggested edit** to define more clearly in bill draft).
- New Duties: 5-year monitoring strategy, ensure the continuation of a comprehensive aquatic invasive species prevention program, provide a biennial report to the Governor.
 - 5-year strategy for all aquatic monitoring in the watershed with a purpose to address gaps and document who is doing what where. UC³ current statue requires the development of an annual monitoring plan- FWP does a great job and a monitoring plan every year may be a bit redundant.
- Many of the duties from the FBC will remain the same in new bill.

- Funding aspect remains the same as both commissions in current statutes.
- AIS specification in Section 5- “ensure the continuation of a comprehensive aquatic invasive species prevention program in Western Montana.” This allows us to work with FWP to fill gaps and provide support without being prescriptive of how that happens.

Discussion:

- Larry Lack- With Thompson Falls and Sanders County being low population and low resource areas, I want to ensure there is representation from this area on the new commission. I want to make sure that we represent the working people that deal with all the same issues we deal with but don't have the income/resources to solve them.
- Arthur Potts- I want to ensure that a merger does not go directly to “this is a Flathead Lake commission.” We are located on the Clark Fork, the downstream of downstream and I want to make sure we are not lost in the new focus. One concern with the seat representing electric cooperatives *or* hydroelectric utilities – these are very different, and we need to make sure that representation does not become solely Flathead representation.
- Stacey Schnebel- I noted that as well, we are very different, and we do not collaborate all that much. All other seats seem fair, but this seat may be set up to be a contest with industry. Delineate between electric cooperatives and hydroelectric utilities as two separate seats - **suggested edit.**
- Dave Fern- Since we deal with invasive species statewide and oversight from border to border, should we ensure east of the divide representation and possibly be the MT Conservation Commission?
 - A: There are other invasive species councils already established in the eastern part of the state. We did think about going statewide but at that scale the work would become too diffuse. With the source of our water coming from Western MT, it is important to focus efforts there.
 - Rae Lynn- A lot of CDs are monitoring inspection stations in the east and they collaborate with each other. Having two CD seat would accomplish getting that representation (currently proposed).
- Tom Ray- Overall, I support the concept.
- Onno Wieringa- How you set up the members is not nearly as important as the purpose. Water quality in all of MT is deeply important. The complexity of water quality issues is growing and the work of FBC is protecting *and* attempting to improve. With UC³ being 5 years old, it is perfect time to revise not only to maintain the focus we have but sharpen and improve it. The purpose should read protect *and* improve or enhance – **suggested edit.**
- Martin Charlo- This bill proposes cutting representation from CSKT in half (currently one representative on FBC and UC³ with new bill proposing only one seat). A representative from Tribal Council is important because it can effect change, but a Natural Resource Dept. representation would provide a subject matter expert. Would prefer first to have two CSKT seats- one for staff and one for tribal council, if only one seat possible preference would be to have an expert (NRD) – **suggested edit.**
 - Lt. Gov- We can give the tribal council the choice to choose who represents.
- Lt. Gov- Under this model, one of the things we discussed is the use of subcommittees. That is an opportunity to invite other experts who are not members of the commission to represent in the commission's work.
 - Martin- Adding CSKT Tribal Council members as ad hoc would be sufficient (in addition to one guaranteed seat) – **suggested edit.**

