



2018

Watercraft Inspection Station Annual Report, 2018

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Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

2018 ANNUAL WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATION REPORT

2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishments during the 2018 watercraft inspection season include:

- Over 109,000 watercraft inspections conducted by FWP and partners in Montana.
- 16 mussel fouled vessels intercepted and over 170 vessels intercepted transporting aquatic weeds.
- Contracted inspection stations with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Blackfeet Nation, Missoula County and Garfield Conservation District.
- Implemented a new data collection app to electronically collect and share inspection information between stations and partners.
- Designed and distributed Watercraft Inspection Passports to help expedite inspections for low risk watercraft.
- Coordinated with partners around the state to provide consistent protocols, forms, data collection and information sharing including Glacier National Park, Bighorn National Recreation Area and Whitefish Lake Institute.
- Improved station operations through improved training, oversight, on-sight storage and new signage.

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) collectively implement the Montana Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management Plan. The goal of the Plan is to minimize the harmful impacts of AIS by limiting or preventing the spread of AIS into, within, and out of Montana. This goal is achieved through coordination and collaboration between our partner agencies and stakeholder groups; prevention of new AIS introductions in the state; early detection and monitoring of invasive aquatic plants, animals and pathogens; control and eradication of new and established AIS populations; and outreach and education efforts. This report focuses on the prevention of new AIS introductions in the state and containment of AIS at Tiber and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs. Prevention is primarily accomplished through watercraft inspection stations.

Montana FWP has been operating watercraft inspection stations since 2004. Watercraft inspections have always been mandatory for anglers and have been required for all other boaters since 2011. As watercraft and water-based equipment are the most common vector for the transport and subsequent introduction of AIS, these check stations are a key part of Montana's overall prevention strategy. Glacier National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area operate watercraft inspection stations within Park boundaries, and the City of Whitefish and the Blackfeet Nation have been inspecting boats for several

years. The Flathead and Swan Lakers also conduct volunteer boat inspections on their respective lakes on selected days, and Missoula County operated Clearwater Junction and the Swan Roving crew.

Inspection stations inspect boats and equipment for any aquatic organisms, standing water, illegal bait and fish, and educate the public about the importance of following Clean, Drain and Dry protocols. Inspection stations also gathers information on water user origin and movement. This information provides inspectors insight into the relative risk of that vessel for carrying AIS and also provides vital information for future AIS program planning.

NEW IN 2018

In 2018, the AIS program changed several operational aspects to improve overall functionality and QA\QC.

- 1.) Increased the number of contracted partnerships across the state that helped run watercraft inspection stations:
 - a. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes operated the Ravalli inspection station and a station just outside of the town of Elmo on Hwy 28.
 - b. The Blackfeet Nation operated the inspection station in Browning and shared data from an additional three stations: Babb, Birch Creek and Seville.
 - c. The Garfield County Conservation District operated the inspection station at Flowing Wells.

These partnerships strengthen the AIS program through coordination and collaboration with partners along with increased quality control. One challenge that the AIS program continues to encounter is QA/QC at inspection stations and contracting with partners helps to provide oversight at stations. (See figure 1 for FWP supervisor areas of responsibility and Figure 2 for partnership locations.)

We continued contracted inspection operations with Missoula County Weed District for managing the Clearwater Junction Station and the Swan Roving crew. FWP also collaborated with Bighorn National Recreation Area to use our forms and data application and with Glacier National Park. FWP coordinated inspections with Glacier to help accommodate their 30 day quarantine requirement for motorized vessels on Lake McDonald. These partnerships are incredibly valuable to help protect the waters of Montana from AIS. The FWP AIS would like to thank all of our partners around the state for their help with this effort.

- 2.) Tablets with the Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination (WID) Data Application for watercraft inspectors.
 - a. Each station used the data tablet and app to record inspections
 - a.) Little to no lag time on data entry
 - b.) Inspectors could query data on boats from prior inspections
 - c.) Data application is used by most western states which allows the watercraft inspection program to coordinate with vessels from other states
- 3.) Worked closely with enforcement to improve boater compliance and education concerning new administrative rules and laws

- 4.) New signage and program logo
 - a. Deployed more AIS road signs and lighted reader boards.
 - b. Protect Our Waters instead of Mussel Alert

- 5.) Certified Boater program changed name from Local Boater to create less confusion on what “local” meant

- 6.) New Outreach and Education specialist hired.

- 7.) New website -- www.cleandraindrymt.com

- 8.) Moved some inspection / decontamination stations to new locations
 - a. Galata decontamination station closed at Tiber
 - b. Willow Creek decontamination station at Tiber went to a Certified Boater only location
 - c. Moved Silos decontamination Station at Canyon Ferry closer to ramp
 - d. Culbertson watercraft inspection station moved to the town of Nashua

- 9.) Sheds were deployed at most locations to allow for on-site wash unit and equipment storage. Sheds also offer an office space, heat and power to provide a better work environment for inspectors.

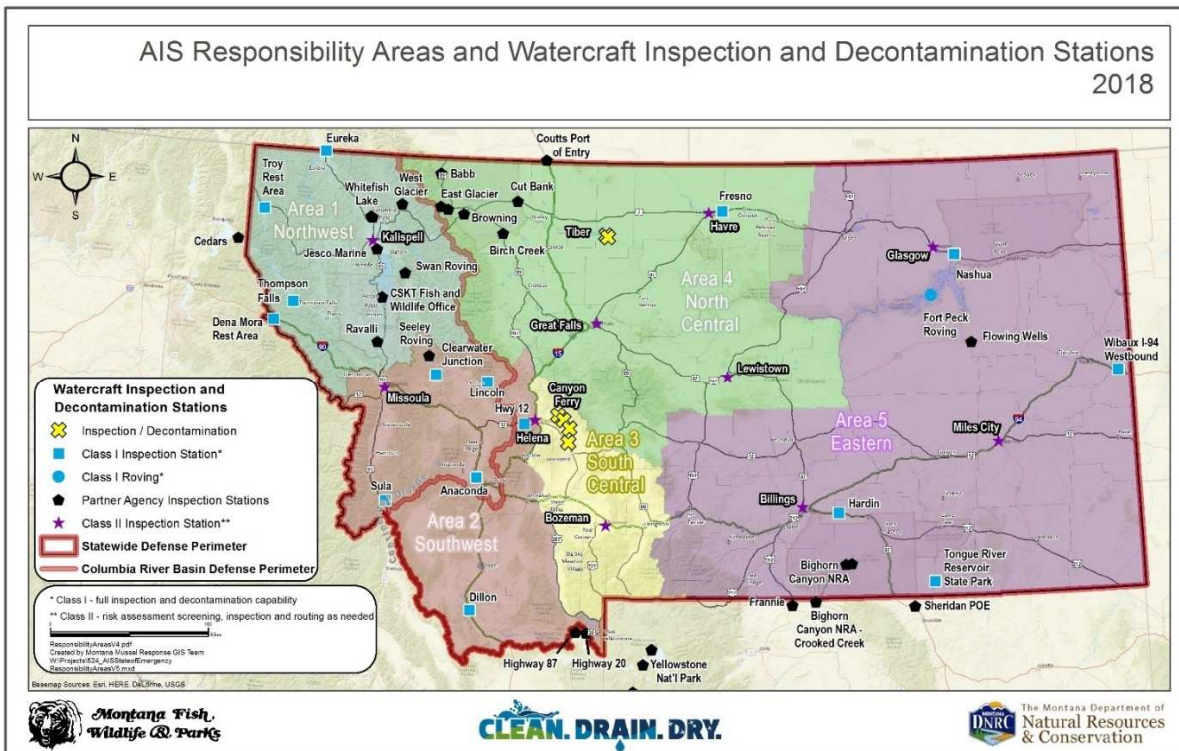


Figure 1. Geographic areas of responsibility for each of the five FWP watercraft inspection and decontamination station supervisors.

WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATION LOCATIONS

Montana’s watercraft inspection station sites are selected based on angler pressure, boater movement, estimated risk of AIS introduction, safety, logistics, and input from other agencies and stakeholder groups. Much analysis has gone into site locations, length of season, and other logistics. Assessment tables have been developed to give each station a score based on empirical and qualitative data. Those scores help guide discussions on how FWP and its partners can best protect Montana from AIS.

