

Invasive Species Working Group
PNWER Update on Efforts to Prevent an Infestation
of Invasive Quagga and Zebra Mussels
August 30, 2016

Background

- The Pacific Northwest is the only region in the United States that does not have established populations of invasive quagga or zebra mussels. The estimated costs of failing to prevent an invasion exceed \$500 million annually for the four Northwest states and Canadian provinces.
- Invasive mussels from other infested areas of the U.S., particularly from the Southwest and Great Lakes, pose a direct threat to the regional hydropower system, to native fish and wildlife species, to basin water supplies, and recreation.
- Each of the four Northwest states have established watercraft inspection and decontamination stations throughout the region¹ to prevent the introduction and establishment of invasive mussels in the waters of the Columbia Basin.

PNWER Working Group on Invasive Species.

PNWER's standing working group on Invasive Species meets biannually during the PNWER Annual Meeting and at the Winter Meeting. The working group develops action items that are submitted to the PNWER Executive Council for approval. Once approved by representatives from each jurisdiction, the action items set PNWER's agenda, including the following actions from the invasive species working group:

- Encourage the states and provinces to pre-approve and create a stock pile of pre-approved materials that can be used for early detection and rapid response (Potash).
- Each state to write a letter to Congress and the US Army Corps of Engineers to support allowing WRDA watercraft inspection money to also be used for rapid response in case of detection of Quagga Zebras in a water body in any of the 4 northwest states.
- Each state and province should compile a contact list of lead persons in the tribes and First Nations who should be interested in AIS prevention. Seek individual meetings, develop champions in the aboriginal community, and work toward a small meeting with tribes about the impacts of invasive mussels, and enlist their support in raising additional funding for prevention
- States should work with PNWER to design materials for CBP officers along the Northern Border about high risk boats, AIS, and the Clean, Drain, Dry initiative.
- PNWER will write letter to US Secretary Sally Jewell urging containment at the source and federal responsibility in infected waterbodies and demand process for boats leaving federal waterbodies to be certified and inspected.
- PNWER will work with legislative leads and governor's offices to develop an MOU between the 4 states creating an Advisory Council within PNWER for a Regional Prevention Strategy.

PNWER Invasive Species Council

- The Invasive Species Council is a recent outgrowth of the PNWER working group formed to increase awareness regarding invasive species in the ten states, provinces, and territories that comprise PNWER. The Council addresses the regional economic and environmental impact of invasive species and promotes regional collaboration and sharing of best practices.
- The non-federal share of the cost of establishing, operating and maintaining WIDs in the basin is 50 percent, to be provided by the state or local governmental entity where the inspection station is located.

¹ The four Northwest states collectively spend a total of about \$3.35 million on their prevention programs (based on 2014-2016 data).

- It authorizes the Corps to carry out monitoring and contingency planning related to aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Water Resources and Reform Development Act of 2014

- In 2014, the U.S. Congress passed the Water Resources and Reform Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014). Section 1039(d) authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to help establish watercraft inspection and decontamination stations (WIDs) in the Columbia River Basin in the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.
- The non-federal share of the cost of establishing, operating and maintaining WIDs in the basin is 50 percent, to be provided by the state or local governmental entity where the inspection station is located.
- It authorizes the Corps to carry out monitoring and contingency planning related to aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Appropriations to Implement WRRDA 2014

- On December 18, 2015, the Northwest Congressional delegation secured \$4 million in the Corps' FY 2016 appropriation, and \$5 million proposed in both the House and Senate versions of the FY 2017 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bills. The additional \$1 million proposed for FY 2017 is for monitoring and contingency planning.

Status of FY 2016 Appropriations and the Corps' Letter Report

- Using a portion of its FY 2016 federal funding, the Corps is undertaking an evaluation in the form of a "Letter Report," including appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation, to assist in establishing WIDs in the Columbia River Basin. Presently the Corps has not completed the report or the necessary NEPA documentation. The \$4 million appropriation can't be distributed to the four states until the report is finalized.
- The report still needs to undergo Corps' regional and technical reviews, as well as final review and approval at Corps headquarters in D.C. before funds can be dispersed to the states.

WRDA 2016 Reauthorization (H.R. 5303/S. 2848)

- Technical corrections to WRRDA 2014 are needed in the pending 2016 reauthorization bills. This will allow states to locate inspection stations where they will be the most effective to prevent the spread of invasive mussels in the waters of the Columbia River Basin.
- It is critical the Senate language is adopted to allow the Corps' funding to support WIDs *outside* of the Columbia River Basin drainage.

Western Canadian Invasive Species Efforts

- **PNWER Sponsored Mussel Prevention Leadership Forum.** On December 8, 2015, PNWER co-sponsored the forum in Vancouver, B.C. to produce the Invasive Mussel Prevention Framework for Western Canada. The meeting included representatives of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the States of Washington and Oregon. The multi-year framework is designed to reflect shared goals and priorities and to facilitate a collaborative and coordinated approach to invasive mussel prevention across western Canada.
- **Western Canada Invasive Species Agreement signed June 1016.** The provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and the Yukon Territory signed a coordinated regional defense against invasive species with an initial focus on aquatic invasive species. The agreement allows for the region to coordinate planning and share resources. For example, the region will coordinate locations of watercraft inspection stations near shared highways.