- Phil Matson- I agree with Red Tape Initiative but it doesn't make conservative sense to tweak this right now. Flathead Lake brings in \$12-17million in property tax, \$40 million in state and local taxes. The budgets for both commission combined would be around \$196k. The revenue Flathead Lake brings to the state vs. the small commission budget and taking the focus off the Flathead Basin as it is the crown jewel of Western MT, does not make conservative sense to me. I want to make sure the AIS focus does not get diluted in the new mission. If we do not have that membership and participation, concerned partners are going to lose interest, feel left out, and we will have to start all over.
- Lt. Gov- There are excellent staff serving both of these commissions. With the consolidation, it frees up the cost/amount of time for staff to actually do the work, make those connections, and not get bogged down with administrative burdens.
- Senator Cuffe- UC³ was needed in 2017 and today it is a good piece of work, and the commission has well served the state of MT. We needed redundancy at the beginning with the detection of mussels in 2017. We adjusted the representation in 2019 to add representation for specific basins and just like that, it does not hurt to reassess and refocus every once in a while. We have a very real threat on the South Dakota border, and action has to happen over there. Groups are stood up where and when needed (SD needs to do something like UC³). This commission grew and did a good thing, but now it makes sense to consolidate and is a good time to do so. No heartburn about the reorganization plan, but we want to maintain the AIS focus. If AIS focus is not specific enough now, then we can build in a clarification into the bill.
- Heidi McMaster- What are the boundaries for the FBC? How does the rotation of voting members work, can they be reappointed after 4 years? In order to maintain expertise on the commission, is there language about term limits? Also, would like to note, there are studies on the Colorado river of the impacts of mussels on water quality. There are ways they can be combined and studied simultaneously.
 - A: FBC is focused just on the Flathead Basin with \$156k budget, the consolidation would spread that across the UC Basin (with additional \$40k from UC³ budget). We will establish term limits if desired in the bylaws, there is no limit on reappointments for either commission right now.
- Director Kaster- There are real opportunities to leverage state funding available with federal dollars, we are working hard to explore that.
- Kate: We already benefit from BOR and EPA grants right now with both commissions, and there are more opportunities coming.
- Rae Lynn- In support of combining, more impactful for staff to do on the groundwork as opposed to duplicating administrative work with both commissions. Commission members attend meetings, discuss, set priorities and then go home- the staff do the real work. Combining commissions provides more opportunity to pursue grant funding with a larger scope, as well.
- Senator Ellis: Page 5 needs to be written differently if we want them to be guaranteed appointment. Second what Phil mentioned about Flathead Lake being an incredible resource. Possibly mention and highlight the Flathead Basin/Flathead Lake more in the bill language to ensure the focus remains there – **suggested edit**. Also add stronger emphasis of AIS in the definition of aquatic resources, to ensure the focus of AIS remains- **suggested edit**.
 - UC³ currently has 4 legislative seats, and the new bill does not mention legislators. Having legislators at the table as ad hoc members allows those legislators to stay involved, informed, and provide support in terms of state budgets and carrying bills. Add legislative seats as ad hoc members (similar to

UC³ current language) – suggested edit. These comments echoed by Rep. Duram, Sen. Cuffe, Rep. Fern and Paul Bradford.

- Rep. Duram- Echo Sen Ellis. Voice of legislators is important, particularly with funding but also in carrying bills to further the cause we are all interested in. Value in combining these two ships, both ships are going to the same destination. There is no victory with AIS, this is an ongoing issue and always will be. Keeping the legislators involved in whatever commission(s) are operating and moving forward is key to commission mission accomplishment.
- Rich Janssen (FBC Chair/CSKT)- I cannot speak for the members of the FBC but there was concern at our last meeting about this merge. We are primarily water quality and UC³ is primarily AIS. With CSKT, I am head of the Natural Resource Department and inform the Tribal Council. I feel this will be a dilution of CSKT's voice as a major land manager in Western Montana as well as dilution of water quality issues that impact Flathead Lake and water bodies within the Flathead Basin. It also dilutes other voices within the state. Subcommittees are fine but as major land managers, CSKT needs an elected official from tribal council and a subject matter expert represented.
- Stacey Schnebel- UC³ brings together a network of partners and they are spending their small budget to achieve this goal. Is FBC's larger budget put toward performing the on the groundwork and/or acting as the convener for water quality groups in the basin?
 - A: FBC is largely a convener of these groups but because there is a larger budget and a full-time staffer for FBC, we have the ability to do some more boots on the ground work as well as bring those partners together.
- Stacey Schnebel- mission statements of both commissions- Section 5 number 6 states "to support economic development and use of Montana resources to their fullest extent." What is the intention for that?
 - A: This wording comes out of the old FBC statute, the idea being economic development is important but not at the cost of natural resource impacts. Residual language that at the time of creation of both bills, legislators wanted to make sure that piece was there. If there were economic interests, not only as an opportunity for growth and development we could address while still protecting natural resources in that inevitable process. Neither commission has acted on that line item, it is a residual from the prior statutes.
- Stacey Schnebel: Suggest rewording of Section 5 number 6 "to support economic development and use of Montana resources to their fullest extent" to better exemplify intent – suggested edit.
- Bruce Vincent- At the beginning of the AIS program there was a lot of work to do to set up the framework, spread the word, and get the program going. That mountain has been built and now it is time to combine the commissions and get rid of the oversight of administration.
- Arthur Potts- Is it more effective to get more DNRC staff?
 - Director Kaster- There is not a guarantee for the addition of staffing right now and we want to leverage federal funding on that front. It is premature to talk about staffing currently. DNRC has 5 administrative attachments, and we already have the most staff (of all attachments).
- Mark Lambrecht (Flathead Electric Co-op)- In terms of membership, there are significant differences between investor-owned utilities and co-ops. Cooperatives are member owned, although they work together their decisions do not always align. Suggest adding seats for both. The representative seats for "a director, officer, staff, or member of a natural resource, conservation or recreation organization" is broad, those viewpoints do not always align (boaters vs. breach of dams). AIS focus being sub section