In 2018, FWP selected the locations listed in Figure 2 and Table 1 to operate stations. FWP has focused much of its effort on border stations to prevent AIS from entering the state and continued inspections at internal locations, popular waterbodies, and extra protection for the Columbia River watershed. The goal of this balanced approach is to:

1. Intercept AIS at Montana’s borders.
2. Prevent the internal spread of AIS already present in the state.
3. Protect the Columbia River watershed.
4. Reach those users who may not encounter a border or highway station during their travels.
5. Provide a presence at some of Montana’s popular waterbodies for outreach and education as well as providing additional prevention.

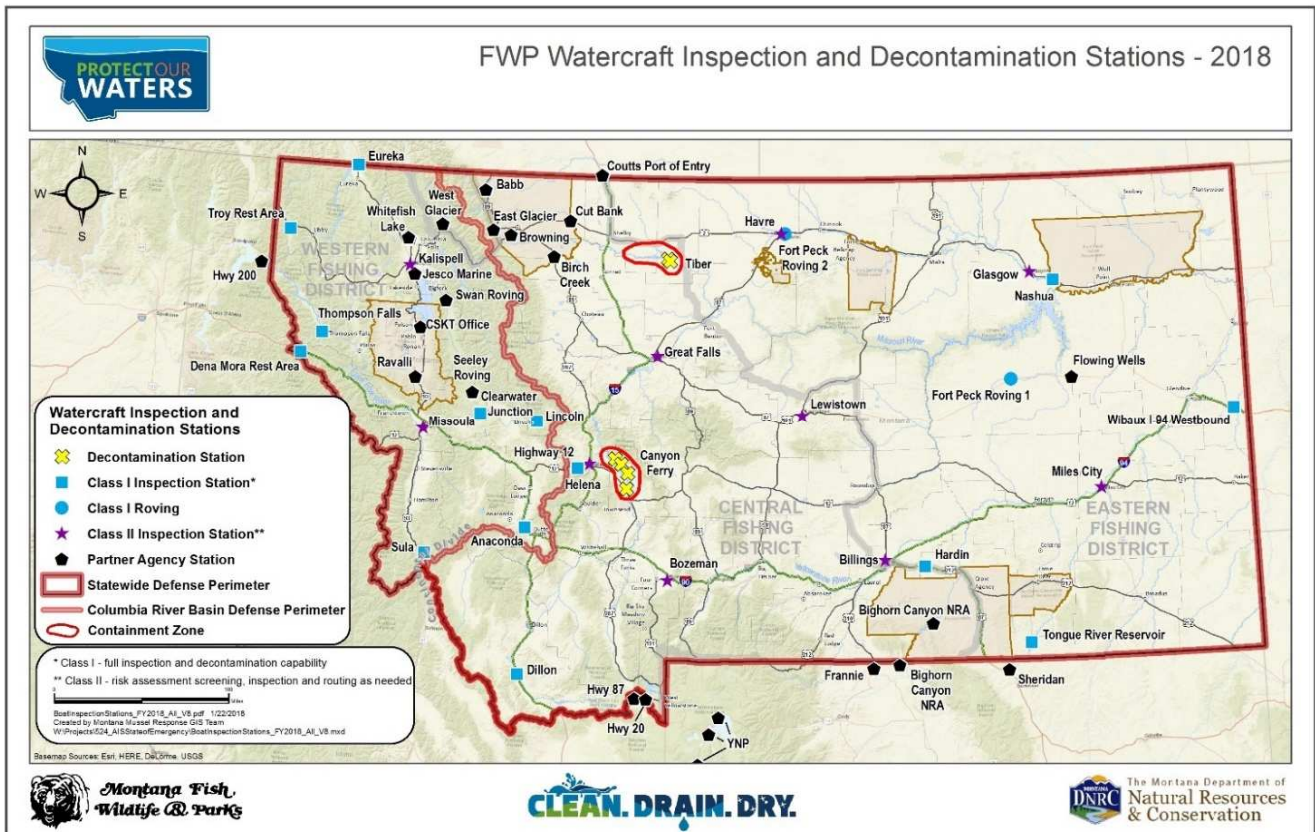


Figure 2. 2018 FWP Seasonally-permanent and roving watercraft inspection stations.

WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATION TOTALS

FWP and partners performed 109,789 watercraft inspections were completed this season (Figure 3). Of that total, FWP or contracted partner stations inspected 94,252 inspections. Other partners conducted the balance of those inspections including 10,690 from Glacier National Park and 2,524 from Whitefish Lake (Figure 4). Stations operated from March through October in 2018 with most stations operating from mid-May and through early September (Table 1). The 2018 season had the highest number of inspections since the inception of the watercraft inspection station program. The high numbers this year due to an expanded season, expanded hours, additional stations, increased compliance and including Glacier National Parks data in the reporting. The July 4th holiday was again the busiest period for boater movement (Figure 5).

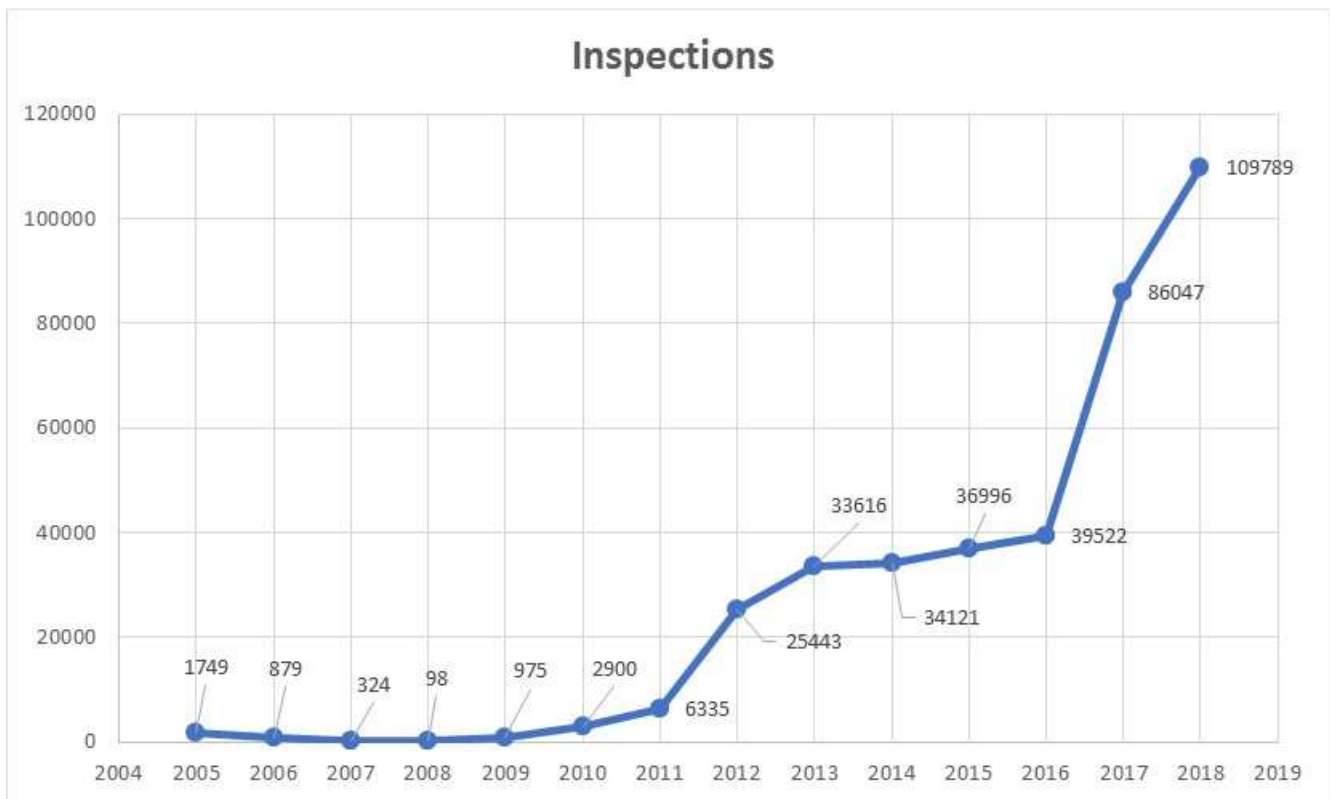


Figure 3. Number of Watercraft Inspections by Year. Total in 2018 includes inspections at FWP stations, contracted stations and other partners conducting inspections in the state.

