

News Release



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Grants Respond to the Spread of Invasive Mussels in the West

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that nearly \$600,000 will be awarded to nine projects targeting three of the highest priorities from the *Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters (QZAP)*.

“As quagga and zebra mussels spread to the Western United States, they can have devastating ecological and economic impacts as already seen in the east and central United States. We must address the spread of these invasive aquatic species, which threaten our Nation’s natural resources, water delivery systems, hydroelectric facilities, agriculture, and recreational boating and fishing,” said Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior.

Invasive species are among the primary factors that have led to the decline of native fish and wildlife populations in the United States and one of the most significant natural resource management challenges. A paper published in 2005 in the journal *Ecological Economics* estimated the cost of invasive species impacts to be approximately \$120 billion each year in the United States. We continue to face enormous economic and environmental consequences as a result of invasive, nonnative species spreading in our waterways and on our lands.

Once established these invasive mussels can clog water intake and delivery pipes and dam intake gates. They adhere to boats, pilings, and most hard and some soft substrates. The mussels negatively impact water delivery systems, fire protection, and irrigation systems and require costly removal maintenance. The spread of quagga and zebra mussels across the West brings the potential to extend devastating impacts into a geographic area already challenged with severe water-related problems.

The QZAP provides a common sense approach to guide collective efforts of those fighting the westward spread of quagga and zebra mussels. Efforts funded in this round of grants include:

- Early-detection monitoring programs for quagga and zebra mussels;
- Developing a manual describing containment activities in infested water bodies;
- Refining hot water decontamination methods for watercraft;

- Refining decontamination methods for wildland firefighting equipment;
- Pilot laboratory testing program for the early detection of larval mussels;
- Invasive mussel early detection monitoring methods and quality assurance workshops;
- Creating and implementing uniform minimum protocols and standards for watercraft interception and decontamination programs; and
- Developing standard and effective equipment (non-watercraft) inspection and decontamination protocols.

The Service also has provided support for quagga and zebra mussel efforts through regional projects under the 100th Meridian Initiative (www.100thmeridian.org), a cooperative effort between local, state, provincial, regional, and federal agencies to prevent the westward spread of zebra/quagga mussels and other aquatic nuisance species in North America. In addition, the Service through the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, has funded implementation of State and Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans. These plans describe detection and monitoring efforts of aquatic nuisance species, prevention efforts to stop their introduction and spread, and control efforts to reduce their impacts. More information is online at: <http://anstaskforce.gov>.

For a full list of the QZAP projects and for more information on aquatic invasive species, please visit: www.fws.gov/fisheries/ans.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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