5, suggest that it be moved up to a higher priority – **suggested edit**. It is important to keep that as a major priority for electric co-ops. Congratulations to FWP for the success of the AIS program, going through stations improves in excellence every year.

- Quentin Kujala (FWP)- Appreciate discussion and comments, they have helped understand the intent of the bill. Speaking to vocabulary- consistent application of partnerships across the bill. May offer vocabulary edits in the future not to change intent but to clarify.
- Casey Lewis (FBC Vice Chair)- The FBC commission members voiced support for the great work FBC is doing and the concerns were surrounding how no one wants to see that diminish. All the on the ground work and all the direct support that the City of Kalispell has received in partnering with FBC is vital; we wouldn't have been able to do all that work without the FBC. I want to stress that it is important to keep those partnerships going.
 - FBC is working heavily on stormwater and septic leachate. The new commission bill specifically calls out wastewater utilities, however there is nothing specific to stormwater representation. Potential new range would include 5 MS4s (larger municipal stormwater systems that require a DEQ permit)- Kalispell, Missoula, Missoula County, U of M, and Butte. To ensure proper stormwater representation, add one stormwater representative for a permitted MS4 and one representative for a smaller unpermitted municipality – **suggested edit**.
- Rep Fern- Does this require approval from the UC³ voting members?
 - Lt. Gov- This is the governor's decision to make, we would like the support of members in the process. After we receive the comments, there will be a meeting to discuss and incorporate. A new draft will be circulated again in the next 2-3 weeks. Then you will receive a final draft of the bill and notice of what the decision is.
- **Overall Suggested Edits:**
 - Define "Western Montana" more clearly as the same boundaries of the UC³ (the Upper Columbia Basin).
 - Delineate between electric cooperatives and hydroelectric utilities as two separate seats.
 - The purpose should read protect *and* improve or enhance.
 - Would prefer first to have two CSKT seats- one for staff and one for tribal council, if only one seat possible preference would be to have an expert (NRD). Additional option of one non-voting NRD seat and one ad hoc Tribal Council seat.
 - Mention and highlight the Flathead Basin/Flathead Lake more in the bill language to ensure the focus remains there.
 - Add stronger emphasis of AIS in the definition of aquatic resources, to ensure the focus of AIS remains (move priority up from current location at Section 5).
 - Add legislative seats as ad hoc members (similar to UC³ current language).
 - Suggest rewording of Section 5 number 6 "to support economic development and use of Montana resources to their fullest extent" to better exemplify intent.
 - To ensure proper stormwater representation, add one stormwater representative for a permitted MS4 and one representative for a smaller unpermitted municipality.

Committee Updates

- UCLN maintenance (annual)
- **\$3,000/5,000** BSWC Project
 - Travel/supplies for Industry Outreach
 - Travel costs have been rising across the basin, especially while visiting tourists destinations during peak season.
- **\$3,000/4,000** Annual Report, Additional Projects, Contingency, etc.
- **\$4,000/1,000** Staff supplies/travel/office
- **TOTAL FUNDS: \$40,000**
- **Motion:** To approve FY23 amended line-item budget (Martin). Second (Onno). All in favor. *Motion passes.*