Table 1. Summary of FWP 2018 Watercraft Inspection Stations.

| Station Name | Hwy | Direction of Travel | Open days/week | Average hours or operation | Start date | End date | Total Inspections |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Border Stations | | | | | | | |
| Babb (Blackfeet Nation) | Hwy 89 | South | 7 | 10 | 7-June | 19-Aug | 244 |
| Birch Creek (Blackfeet Nation) | Hwy 89 | North | 5 | 9 | 5-May | 30-Aug | 505 |
| Nashua | US 2 | West | 7 | 10 | 18-May | 14-Oct | 1,902 |
| Dena Mora | I-90 | East | 7 | 11 | 11-May | 5-Sept | 5,097 |
| Dillon | I-15 | North | 7 | 12 | 31-Mar | 14-Oct | 2,286 |
| Eureka | US 93 | South | 7 | 13 | 14-May | 4-Sept | 1,826 |
| Hardin | I-90 | West | 7 | 10 | 19-Apr | 14-Oct | 4,843 |
| Seville (Blackfeet Nation) | Hwy 2 | West | 7 | 10 | 8-May | 26-Sept | 747 |
| Troy | US 2/ MT 56 | East/North | 7 | 14 | 8-May | 5-Sept | 5,779 |
| Wibaux | I-94 | West | 7 | 12 | 15-Apr | 14-Oct | 1,310 |
| Continental Divide Stations | | | | | | | |
| Anaconda | I-90 | West | 7 | 14 | 6-Apr | 14-Oct | 7,929 |
| Browning (Blackfeet Nation) | HWY 2 | East/West | 7 | 12 | 26-Mar | 31-Oct | 5,017 |
| Hwy 12 Helena | HWY 12 | West | 7 | 13 | 5-May | 14-Oct | 4,498 |
| Lincoln | HWY 200 | East | 7 | 12 | 27-Apr | 14-Oct | 3,433 |
| Sula | HWY 93 | North | 7 | 14 | 11-May | 3-Sept | 1,460 |
| Interior Stations | | | | | | | |
| Clearwater Junction (MSLA) | MT 200 | West | 7 | 12 | 14-Apr | 3-Sept | 13,718 |
| Elmo (CSKT) | Hwy 28 | East | 7 | 12 | 2-Jun | 15-Oct | 1,557 |
| Flowing Wells (GCCD) | MT 200 | East/West | 3 | 12 | 19-May | 20-Oct | 1,396 |
| Fresno Reservoir | Fresno | N/A | 4 | 9 | 11-May | 14-Oct | 511 |
| Jesco Marine near Kalispell | HWY 93 | South | 4 | 12 | 11-May | 3-Sept | 119 |

| Station Name | Hwy | Direction of Travel | Open days/week | Average hours or operation | Start date | End date | Total Inspections |
|--|-------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Ravalli (CSKT) | US 93 | North | 7 | 16 | 15-Mar | 14-Oct | 13,763 |
| Thompson Falls | MT 200 | East | 7 | 15 | 8-May | 5-Sept | 3,678 |
| Whitefish Lake City Beach (WLI) | Boat Ramp | N/A | 7 | 16 | 1-May | 30-Sept | 1,081 |
| Whitefish Lake Decontamination Station (WLI) | HYW 93 | North | 7 | 9.5 | 1-May | 30-Sept | 328 |
| Parks | | | | | | | |
| Bighorn NRA Fort Smith (NPS) | Fort Smith | North | 4 | N/A | N/A | N/A | 825 |
| Tongue River Reservoir State Park | State Park | N/A | 4 | 9 | 20-Apr | 9-Sept | 2,320 |
| Whitefish Lake State Park (WLI) | Boat Ramp | N/A | 7 | 15 | 1-May | 30-Sept | 1,092 |
| Glacier National Park (NPS) | 4 Locations | N/A | 7 | Varied | 12-May | 29-Sept | 10,690 |
| Roving | | | | | | | |
| Fort Peck Roving | N/A | N/A | 4 | 9 | 24-May | 17-Aug | 1,593 |
| Swan Roving | N/A | N/A | 4 | 10 | 24-May | 16-Sep | 267 |
| Regional and Area Offices | | | | | | | |
| FWP Region 1 Office | Kalispell | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 412 |
| FWP Region 2 Office | Missoula | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 18 |
| FWP Region 3 Office | Bozeman | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 55 |
| FWP Region 4 Office | Great Falls | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 2 |
| FWP Region 5 Office | Billings | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 24 |
| FWP Region 6 Office | Glasgow | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 14 |
| FWP Region 7 Office | Miles City | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 17 |
| Lewistown Area Resource Office | Lewistown | N/A | 5 | 4 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 4 |
| Havre Area Resource Office | Havre | N/A | 5 | 4 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 0 |

| Station Name | Hwy | Direction of Travel | Open days/week | Average hours or operation | Start date | End date | Total Inspections |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Helena Area Resource Office | Helena | N/A | 5 | 9 | 15-Apr | 31-Dec | 14 |
| Canyon Ferry Reservoir | | | | | | | |
| Goose Bay Marina | Canyon Ferry | N/A | 7 | 12 | 3-May | 14-Oct | 446 |
| Hellgate Recreational Area | Canyon Ferry | N/A | 7 | 12 | 4-May | 14-Oct | 986 |
| North BOR Site | Canyon Ferry | N/A | 7 | 12 | 13-May | 14-Oct | 2,625 |
| Silos Area | Canyon Ferry | N/A | 7 | 12 | 2-May | 14-Oct | 4,078 |
| Tiber Reservoir | | | | | | | |
| Tiber Boat Ramp -- Marina | Tiber | N/A | 7 | 13 | 10-May | 14-Oct | 412 |
| Tiber Boat Ramp -- N. Bootlegger | Tiber | N/A | 7 | 14 | 26-Jun | 12-Aug | 151 |
| Tiber Boat Ramp -- VFW | Tiber | N/A | 7 | 12 | 10-May | 14-Oct | 691 |
| TOTALS | | | | | | | 109,789 |

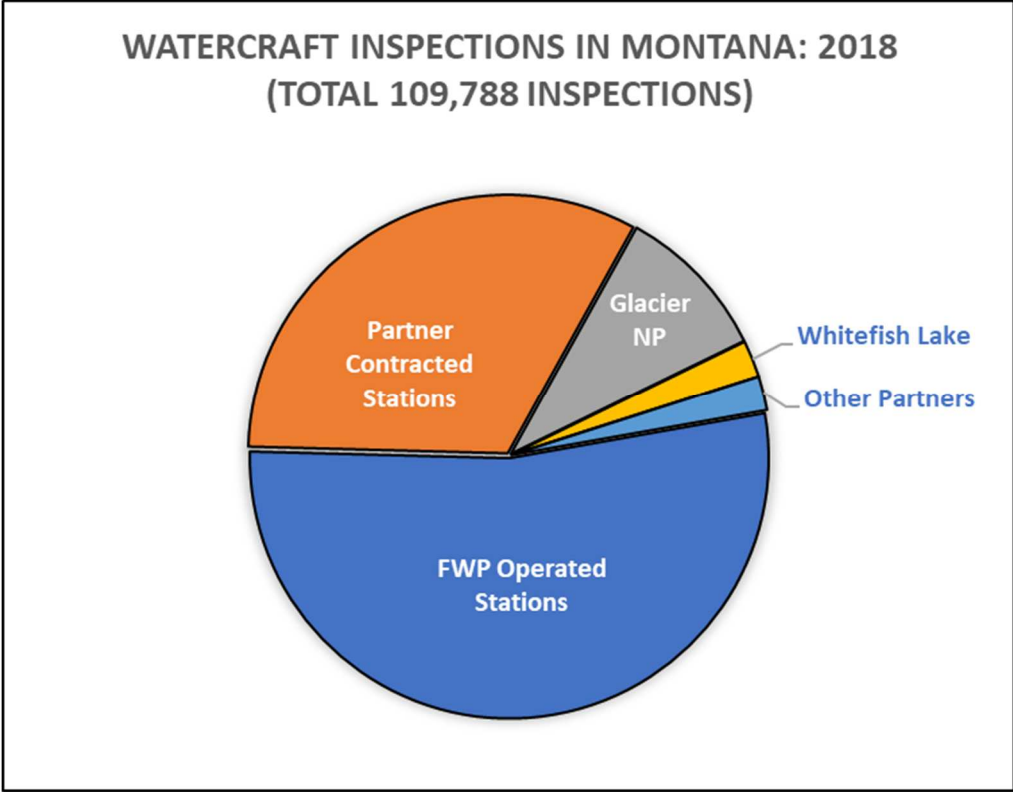


Figure 4: Partner involvement with watercraft inspection in 2018.

