

Invasive Species

Quagga and zebra mussels

The Pacific Northwest remains the only region in the U.S. and Canada without quagga and zebra mussels. If these mussels were to establish themselves in the region, the cost is estimated at half a billion dollars annually to mitigate damage to region's infrastructure. The PNWER Report is available at www.pnwer.org/invasive-species

Preventing the \$500 million annual cost of a mussel infestation to the PNW

PNWER has helped the Columbia River basin jurisdictions share information and coordinate a perimeter defense strategy.

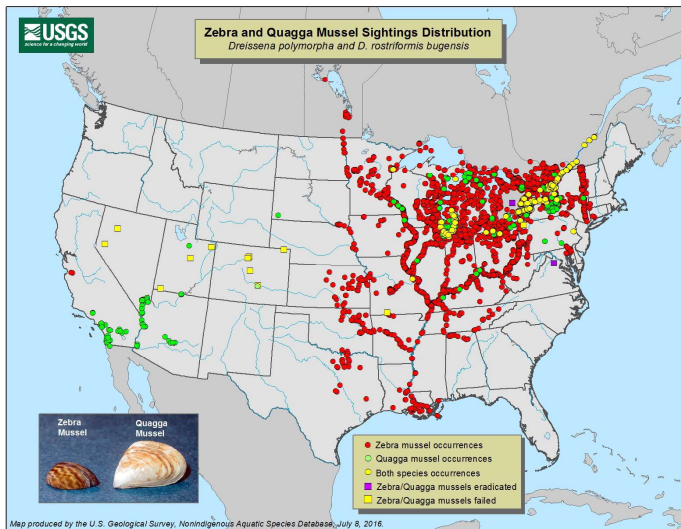
US Congress funded, through the US Army Corps of Engineers, approximately \$4 Million to protect the Columbia River Basin this year. PNWER and regional partners led this effort to secure funding.

PNWER also engaged key U.S. Department of Interior officials and through its Invasive Mussels Working Group requesting mandatory inspections for all watercraft leaving Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the Lower Colorado River basin, the source of most of the contaminated watercraft coming into the region.

PNWER helped secure \$9 million in federal funding

Following years of efforts by PNWER and partners, federal funding from the 2014 WRRDA bill was released to the four Northwest States in April 2017, allowing States to use matching federal funds to strengthen their watercraft inspection programs. In December 2016, Congress expanded funding to include early detection, rapid response, and monitoring through the Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act (WIIN). In April 2017, Congress appropriated an additional \$5 million for the four States. PNWER was instrumental in incorporating new language in WIIN that updates WRRDA 2014 language and allows for federal cost-share funds to be used for watercraft inspection stations outside of the Columbia River Basin and early detection and rapid response.

PNWER met with the Northwest Congressional delegation in D.C. to continue awareness of this issue and advocate for additional FY18 appropriations.



Quagga and zebra mussels have spread rapidly from the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watershed throughout the country and into Canada since the mid-1980s. Larvae were found in Montana in October 2016. Photo by the U.S. Geological Survey.

- TIMELINE -

- **October 2016**
Invasive Mussel larvae were discovered in Montana, prompting alarm throughout the region. Alberta contributed canine team to response
- **November 2016 PNWER Winter Meeting**
PNWER convened an emergency information sharing session with legislators and state invasive species coordinators
- **November 30, 2016**
Governor Steve Bullock declared a natural resources state of emergency and released \$750,000 in emergency state funds to combat the spread of invasive mussels. The Montana Mussel Incident Response Team was formed.
- **Early 2017**
PNWER gave presentations to Washington, Oregon, and Idaho legislative committees about the urgency of the situation. The Montana Legislature voted to increase Montana's aquatic invasive species prevention funding from \$2.2 to \$13 million for the 2017-2019 biennium, led by PNWER Vice President Rep. Mike Cuffe.

Through strong response by the State of Montana and close monitoring, the threat was contained. For the rest of 2017, no new mussels were found in Montana waters, nor in the rest of PNWER.

Invasive Species Prevention in Canada

PNWER has also pushed the Canadian federal government to develop a program within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to provide funding to western provinces for their mussel prevention efforts, and has held several conferences promoting a Western Canadian framework for invasive mussels.

PNWER met with federal ministers and officials to call for more Canadian federal funding towards invasive species prevention initiatives in Western Canada.