



Aquatic Invasive Mussels

Early detection of invasive mussels is paramount to preventing an infestation. Once mussels are established, it is impossible to get rid of them. Invasive mussels could forever change our watershed and the communities that depend on it.

Prevention is critical and far less costly than the damage mussels would cause. The Flathead Lakers work with partners, provide education, and advocate for strong state and local prevention programs and funding to keep Flathead Lake and our watershed mussel-free.

Why should we care?

Invasive mussels in the Flathead would have huge local recreation and economic impacts.

- Reductions in local tourism, recreation, and lakeside property values.
- Beaches covered with sharp shells would make walking and playing difficult for people and animals. Our fresh air would turn foul smelling with mussels decomposing along the shoreline.
- Increased costs for cleaning and maintaining water system pipes used in domestic, municipal, agricultural, and hydroelectric facilities.
- Increases in our monthly electricity and water bills due to substantially more annual maintenance costs for utility companies.



U.S Fish & Wildlife estimated that if zebra or quagga mussels invade the Columbia River, they could cost hydroelectric facilities alone up to \$250-300 million annually (fws.gov/invasives).

The Flathead Watershed is the headwaters of the Columbia River.

What is at stake?

The Flathead Watershed Ecosystem

Zebra and quagga mussels are voracious filter feeders, removing substantial amounts of phytoplankton from the base of the food web.

As a result, we could see dramatic changes in the Flathead Watershed ecosystem, possibly irreversible, including crashing fish populations, losing native flora and fauna, declining water quality, and increasing frequency of toxic algal blooms.

The Flathead Economy

A recent economic study estimated that invasive mussels could cost Montana \$234 million in annual mitigation costs and lost revenue. The study confirms the critical importance of preventing the spread of invasive mussels and shows that what we invest today is well worth the cost.

What can we do?

The zebra and quagga mussels are some of the most damaging aquatic organisms to invade the US. You can help prevent their introduction by spreading the message, not the mussel.



Talk to your legislators.

Support funding for more protection of the Flathead Watershed and all Montana waters, including additional boat inspections stations and requirements.



Participate in the Flathead Lake Mussel Walk.

Inspect your favorite shoreline for invasive mussels every spring, and share your results with us. Early detection is critical in preventing an invasion.



Clean, drain, and dry your boat and equipment.

Remind your friends and guests to clean, drain, and dry their boats every time they move it, AND to happily stop at all watercraft inspection stations.

LEARN MORE

Montana Mussel Response
cleandraindry.mt.gov

Flathead Lake Biological Station
flbs.umt.edu

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
fwp.mt.gov

CSKT Natural Resources Department
csktnomussels.org

Flathead Lakers
flatheadlakers.org

Join our community

The Flathead Lakers keeps our members up to date on current issues and legislation regarding invasive species, and clean water generally.

We notify our members and community when we need their voice or action on an important issue.



**FLATHEAD
LAKERS**
DEFENDERS OF THE WATERSHED

The Flathead Lakers provides leadership and a strong voice for protecting and improving water quality through our programs and advocacy since 1958.

PO BOX 70 | POLSON, MT 59860
406.883.1346 | FLATHEADLAKERS.ORG