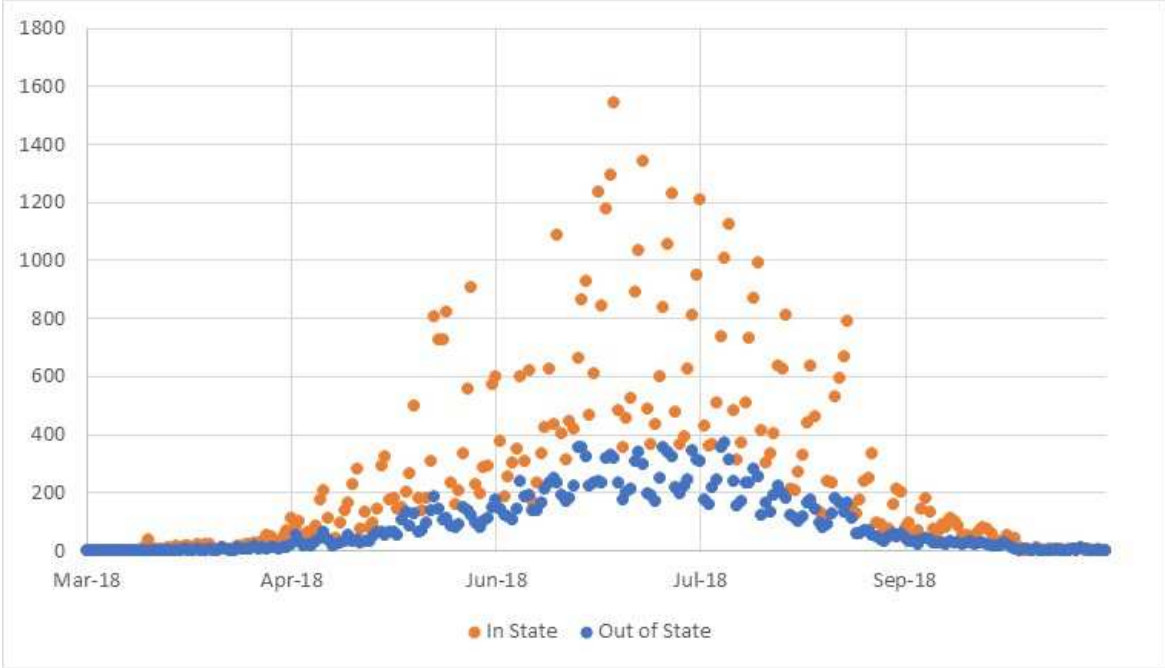


Figure 5. Number of Watercraft Inspections by Day for 2018.

ORIGIN OF WATER USERS, RELATIVE RISK, AND BOATER MOVEMENT

The origin of watercraft and subsequent movement is valuable information that helps guide the placement of FWP watercraft inspection stations and monitoring priorities and helps inspectors assess relative risk. Those boats traveling from eastern states tend to come from areas where zebra mussels, quagga mussels, and Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) are prevalent, such as the Great Lakes region. Boats coming from southwestern states could be carrying quagga mussels from the lower Colorado River System. Boats that originate in-state also are at risk of transporting AIS and must be cleaned, drained and dry. Of the 109,789 watercraft that passed through inspection stations during the 2018 season, 74% were from Montana.

Figure 6 shows the origin of watercraft from 2018 and illustrates the great distances that people travel to recreate in Montana. It is important to the overall prevention strategy to contact both out-of-state and in-state boaters to reach as much of the public as possible.

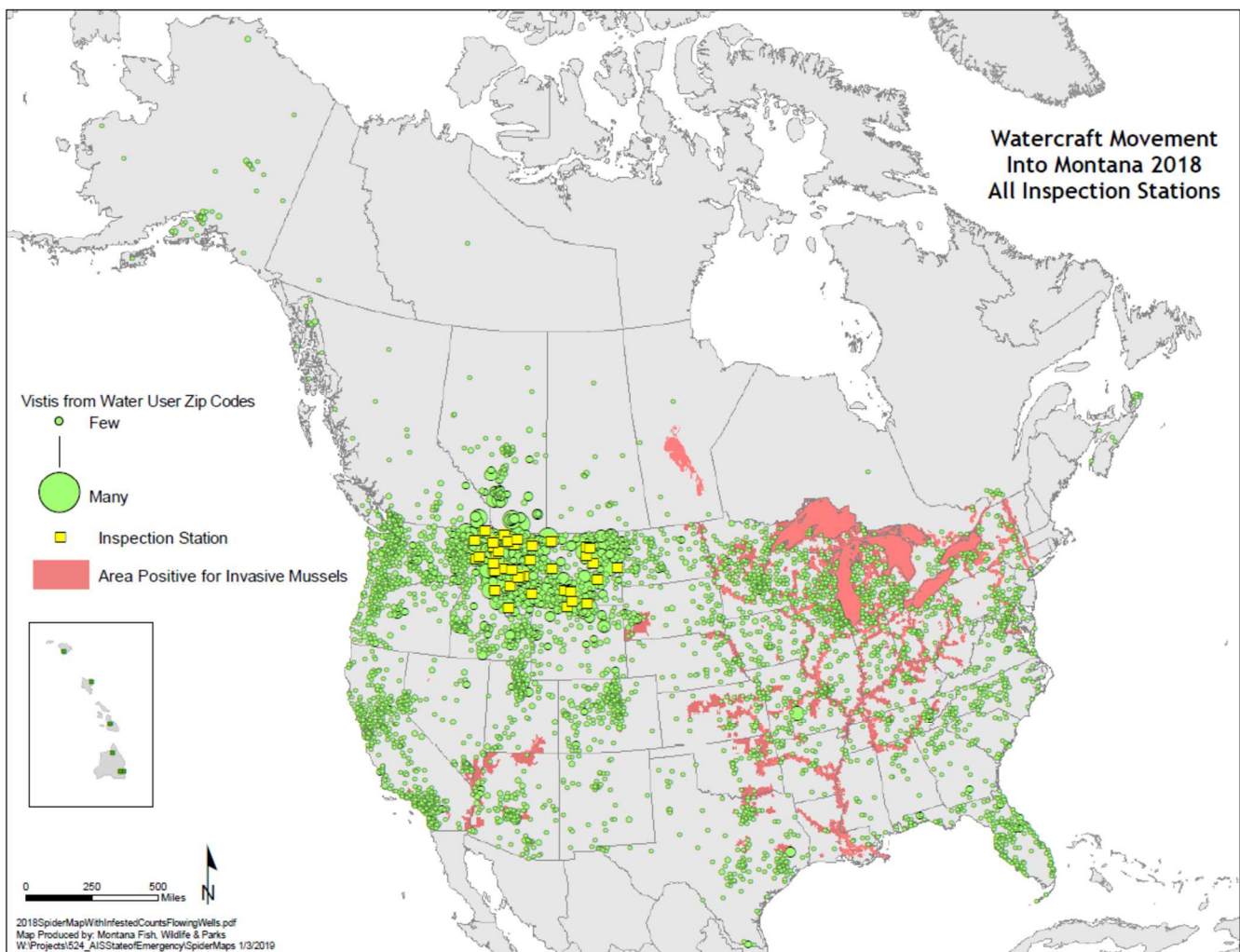


Figure 6. Origin of Montana inspected watercraft in 2018 by postal code.