AIS Monitoring in the Upper Columbia Basin

- **UC³ Monitoring Duties:**
 - 2022 Annual Monitoring Plan
 - Monitoring Workshop/Survey
 - Develop recommendations for gaps/areas of improvement for AIS monitoring in the UC Basin
- **Upper Columbia Lakes Network**
 - Continuity/expansion identified as priority
 - Whitefish Lake Institute contract
 - BOR funds at \$5k/annually (3 years)
 - Assist with training video production
 - Continue outreach to bring in additional citizen scientists
- Cynthia Ingelfinger moved on from Whitefish Lake Institute and is heading to Whitefish Legacy Partners.
- We will be reaching out to WLI and FWP monitoring team to coordinate and develop the citizen science monitoring video.

E&O Updates

Cassidy Bender,
UC³ Coordinator

UC³ Education & Outreach:

- Updated the group at June meeting on our 2022 media plan augmenting FWP's AIS advertising and outreach efforts. Those purchases included:
 - Evaro Clean Drain Dry Billboard – *before Ravalli inspection station*
 - 4 Tourism Magazines – *Out of state boater targeted messages*
 - Advertisements for 2022 Inspector Appreciation Week – *tips for boaters' message*
- Clean Drain Dry Drink Coasters- Distributed ~\$15,000 coasters to restaurants & breweries so far with the help of commission members and partners. Contact Cassidy if you would like more to distribute in your area.
- AIS outreach events we have participated in since our last meeting include:
 - Inspector Appreciation Week
 - 2022 Flathead Waters Cleanup
 - CFWEP Youth Flyfishing camp
 - Western MT Fair in Missoula
 - Clean Water Act Celebration in Missoula
- 2022-2023 AIS Video Production- contract signed with Conservation Media
 - There was a hold up with the DNRC procurement office in the signing of the contract. This pushed back our timeline, but we have met with the contractor and are now moving forward.

Industry Outreach Project Update

Josh Abrahamson,
UC³/MCWD BSWC
member

- This contract includes both AIS videos for UC³ and water quality videos for FBC, the AIS videos will be developed first.
- Video concepts include:
 - Citizen science monitoring training video
 - Industry 'AIS 101' video
 - Wade angler targeted PSA

Industry Outreach Project Update:

- Term of Service Objectives:
 - Serve as an AIS ambassador to industry partners
 - Provide AIS presentations to large groups
 - Educational tabling at events
 - Assist Missoula County Weed District (MCWD) with field work and data acquisition
- Term Highlights & Projects:
 - Conducting AIS full staff trainings for REI and Glacier Guides.
 - Visited ~60 businesses to discuss AIS and share materials.
 - Conducted a virtual AIS E&O Partner Survey to assess who is doing what, where in the basin on AIS outreach. Currently compiling the report.
 - MCWD field work- collected 71 samples, focused on Holland Lake & Lindberg Lake.
 - Obtained herbicide applicator license and assisted in spraying 75 miles of Clark Fork River for yellow flag iris and perennial pepper weed.
 - Tabling at lots of outreach events this year was improved by the purchase of the tabletop spin the wheel game (Invasive vs. Native species identification). This activity really brought people into the table to talk about AIS.
 - Mapped and documented over 130 Don't Let it Loose and AIS Clean Drain Dry alert signs at fishing/boating access sites across the basin. Replaced 67 old mussel alert signs. All of this information will be shared via Arc Maps.
 - Regularly assisted with youth education events including CFEWP Fly-fishing camp and MCWD youth conservation corps.
- Q: When you return to businesses are they still carrying this information forward?
 - A: Yes. Good examples are Sportsman's Ski Haus and Captain Marine up in Kalispell, they have their Protect Our Waters Partner sign up in the front. Most businesses have those signs up and they are continuing to spread the word. We try to get pictures to promote them as CDD partners as well.
- BSWC program adds HUGE capacity, just at this meeting there are a whole crew of current and former BSWC members.

