



Invasive Mussel Alert from Montana Trout Unlimited

Submit public comments on FWP's proposed rule changes regarding invasive mussel containment and prevention program

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is seeking public comment on proposed rules for its invasive mussel program. Check out the full comment request [site here](#).

Proposed rule changes include:

- Mandatory inspections of out-of-state motorized or nonmotorized watercraft prior to launching on any Montana waterbody.
- Mandatory inspections of motorized or nonmotorized watercraft traveling across the Continental Divide into the Columbia River Basin within Montana.
- Mandatory inspections of all motorized or nonmotorized watercraft coming off Tiber and Canyon Ferry reservoirs, and decontamination if necessary.
- Drain plugs would be required to be removed; if the watercraft doesn't have drain plugs, reasonable measures must be taken to dry or drain all compartments, including bilges.
- Transporting lake and river water would be prohibited.

Live bait and fish would be required to be transported in clean domestic water where allowed in current fishing regulations. Upon leaving Tiber and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs, bait and fish must be transported without water.

Public Comment

Invasive mussels are a very serious concern in Montana. MTU is following the state agency's response to positive samples of mussels in Tiber and Canyon Ferry reservoirs very closely. It is important that the department hear from TU members on this issue. Below are some talking points from our response to the proposed rule changes. Please use these to craft your own public comment and send it to FWP by March 17 at: fwpexotics@mt.gov; or Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Fisheries Division, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701.

- Strongly support inspection of out-of-state motorized and nonmotorized watercraft prior to launching on any Montana waterbody.
- Strongly support creating a 'firewall' between the Missouri River basin and the Columbia River basin. Continental Divide inspection stations need to be available during the entire season when mussels transport is possible and to be open 24/7.
- Mandatory decontamination of all watercraft that have been on suspected mussel-positive waters. No exceptions. And, consider banning fishing tournaments from mussel-positive waters in the state.

Additionally, we suggest that FWP develop a more robust outreach and education campaign on AIS (aquatic invasive species)/mussel issues.

As always, please call or email David Brooks if you have any questions or thoughts about AIS issues or this public comment opportunity.

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Montana Trout Unlimited represents 4,200 conservation-minded anglers organized to conserve Montana's coldwater fisheries and preserve traditional recreational access to rivers.

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