HIGH RISK BOATS

High-risk boats are categorized as vessels that: originated outside of the northwest (WY, ID, OR, WA, or MT); launched in a waterbody in a zebra or quagga mussel-positive state in the previous 30 days; are from a mussel-positive state; originated from Canyon Ferry or Tiber Reservoirs; or has standing water, plants, animals, dirty or ballast tanks. These boats are more likely to be carrying adult or veliger (larval) mussels, aquatic weeds or other AIS, therefore extra time and care is taken during inspection of these boats. In 2018, there were a total of 29,693 high-risk boats that passed through FWP and partner inspection stations, which was 30% of all inspections. The stations with the highest number of high-risk watercraft were Canyon Ferry, followed by Anaconda, Ravalli, Browning, and Dena Mora (Figure 7). It is also useful to look at the total of high-risk boats as a percentage of total inspections at a given station (Figure 8). The stations with the highest percent of total inspections that are high-risk was Canyon Ferry followed by Anaconda and Ravalli.

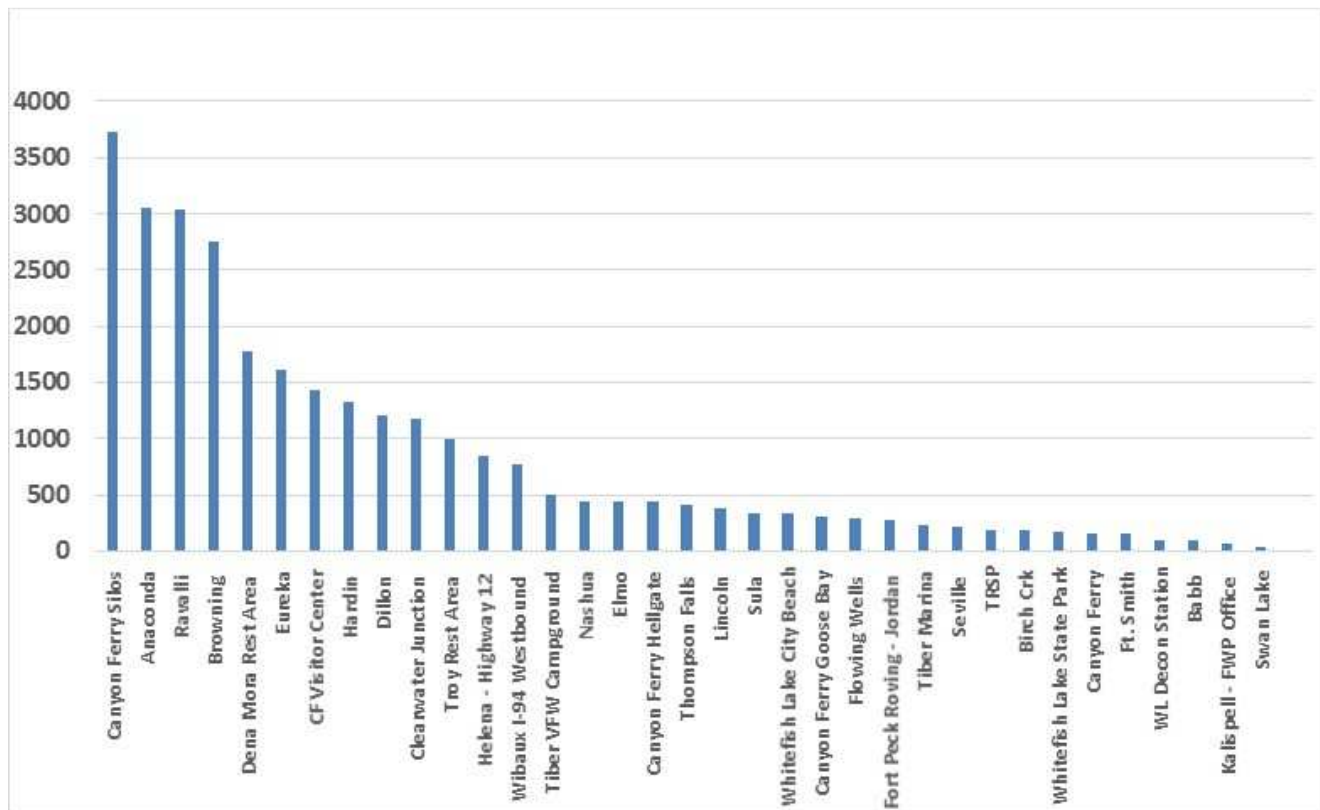


Figure 7. Number of high-risk boats by station, 2018.

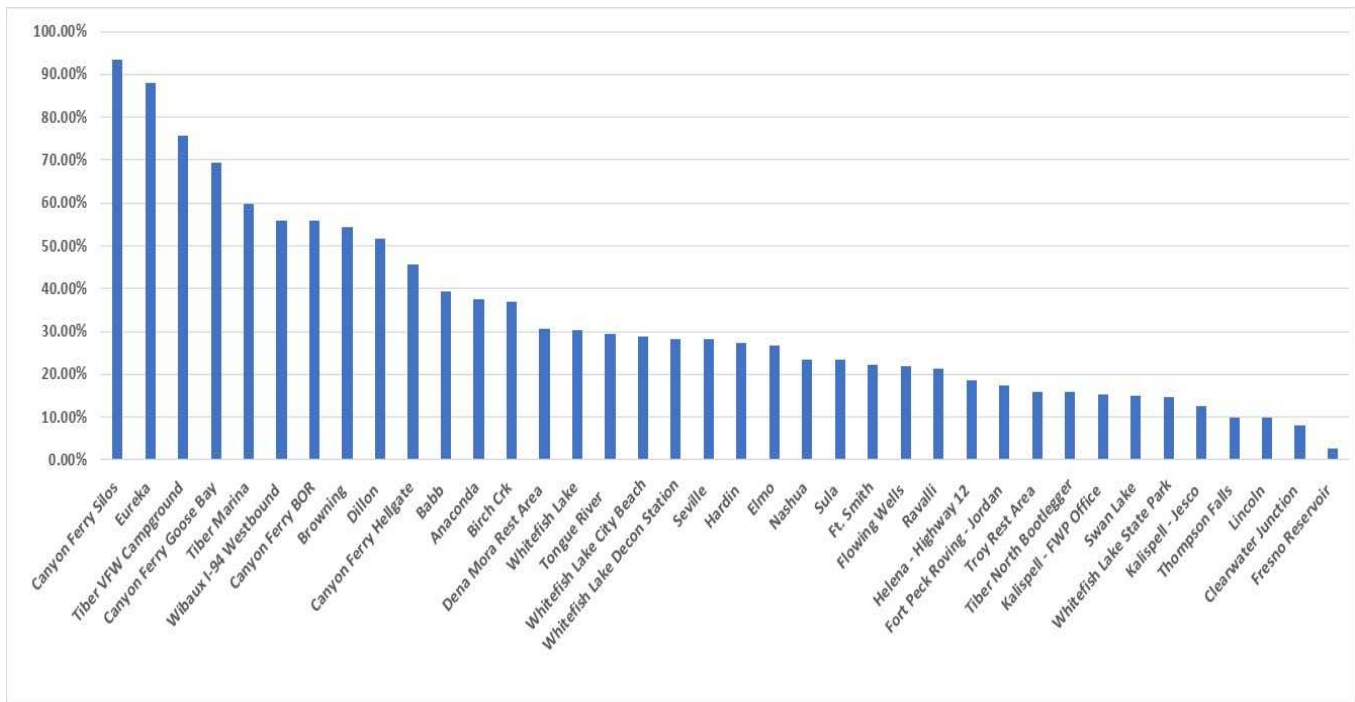


Figure 8. Percentage of the total inspections at each station that were high-risk in 2018.

TIBER AND CANYON FERRY

Following the detection of invasive mussel larvae at Tiber and a suspect detection on Canyon Ferry in late 2016 mandatory exit inspections were put in place to ensure boats are clean, drained and dry upon exit to prevent the spread of invasive mussels to other basins. In 2018, two mandatory inspection stations operated at Tiber Reservoir. The stations conducted 1,254 inspections to ensure vessels were clean, drained and dry. If issues were identified on the boat or if standing water could not be drained, station staff decontaminated the vessel.