Legislative Committee -

- 'Ad Hoc' Legislative Committee Priorities
 - Assess and prioritize AIS gaps, challenges, and issues
 - Identify and explore potential solutions and make recommendations to commission and/or Montana legislature for action to strengthen AIS prevention and management activities.
- Ways to prepare for 2023 Legislative Session
 - Research from 2021 session
 - Focus on maintaining AIS Program funding
 - Legislator information- **February 22nd, 2023, Invasive Species Rotunda Event**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare and Share: key messages, AIS talking points & testimony training for 2023 session ● We have a meeting scheduled for November 2nd; this would be a great place to further discuss the consolidation concept. ● Other topics to discuss at next committee meeting: key talking points for legislative session, sharing testimony tips, planning rotunda event, etc. ● Q: Suggestions on how the legislative info session could be improved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A: The combined committee meeting during the first week of session is when PNWER comes in and presents, this would be a great day to get the legislators undivided attention. Especially if we want to put out information on the consolidation concept/bill. ● Action: Reschedule November 2nd Legislative Committee meeting to a time when we can review a new bill draft. ● Action: Invite Liz Lodman/MISC to next Legislative Committee meeting if discussing planning for the invasive species info session. <p>Tasks Moving Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AIS video projects ● AIS E&O Partner Survey Final Report ● 2022 Annual Report (fiscal year) ● Prep for 2023 Legislative Session ● 2023 BSWC Interviews & Hiring <p>Upcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● North American Invasive Species Management Association Annual Conference- Orlando, Florida (November 7th – 11th) ● National Invasive Species Awareness Week 2023- February 20-24th, 2023 ● Invasive Species Legislative Info Session, February 22nd, 2023
<p>Partner Program Roundtable Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heidi McMaster, BOR- BOR putting out a call for funding soon, delayed on timeline likely due to the Pactola Reservoir mussel detection. Currently updating reporting on acres infested vs. treated, quantifying that in comparison to the landscape. ○ Jacob Bradford, BOR- Pactola applied for over \$500,000 for federal funding to address mussel infestation equipment, resources, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q: Would reclamation own the equipment if the grant money came through? A: We would fund the project and technically the equipment would be USFS as the land surrounding Pactola is USFS owned. ○ Theresa Thom, USFWS- All sampling tested negative for mussels. Conducted tabletop rapid response exercise at Wild Horse reservoir in Nevada earlier this month for mussels. Funding for state ANS plans for state partners totaling over \$4million (~\$95,000 per state divided up in the plan). Anticipate same funding for FY23. \$2.25 million for project funds and proposals related to ZQM in FY22, similar level of funding for FY23 in support of the Western Regional Panel QZAPP action plan. We will see how the bipartisan infrastructure bill works out, there was \$20million tied to entire DOI for invasive species work- priorities coming from DOI are through Invasive Species Task Force, focusing a lot on prevention. The 100th Meridian Columbia River Basin meeting will be December 6-7, 2022 in Spokane, Washington. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q: Timeline for QZAPP awards announced? A: Hoping announced soon. FWP put in QZAPP grant to update decontamination units to be on demand wash units. ▪ Q: Timeline for RFP for QZAPP grant? A: Historically announced in May, due in June/July.

