

2009 GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES COOPERATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) is a global asset that is treasured for its natural beauty, geological wonders, biological diversity and plethora of recreational opportunities. People from all over the world visit the GYA to enjoy its natural wonders and resources. The GYA is the headwaters for three major river systems that are of immeasurable economic importance to the United States. The unique ecological and economic values of the GYA are now being threatened by aquatic invaders, or aquatic invasive species (AIS). These non-native mussels, plants, snails, and other introduced species have the potential to severely impact the region's ecosystem, tourism, agriculture, hydropower, and businesses.

To better combat these invaders, Federal, state, and county agencies have partnered with organizations, outfitters, and businesses to protect the GYA from AIS, by creating the GYA AIS Cooperative, a subcommittee of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC). The values of this unified approach includes the pooling of resources, knowledge, and energy as well as avoiding the duplication of efforts

With the assistance of the GYCC, the GYA AIS Cooperative had several achievements in protecting the GYA from AIS in 2009. These actions included preparing strategic and implementation plans, developing an inventory/monitoring framework, publishing a GYA AIS brochure, organizing universal outreach and inventory crew training sessions, deploying public outreach crews throughout the GYA, performing inventory/monitoring surveys, creating a marketing strategy, and developing a website.

Strategic and Implementation Plans

The diversity and geographic spread of GYA AIS Cooperative members requires clear direction to effectively and efficiently achieve their mission, so the group created their strategic and implementation plans. The plans were approved by the group May 2009.

Inventory/Monitoring Framework

The Forest, USGS, and USNPS assisted a group of national aquatic invasive species experts in a week-long session in May 2009 at Jackson Lake to develop a Greater Yellowstone aquatic invasive species inventory and monitoring framework. The framework, providing direction for the monitoring of AIS throughout the Greater Yellowstone Area, was approved by the GYA AIS Cooperative in October 2009.



GYA Aquatic Invasive Species Inventory and Monitoring Framework Working Group at AMK Ranch at Jackson Lake (From top left: Dave Britton (USFWS), Robert Hall (University of Wyoming), Sarah Spaulding (USGS), Mark Sytsma (Portland State University), Robert McMahon (University of Texas), Erin Williams (USFWS), Sunil Kumar (USGS), James Capurso (USFS), Aida Farag (USGS), and Susan O'Ney (USPS))

GYA AIS Brochure

The GYA AIS Cooperative developed and printed an AIS brochure that can universally be used in research efforts throughout the GYA. It will be used in outreach efforts.

Universal Outreach and Inventory Crew Training

On June 12, 2009, the GYA AIS cooperative hosted an AIS outreach and inventory training workshop at the Jackson, WY fairgrounds. It was organized by Teton County Weed and Pest and Bridger-Teton National Forest personnel. All AIS state coordinators within the GYA were present and most of the training was provided by Eileen Ryce, the Montana AIS State Coordinator. Approximately 150 field-going personnel attended the workshop.

An additional workshop was hosted in Montpelier, ID on June 15th. Approximately 30 people attended that workshop, taught by Tom Woolf from Idaho Department of Agriculture. It consisted of both inside and field sessions.

At both workshops, participants were taught AIS identification, spread vectors, and public contact techniques. All AIS workers were provided with a clear and consistent message they could use during their public contacts and surveys.



Salt cedar observed near a small pond outside of Montpelier during the field portion of the Montpelier training session.

Public Outreach Crews

Public outreach is the most effect tool we can use to decrease the spread of AIS. The GYCC assisted in the funding of outreach crews. They were deployed throughout the GYA to inform anglers and boaters about the AIS issue. Thousands of contacts were made. Data sheets were completed for each contact. This contact information will be helpful in the prioritization of where to conduct AIS surveys in the future. Each crew leader was instructed to provide their data to the 100th Meridian Initiative for entry into the national AIS database. The GYCC contributed \$38,000 to this activity in 2009.

Inventory/Monitoring Surveys

GYCC funding was pooled with other state, county, and federal funding to conduct baseline AIS surveys. Portland State University was contracted to survey several water Bodies in Wyoming, including the upper Green River, Fremont Lake, Half Moon Lake, New Fork Lake, Flat Creek, Fall Creek, and Gros Ventre River. A monitoring report is currently being prepared.

In addition, Portland State University was contracted to gather all legacy AIS data from the GYA and create a database and associated GIS layer. They expect to complete it by the end of the calendar year. The GYCC contributed \$5,000 to the inventory and database efforts in 2009.

Public Outreach and Marketing Strategy

The GYCC contributed \$9,000 for public outreach and a marketing strategy. Most of this funding went towards the production of our GYA AIS brochures. The remaining funds were used to initiate a marketing strategy that we are asking the GYCC for support in 2010 to complete. Reaching different user groups will require different outreach materials and methods. This marketing strategy, produced by the Center for Aquatic Nuisance Species specifically for the GYA, will help us define those needs.

Website

With the help of Marley Vaughn of the Snake River Fund, the GYA AIS Cooperative developed a website to post important documents and facilitate communication with the public. Work on this website continues. Its address is: <http://www.cleaninspectdry.com/>