Three Certified Boater ramps were operated at Tiber in 2018. These were gated ramps that allow access to boaters that primarily use Tiber. To access these ramps boaters were required to take a test and sign an affidavit they will follow the rules for Certified Boater ramps. Certified Boaters are permitted to use these ramps and can exit without an inspection if they are cleaned, drained and dry. If they wish to launch on another waterbody they must receive an inspection / decontamination. 494 Certified Boaters were issued for Tiber and 2,521 were issued for Canyon Ferry in 2018.

Four stations were operated at Canyon Ferry Reservoir in 2018 conducting 8,135 inspections. Over 20 Certified Boater ramps also exist on Canyon Ferry. Inspection stations at Canyon Ferry are some of the busiest in the state and are staffed accordingly to ensure inspections / decontaminations are as effective and timely as possible.

IN-STATE AND OUT-OF STATE BOATS

Figure 9 shows the percentage of in-state vs out-of-state boats at all seasonally permanent and roving inspection stations. Border stations see higher percentages of out-of-state boats than internal stations and roving crews, but internal stations also see out-of-state-boats and are extremely important to the overall

prevention strategy. Many Montana boaters regularly recreate in AIS-positive waters and could potentially spread AIS to other clean waterbodies in the state. It is also common for Montana residents to purchase used boats from out-of state, particularly from midwestern states. Internal stations provide another level of protection for these in-state boats that might miss an inspection at the border. Internal stations also help prevent movement of AIS between Montana waters. In-state boats can transport EWM, NZMS, illegal bait/live fish, pathogens between waterbodies. Internal inspection stations help contain AIS and minimize the potential spread among Montana waters.

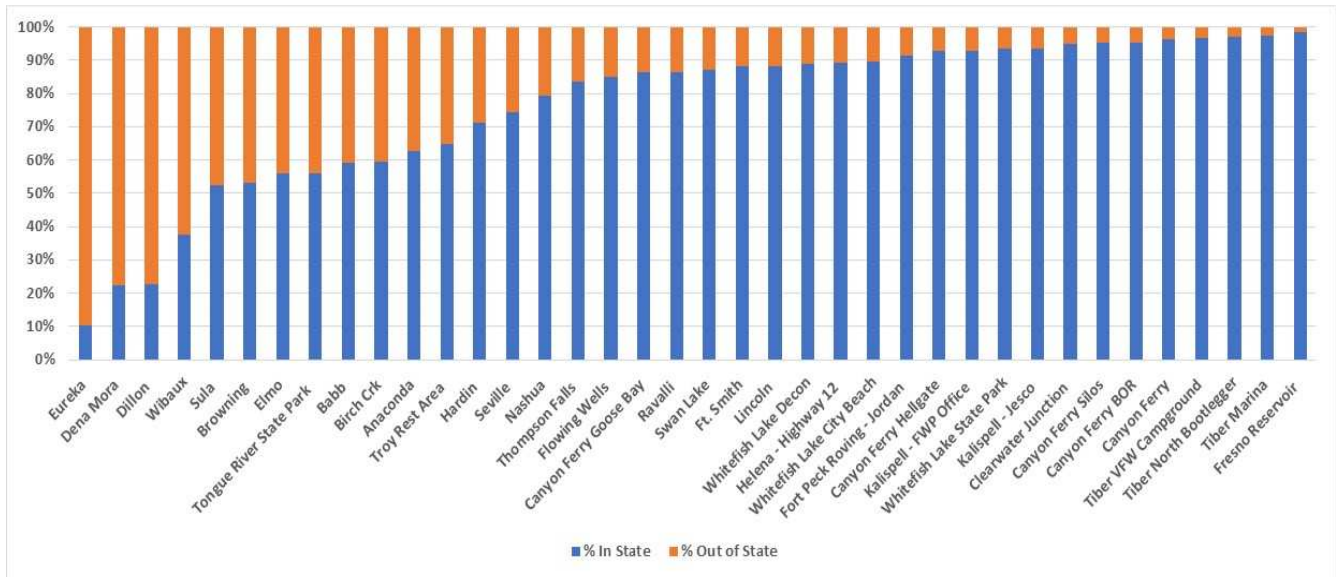


Figure 9. Percentage of out-of-state and in-state vessels by station.

AIS OBSERVED

Out of the 109,789 inspections during the 2018 field season, 788 (<1%) boats had some type of issue identified (Table 2 and Figure 10). Standing water (water in bilges, live wells, etc.) was the most common factor identified followed by vegetation. Standing water is a concern because it can carry mussel larvae, disease-causing pathogens, and plant fragments. Zebra or quagga mussels were found on 16 boats over the course of the season. These vessels are hot washed on site and require a follow up inspection / decontamination before they are permitted to launch. Additional dry time may be required to ensure no live mussels remain on the vessel.

When a Dreissenid mussel-infested boat or piece of equipment is found, protocol mandates that staff from the FWP AIS management team is contacted and oversee decontamination. If the boat is complex (air conditioning unit, seas strainers, multiple internal compartments, complex plumbing, or ballast tanks), marine mechanics may be brought in to aid in the decontamination process. Boats must pass a second inspection before they can launch in Montana waters. If a boat or piece of equipment is carrying vegetation or any other AIS besides mussels, the inspectors remove the AIS, decontaminate the boat on site, and then release it.

Table 2. Observations of mussels, plants, water or illegal bait identified per station. Data excludes Canyon Ferry and Tiber.

| Station | Out-of-State | In-State | Total | Zebra / Quagga Mussels | Vegetation | Standing Water | Illegal Bait | Illegal Fish | Total Observed |
|---|--------------|----------|-------|------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Border Stations</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Babb (Blackfeet Nation) | 100 | 144 | 244 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Birch Creek (Blackfeet Nation) | 206 | 299 | 505 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nashua | 443 | 1459 | 1902 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Dena Mora | 3955 | 1142 | 5097 | 0 | 31 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 59 |
| Dillon | 1769 | 517 | 2286 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| Eureka | 1637 | 189 | 1826 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Hardin | 1502 | 3341 | 4843 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 15 |
| Seville (Blackfeet Nation) | 230 | 517 | 747 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| Troy | 2171 | 3608 | 5779 | 0 | 25 | 9 | 0 | 4 | 39 |
| Wibaux | 836 | 474 | 1310 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| <i>Continental Divide Stations</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Anaconda | 3640 | 4289 | 7929 | 8 | 38 | 65 | 0 | 0 | 123 |
| Browning (Blackfeet Nation) | 2827 | 2190 | 5017 | 0 | 10 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 27 |
| Highway 12 Helena | 982 | 3516 | 4498 | 0 | 6 | 217 | 0 | 0 | 298 |
| Lincoln | 476 | 2957 | 3433 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Sula | 705 | 755 | 1460 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Clearwater Junction (MSLA County) | 1235 | 12483 | 13718 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Elmo (CSKT) | 795 | 762 | 1557 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Flowing Wells (GCCD) | 335 | 1061 | 1396 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Fresno Reservoir | 13 | 498 | 511 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Jesco Marine | 17 | 102 | 119 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ravalli (CSKT) | 3097 | 10666 | 13763 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 22 |

| Station | Out-of-State | In-State | Total | Zebra / Quagga Mussels | Vegetation | Standing Water | Illegal Bait | Illegal Fish | Total Observed |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Thompson Falls | 646 | 3032 | 3678 | 0 | 38 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 89 |
| Whitefish Lake City Beach (WLI) | 267 | 814 | 1081 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Whitefish Lake Decon site (WLI) | 42 | 286 | 328 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Tongue River State Park | 1089 | 1231 | 2320 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Bighorn NRA Fort Smith | 184 | 641 | 825 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Whitefish Lake State Park (WLI) | 136 | 956 | 1092 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Glacier National Park | N/A | N/A | 10690 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Fort Peck | 283 | 1310 | 1593 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Swan Roving | 37 | 230 | 267 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Regional Offices | 147 | 410 | 557 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| Totals | 29,496 | 59,736 | 100,282 | 16 | 177 | 447 | 74 | 4 | 788 |