**Partner Program
Roundtable Updates**

- **Chris Downs, GNP**- East side lakes remain closed, couldn't get staffing and lingering covid housing regulations limited how many people we could have on board. Continuing to work with the Blackfeet to improve on that because they have access to housing and people in the local area on the east side. Continued motorized and nonmotorized inspections, continued eDNA and veliger sampling at all sites, no new detections. Lab can detect between native and invasive milfoils, which has been interesting and helpful. Maintain status quo in the future with inspections and sampling.
- **Martin Charlo, CSKT**- CSKT is currently lobbying against mining that is happening in BC, directly north of us. They are violating the transboundary treaty with the difference in levels of selenium they allow in BC vs. MT.
- **Katie Finley-Squeque, CSKT**- Completed Mussel Walk events this season, reaching lots of school age children with AIS information. Early detection monitoring with Phil and FWP. We manage the Thompson Falls and Ravalli watercraft inspection stations from March-October with April-September operating 24/7. 3,000 less inspections than last season. 59 drive by's brought back from law enforcement, the increase in law enforcement presence at the Ravalli station brought this number down a bit from last year. Thompson Falls had 11 drive by's. Some came back on their own volition; inspectors keep a tally sheet to document. Thompson Falls received the old Tiber shed with solar power which brought power to their station. Relationship with the rural fire department was a big success. Deb Tirmenstein visited the station with mussel dogs and did some demonstrations with several boat owners. Over half the staff is returning this year.
- **Whisper Means, CSKT**- We displayed the UC³ pop-up displays in the Natural Resource Department lobby and then shared with Flathead Lakers for their events. Have shared coasters with lots of folks, they are definitely reusable and last a long time.
- **Rae Lynn Hays, Lincoln CD**- The CD recently had a meeting with FWP, working through logistics and needs to support AIS station. Hopefully having a few conservation districts coming on board to manage inspection stations in the future, great partnership. Shoutout to all BOR and all the CDs on the east side for protecting and being diligent with the Pactola infestation.
- **Phil Matson, FLBS**- 6th year of partnering with CSKT on sampling. Lots of support from BSWC members, held an eDNA training for early detection and monitoring. Was a big success and would like to do it again next year- 8 organizations attended with a total of 18 individuals. Interacted with 150 individuals while sampling, trained some on plankton tow monitoring. Just like last year, did a fun morning radio spot on AIS.
- **Onno Wieringa, Flathead Lakers**- We focus on water quality on Flathead Lake with no specific AIS program beyond working with FWP and DNRC. We have a nice office on Flathead Lake if anyone needs a central place to meet. This year we worked with FWP to create a Flathead Lake AIS sign and installed signs at 70 different locations (mostly private boat launches and access sites). Worked with Dave Landstrom (FWP State Parks) who is in charge of state parks on the west side of the lake to implement AIS training with state park employees acting as the last line of defense. Lakers are concerned about the merger between two commissions, worried about dilution of the mission and will stand up to do our part to ensure that this is a successful merger.
- **Tom Woolf, MISC**- The last two days was the MISC Invasive Species summit. It was hugely successful with ~100 people in attendance. The purpose was to layout a framework for invasive species priorities moving forward, notes/results will be out soon.
- **Bryce Christaens, MCWD and AIS District** - Update on Flowering Rush Biocontrol project- In the very initial stages, partners hand delivered first insects to the containment facility. Working out field and monitoring protocols and identifying highest potential release areas. Initial site visits to assess populations, looking for monocultures that we can rear and keep

	<p>them together to build the population. Moving forward with pre-release monitoring efforts. Funding through MISC and DNRC as well as Washington and Canadian partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris Mascari, MCAD- First big season as an AIS District. Eight lakes sampled and mapped proactively, if there is an invasion, we have that data and baseline information. Fragrant Waterlily population is at 136 acres in Missoula County, working on outreach and controls. Clearwater Inspection station finished the season at just under 31,000 inspections. First mussel fouled boat intercepted at that station this season. It was coming from Duluth and heading to Portland, mussels were very small, and inspectors did a great job finding them. We are planning an AIS short course- bridging the education gap between managers, staff, landowners, and inspectors. It will be March 5-7th ,2023 in Missoula. ○ Arthur Pots, Avista- Avista took two plankton samples from Noxon and two from Cabinet Gorge over the summer, all negative for mussels. Proposed to do a harvester study in Noxon but had to scrap the project largely due to logistics and costs. We have one boat ramp that gave approval to offload the weeds on, gas costs were restrictive with getting across the reservoir to that one boat ramp (reservoir 30 miles long). Constrained by the amount of money available to do the applications for EWM. Treatment is herbicide application, effective although it does come back each year. ○ Larry Lack, Sanders County Aquatic Plant Task Force- We treated usual approx. 100 acres with herbicide. Thoroughly discussed and researched the mechanic harvesting option. Noxon hosts 7 regional Bass competitions, reaching those people with education would have a huge impact. Cost for 100 acres, ~\$1,000 an acre. There is currently 2,000 acres established that we know of. Avista pays most of the bill plus they also provide capacity. ○ Hilary Robison, Yellowstone Center for Resources- Oversee invasive plant and AIS program. Sue Mills oversees AIS program, we appreciate the opportunity to attend MISC/FWP meetings the last two days. Watercraft Inspection program, stations at Grant Village, Bridge Bay Marina, and Lewis Lake. ~4,000 a year over last 4-5 years. Avg. of 120 boats that are high risk- 2022 brought 252 incoming inspections and 4-5 decontaminations which was up from last year at 241 high risk inspections and 2 decontaminations. This year, 2 mussel fouled boats came into the park with dead mussels. The boats were decontaminated and not allowed to launch due to fear of interfering with the eDNA detection and monitoring program this year. We spoke with the boat owners and informed them why they were refused launch, boat owners understood and were concerned with the risk AIS proposed. ○ Sue Mills, Yellowstone NP- Boating numbers were consistent with past years, even though there were park entrances closed due to flooding. Most boaters come through South and then East entrance. Plankton tows and eDNA in two motorized lakes in the park (Yellowstone and Lewis lakes). eDNA also on non-motorized lakes in the park, waiting for analysis on that. We are currently hiring an AIS Biologist GS9 permanent with benefits, get ahold of Sue if interested. ○ Monica Pokorny, USDA NRCS- NRCS currently has a water quality and water quantity focus with projects in sediment prevention, metering, and exploring water conservation and efficiencies with irrigation projects. ○ Michelle Cox, USFS- Continued agreement with FWP for monitoring and E&O. Worked with FWP for replacing signs. FWP BSWC member, Justina came to table at the Disco PBR Spring Triathlon, great feedback from the organizers and lots of appreciation from Beaverhead Deer lodge National Forest. We received committee grant to update fire hoses and decontamination equipment. Geonomics center, hoping to get specimens through Dept of Defense Grant. Wishlist available on their website.
	<p>FWP AIS Program Updates:</p>