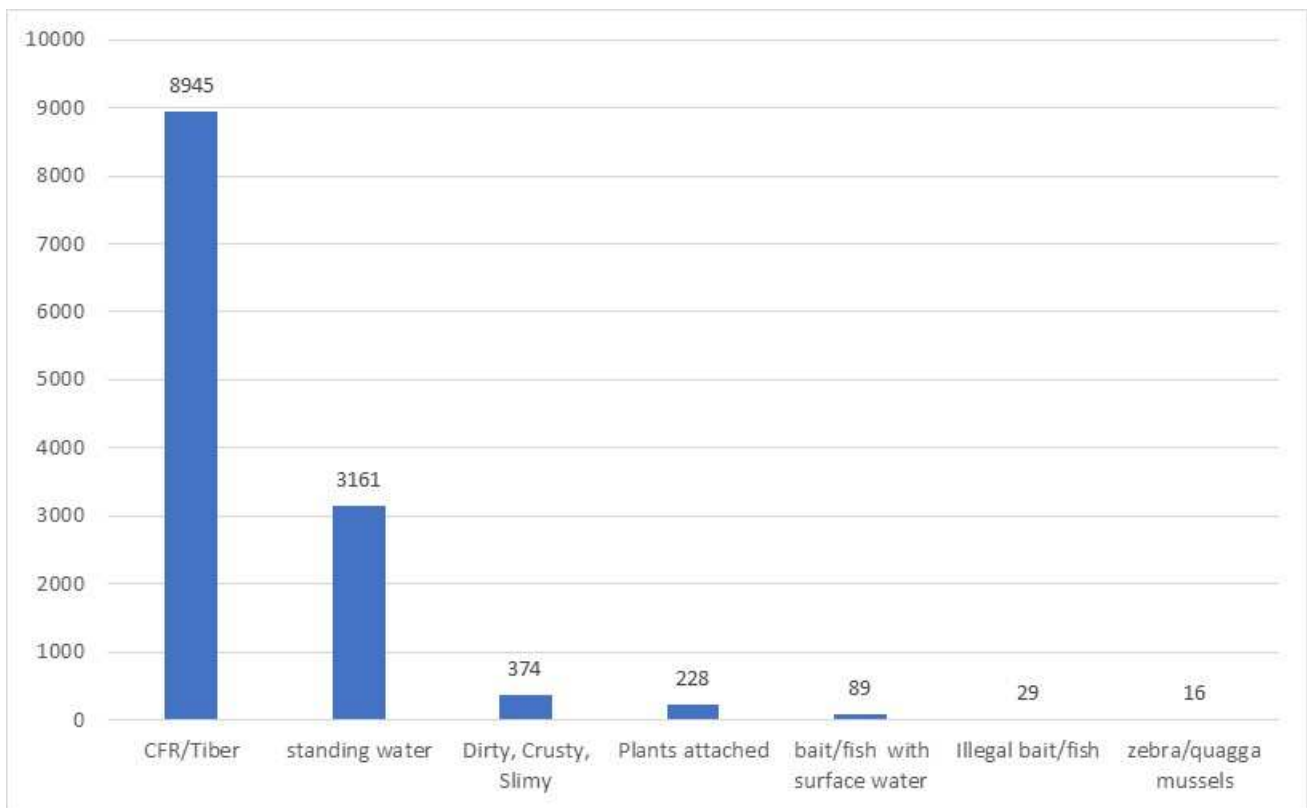


Figure 10. Occurrences of issues during the 2018 inspection season. Standing water in this graph includes 2,713 from Canyon Ferry and Tiber.

LIVE FISH

It is illegal to transport live fish, including bait fish, into Montana without authorization from FWP, and it is unlawful to possess or transport live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken anywhere in the western and central fishing district. Live non-game fish may be used as bait in certain waters in the central and eastern fishing districts. These regulations exist to prevent the introduction of non-native fish into Montana’s waters. Fish and the water they are transported can also carry pathogens, weeds, snails, mussels, or other AIS. In 2018, inspectors found 4 cases of illegal live fish over the course of the season all of which came from Troy. Standard protocol for inspection staff is to confiscate any illegal live fish and call an FWP game warden.

LIVE BAIT OTHER THAN FISH

Live animals such as mealworms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, crayfish, reptiles, amphibians, and insects may be used as bait on all waters, but live bait animals may not be imported into the state without authority from FWP. Anglers who use leeches in Montana must have purchased them within Montana or have a bill-of-sale from an FWP-approved out-of-state dealer. Leeches have the potential to transport pathogens and mussel larvae in the water that they are transported in. Watercraft station inspectors confiscate leeches if the angler cannot prove out of state leeches were legally obtained. FWP inspectors didn’t encounter any cases of illegal leeches in 2018.

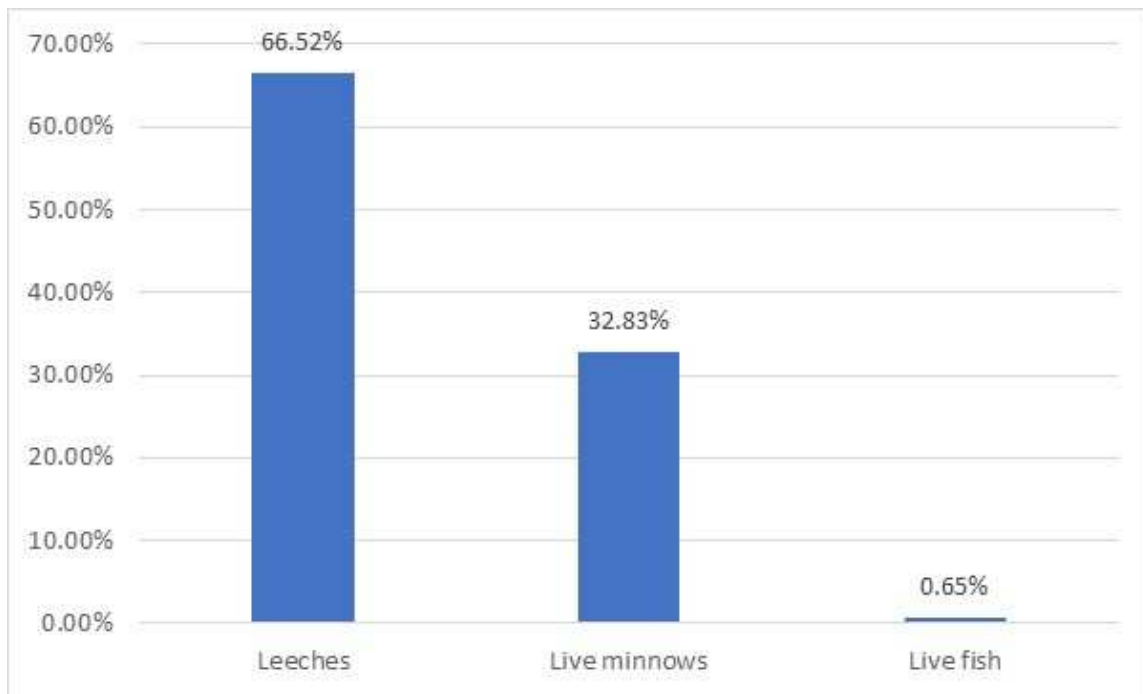


Figure 11. Percentage of anglers possessing live bait at the time of inspection in 2018

COMMERCIALY HAULED AND OVERSIZE VESSEL TRACKING AND INSPECTION

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) helps support the AIS Program in several ways, including the tracking and inspection of commercially hauled and oversize vessels. Licensing and permitting personnel with MDT question commercial boat haulers about the origin and destination of vessels during the permitting process and include a restriction on permits requiring boat haulers to contact FWP upon entry into Montana. AIS Program staff receive notifications for all permitted vessels entering the state and follow up with all boats destined for Montana. For vessels passing through the state, notifications are forwarded to the destination state or province. Most commercially hauled boats (179, 79%) are passing through Montana (Figure 12). Two percent of commercially hauled watercraft came from MT heading to other states. Of the 42 permits (19%) that are destined for Montana, 2 came from western states, 27 from eastern states, and 13 came from southern states.

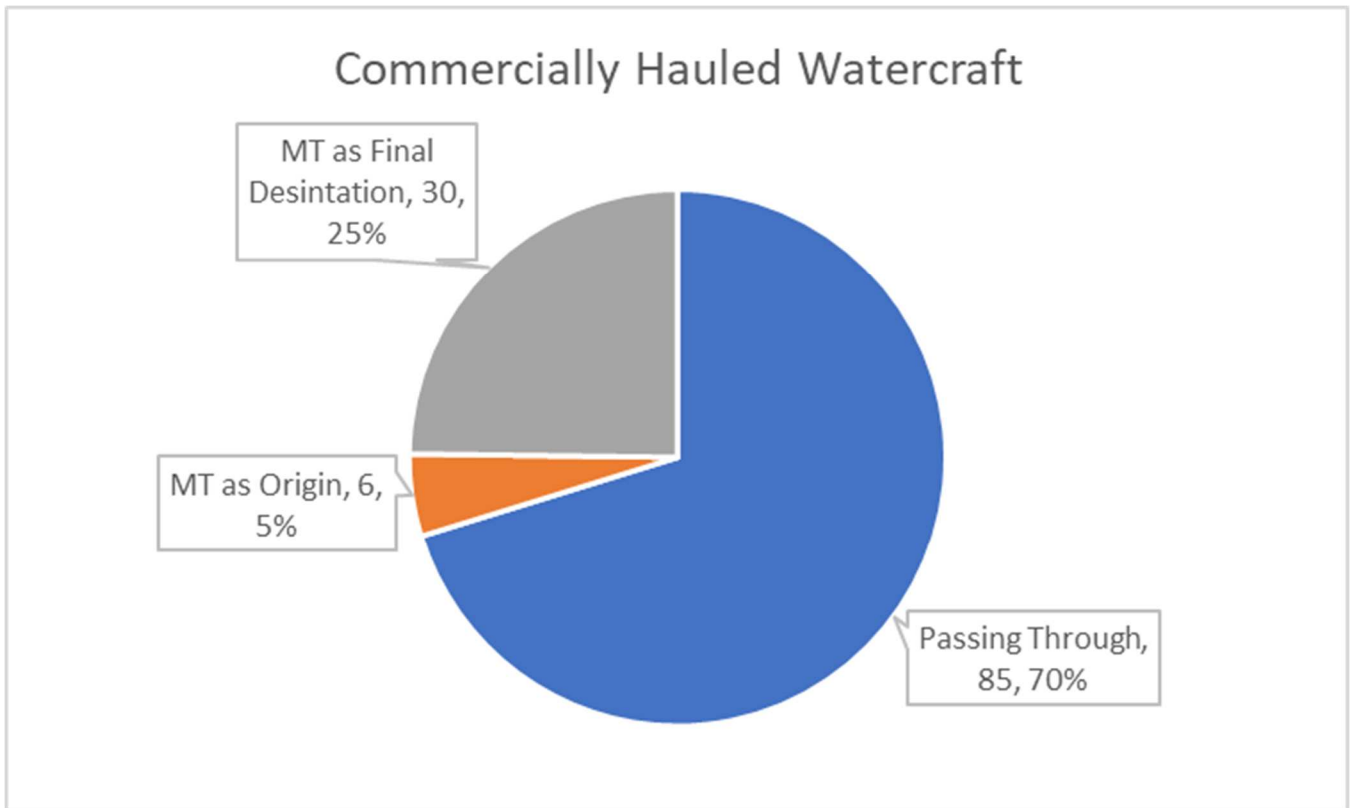


Figure 12. Percentage of Commercially-Hauled Boats Bound for MT, 2018.

SUMMARY

The 2018 watercraft inspection season was highly successful. Overall, FWP recruited many outstanding people to serve in inspector positions across the state. Their professionalism and dedication to this issue were instrumental in stations running smoothly and in getting people checked and on their way as quickly as possible. Many improvements have been put into place in 2018 and the program will continue to make adjustments and improvements to make the program more effective and efficient.

Knowledge and awareness of the issues surrounding AIS continues to increase because of the outreach and education efforts across Montana. Many thanks to all of our partners around the state. A special thanks to Missoula County Weed District, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, The Blackfeet Nation, Garfield County Conservation District, and Glacier National Park.

APPENDIX A. TOP 40 DESTINATIONS

| Next Destination | # of Water Users | % of Total Inspections |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Flathead Lake | 9829 | 8.95% |
| State of Montana | 6401 | 5.83% |
| Canyon Ferry | 5180 | 4.72% |
| Fort Peck Lake | 4307 | 3.92% |
| Blackfoot River | 3184 | 2.90% |
| Seeley Lake | 2708 | 2.47% |
| Salmon Lake | 2444 | 2.23% |
| Whitefish Lake | 2387 | 2.17% |
| Flathead River | 2113 | 1.92% |
| Missouri River | 1831 | 1.67% |
| Noxon Reservoir | 1747 | 1.59% |
| Georgetown Lake | 1680 | 1.53% |
| Koocanusa Lake | 1611 | 1.47% |
| Glacier National Park | 1486 | 1.35% |
| Clark Fork River | 1422 | 1.30% |
| Bull Lake | 1393 | 1.27% |
| Tongue River Reservoir | 1292 | 1.18% |
| State of Washington | 1264 | 1.15% |
| Placid Lake | 1188 | 1.08% |
| State of Idaho | 1172 | 1.07% |
| Holter Lake | 1039 | 0.95% |
| Swan Lake | 780 | 0.71% |
| Hauser Lake | 745 | 0.68% |
| Holland Lake | 744 | 0.68% |
| Bighorn River | 736 | 0.67% |
| Clearwater River | 720 | 0.66% |
| Browns Lake | 709 | 0.65% |
| Mary Ronan Lake | 626 | 0.57% |
| Kootenai River | 620 | 0.56% |
| Province of Alberta | 565 | 0.51% |
| NONE | 555 | 0.51% |
| Tiber | 530 | 0.48% |
| Bitterroot River | 497 | 0.45% |
| Bighorn Canyon NRA | 489 | 0.45% |
| Big Horn Reservoir | 480 | 0.44% |
| Hungry Horse Reservoir | 454 | 0.41% |
| McDonald Lake | 432 | 0.39% |
| Echo Lake | 397 | 0.36% |
| Province of British Columbia | 390 | 0.36% |
| Other | 385 | 0.35% |
| | | |
| Total | 66,532 | 60.60% |

APPENDIX B. THE TOP 40 PREVIOUSLY VISITED DESTINATIONS.

The top 40 destinations that surveyed water users had visited.

| Previously visited destination | # of Inspections | Percent of Total Inspections |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Canyon Ferry | 7863 | 7.16% |
| Flathead Lake | 5269 | 4.80% |
| State of Montana | 4263 | 3.88% |
| None | 3969 | 3.62% |
| Fort Peck Lake | 3345 | 3.05% |
| Noxon Reservoir | 2737 | 2.49% |
| Missouri River | 2541 | 2.31% |
| Blackfoot River | 2408 | 2.19% |
| Tongue River Reservoir | 2001 | 1.82% |
| Salmon Lake | 1817 | 1.65% |
| Bull Lake | 1789 | 1.63% |
| Clark Fork River | 1733 | 1.58% |
| Holter Lake | 1648 | 1.50% |
| Seeley Lake | 1506 | 1.37% |
| Hauser Lake | 1390 | 1.27% |
| State of Idaho | 1325 | 1.21% |
| State of Washington | 1323 | 1.21% |
| Georgetown Lake | 1131 | 1.03% |
| Flathead River | 1082 | 0.99% |
| Tiber | 1080 | 0.98% |
| Bighorn River | 1004 | 0.91% |
| Whitefish Lake | 1003 | 0.91% |
| Koocanusa Lake | 958 | 0.87% |
| Tongue River Reservoir State Park | 897 | 0.82% |
| Placid Lake | 832 | 0.76% |
| Bitterroot River | 793 | 0.72% |
| Big Horn Reservoir | 755 | 0.69% |
| Pend Oreille Lake | 737 | 0.67% |
| Other | 731 | 0.67% |
| Como Lake | 716 | 0.65% |
| Smith River | 573 | 0.52% |
| Clearwater River | 564 | 0.51% |
| Coeur d'Alene Lake | 557 | 0.51% |
| Kootenai River | 545 | 0.50% |
| State of Oregon | 537 | 0.49% |
| Yellowstone River | 511 | 0.47% |
| Hungry Horse Reservoir | 500 | 0.46% |
| Browns Lake | 470 | 0.43% |
| Bighole River | 441 | 0.40% |
| Fort Peck Roving - Fresno Reservoir | 434 | 0.40% |
| Total | 63,778 | 58.09% |