FWP AIS Report

Tom Woolf, FWP AIS
Bureau Chief

- Discussion on combining commissions is timely because we have come a long way. During the last few days got great feedback, on how far we have come and new ideas to improve in the future.
- Inspection numbers can be found on the [AIS Dashboard](#).
 - Total 112,000 inspections
 - 53 mussel fouled boats (down a bit this year, ~60 last year).
 - Lots coming from the Midwest. We are working closely with the Great Lakes Panel trying to find ways to make sure those boats are cleaned before they come to MT (from Michigan you don't see inspection station until you hit the MT border).
 - Contracted Partners - Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes; Blackfeet Nation; Missoula County; Garfield Conservation District; McCone Conservation District; Beaverhead Conservation District; Bighorn Conservation District; Powder River Conservation District
 - Other Inspection Station Partners - City of Whitefish; Swan Lakers; Glacier National Park; Yellowstone National Park
- Call Before You Haul- program is geared to outreach to commercial boat haulers (issue is lots of them are all independent contractors so reaching them with this message is difficult).
- South Dakota Pactola Reservoir Mussel Detection
 - Zebra mussels confirmed in August
 - Rapid City, South Dakota. This was a 200 mile jump west for mussels bringing them ~70 miles from MT border.
 - BOR managed reservoir with boat ramps managed by the USFS and inspection stations run by the SD Game and Fish through Conservation Districts.
 - SD reached out for help from western states because they do not have the resources to do it. In response 2 FWP staff went down and inspected boats coming off the reservoir for a week and found 30 mussel fouled boats off the reservoir.
- Highline Reservoir, Colorado Mussel Detection
 - First time CO has seen adult zebra mussels.
 - Only found 1 initially, found more earlier this week.
 - Good thing is that reservoir does have mandatory boat inspections and it is locked at night. If you don't get inspected, you can't launch.
- Early Detection Survey-
 - ~2,600 samples collected and analyzed, no detections of mussels.
 - Partner sampling with FLBS, UCLN, CRC and Yaak Valley Forest Council
 - New populations of NZM in Bozeman and curly leaf pondweed in Whitefish on Haskill Creek. WLI started a hand pulling effort to assess this new infestation.
- Treatment & Evaluation-
 - Diver treatment of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) in Beaver Lake (WLI).
 - EWM herbicide treatment assessments at Noxon (Sanders County TF).
 - EWM herbicide treatment at Nilan (Nilan Water Users Assn)
 - Fragrant water lily diver removal (USFS, Missoula County)
 - Corbicula clam eradication project (Yellowstone CD).
 - Bullfrog and snapping turtle (44) removal projects (CSKT).
 - State-wide crayfish survey.
- Education & Outreach-
 - Statewide marketing plan + outreach partners get a lot of the outreach on the ground done.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social media- Cray team and Fisheries Friday videos can be found on FWP Facebook and YouTube. ● Gaps Identified on Monday at the FWP AIS Work Session- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance enforcement. ○ AIS in private ponds. ○ Boater / wading angler behavior change. ○ Outreach to used boat buyers. ○ Enhanced social media outreach. ● Planning for 2023- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanding station at Broadus ○ Tongue River SP inspections (SD infestation threat) ○ Possible inspection contract with Lincoln and Mineral CDs ○ Expanded eDNA sampling ○ Promote Citizen Science ○ Expand partner involvement ○ Expand regional engagement <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Swan Lakers operate a volunteer/courtesy inspection station, with permission they inspect boats, and it is more of an education effort. They do not have authority to stop boats. ● Flowering rush treatment is herbicide and bioagents. Bioagents are insects that target a species of plant to control it, very specific to species we are targeting. Work with researchers in the native range to identify insects that feed on that species and test any potential off target feeding to assess impact for native plants. Important part of noxious weed management. ● Action: Get Phil Trout Unlimited stencil contact.
<p>Public Comment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Casey Lewis (FBC): On commission consolidation topic, FBC is working heavily on stormwater and septic leachate. The new commission bill specifically calls out wastewater utilities, however there is nothing specific to stormwater representation. Potential new range would include 5 MS4s (larger municipal stormwater systems that require a DEQ permit)- Kalispell, Missoula, Missoula County, U of M, and Butte. To ensure proper stormwater representation, add one stormwater representative for a permitted MS4 and one representative for a smaller unpermitted municipality – suggested edit.
<p>Next Steps & Wrap Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do we support as a commission, sending a letter to South Dakota Governor addressing our concerns with the Pactola infestation? We would send the letter through the DNRC Director to our Governor and then to South Dakota Governor. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sen. Cuffe has been talking to folks in South Dakota on this issue. Yes, it would be very appropriate. Could perhaps coordination/cooperation/assistance offered by FWP and UC³. ● Motion: Kate and executive committee to draft a letter of concern to South Dakota governor on mussel infestation (Rae Lynn). Second (Larry). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should we form a statement about the commission consolidation discussion? We did not come to a consensus but were all pretty passionate that we do not want our efforts as UC³ diluted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There were a fair amount of people who did support the idea and a fair amount that had some concerns from the FBC meeting. Follow up for them was to schedule a short virtual meeting to update on how this meeting went. • Rep. Duram- Whatever this committee decides, I will be happy to carry this bill forward. We are all concerned about the dilution of our mission. Once the next draft is completed, it might change the recommendations moving forward. • Action: Compile the consolidation bill section of notes (including FBC responses) and share condensed document with the commissions. • Motion: To adjourn the meeting (Onno). Second (Larry). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> • Adjourned at 12:45pm.
--	--

4. Action Items				
Action:		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Draft minutes and send to members	Cassidy Bender	11/15/2022	Complete
2	Reschedule November 2 nd Legislative Committee meeting to a time when we can review a new bill draft.	Kate Wilson	11/21 next steps info session scheduled	Complete
3	Invite Liz Lodman/MISC to next Legislative Committee meeting if discussing planning for the invasive species info session.	Kate Wilson		Complete
4	Get Phil Trout Unlimited stencil contact.	Cassidy Bender		Complete
5	Kate to request that the Governor's Office send a letter of concern to South Dakota governor on mussel infestation.	Kate Wilson		In progress
6	Compile the consolidation bill section of notes (including FBC responses) and share condensed document with the commissions.	Cassidy Bender	11/16/22	Complete
EXISTING ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS				
7	Prepare and Share: key messages, AIS talking points and testimony training for 2023 session- send links to testimony.	UC ³ staff		In progress (draft)
8	Set up presentation on Canada/BC/Alberta's AIS management and prevention efforts for the next meeting (CKISS and other councils).	Kate Wilson		On hold
9	Distribute 2022 UC3 annual report to all legislators before the next session.	UC ³ staff	Jan/Feb 2023	In progress
10	Follow up with monitoring committee on flowering rush biocontrol project assistance and invite Melissa to next committee meeting.	Kate Wilson	2023	
11	Look into railway transport of watercraft as potential high-risk vector	Tom Woolf		