

Strategy to Enhance Columbia River Basin Interagency Response to Zebra Mussels and Other Dreissenid Species

**100th Meridian Initiative, Columbia Basin Team
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DRAFT

Introduction

This document focuses on strategic goals and associated tactics to enhance response preparedness for an introduction of zebra or quagga mussels into the Columbia River. It is a companion to the “Columbia River Basin Interagency Invasive Species Response Plan: Zebra Mussels and Other Dreissenid Species”(Plan), which addresses actions that should occur **after** an introduced population of this family is discovered.

The recent invasion of quagga and zebra mussels into the West heightens the urgency to implement the actions in this strategy. Some of the tasks outlined here will take a considerable amount of time and effort to accomplish. Given the urgency of this issue to the Columbia Basin, it is imperative that the involved parties take the necessary steps now to prepare.

Strategic Goals

1. A strong early detection monitoring system detects an initial introduction promptly.
2. A standing response organization includes and meets the needs of all lead jurisdictions, and is reflected in written letters of agreement by lead agencies.
3. A notification system is in place that assures all lead jurisdictions receive prompt and accurate information about reported introductions, and ensures that all initial reports promptly lead to a report to the national 877-STOPANS hotline.
4. A notification coordinator is available 24/7 to initiate the response plan.
5. All lead agency representatives on the Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) group and Coordination and Support (C&S) Group are sufficiently trained in National Incident Management System concepts and principles, and have a strong working relationship.
6. Written delegation of authority for all lead agency representatives streamlines internal decision-making.
7. A diverse set of integrated response tools, including chemical treatment in natural systems, are readily accessible to manage a population if it is discovered.
8. Environmental compliance documents are in place to expedite approval of response tactics for specific incidents (for each tool noted above).
9. External communication plans and materials (e.g., draft press releases) are available for use if a Joint Information Center is formed.
10. Vessel traffic management and decontamination protocols are in place and supported by adequate legal authorities and equipment/personnel.
11. Adequate funding exists to ensure that response operations can be initiated quickly.

Tactics

1. Confirm identity of Columbia Basin Notification Coordinator and alternates
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and state ANS coordinators
2. Develop system to ensure 24/7 notification coverage
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and state ANS coordinators
3. Schedule at least one MAC and C&S Group exercise/year
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, and MAC chair
4. Incorporate NOAA into standing MAC membership
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, and NOAA
5. Incorporate the appropriate Canadian authorities into the response system
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, Canada Fisheries and Oceans, B.C. Environment
6. Coordinate with Columbia Basin tribes to define and enhance their response roles.
Suggested Lead(s): CRITFC, USFWS, and state ANS coordinators
7. Engage National Park Service regarding link to their rapid response plan and specific connections to Columbia Gorge and Lake Roosevelt NRA
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, NPS, and PSMFC
8. Coordinate with each Columbia Basin state to ensure their internal notification system includes prompt notification of the 877-STOPANS hotline.
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and state ANS coordinators
9. Inform MAC and other teams of cross-training opportunities (e.g., other exercises)
Suggested Lead(s): MAC membership
10. Determine MAC Chair
Suggested Lead(s): MAC membership
11. Identify C&S Group membership and lead roles
Suggested Lead(s): MAC membership
12. Develop agency incident-management teams
Suggested Lead(s): MAC membership
13. Identify pre-designated meeting sites
Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, and state ANS coordinators
14. Develop initial public/media outreach kit with draft press releases, etc.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and state ANS coordinators

15. Secure written delegations of authority for identified lead agency representatives

Suggested Lead(s): MAC membership

16. Complete inventory of available logistical resources

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, and state ANS coordinators

17. Provide lead jurisdictions with additional tools to “market” the response plan internally

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and PSMFC

18. Develop situation analysis tool(s)

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, USGS, and state ANS coordinators

19. Develop detailed descriptions of most likely dreissenid mussel discovery scenarios in the CRB, and associated list of initial tactics that would be employed.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and PSMFC

20. Hold a second table-top exercise in 2008, repeated as necessary.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and PSMFC

21. Expand the existing summaries of available control techniques for both infrastructure and natural systems.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, USGS, and Portland State University

22. Enhance existing targeted dreissenid early detection efforts (veligers and settled mussels), and increase opportunistic early detection monitoring via other regional aquatic monitoring programs.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, USGS, Portland State University, and the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership

23. Identify gaps in current knowledge related to effective response techniques for dreissenid mussels.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, USGS, and Portland State University

24. Promote research and development of new techniques that could enhance dreissenid mussel control opportunities while minimizing negative impacts to desired species.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS, PSMFC, USACE, NOAA, and USGS

25. Complete draft Environmental Assessment that incorporates most likely control methods that will be used to attempt eradication.

Suggested Lead(s): USFWS and PSMFC

26. Initiate formal process to obtain NPDES permits for the use of chlorine or other chemical treatments for long-term maintenance at hydropower and other water use and intake

facilities, as well as development of associated Environmental Assessments, Environmental Impact Statements, and/or Endangered Species Act biological opinions.
Suggested Lead(s): Action agencies involved with operation of such facilities

27. Conduct regional workshops for hydropower operators, agricultural interests, and other CRB water users regarding the Plan and needs for enhancing existing control options (including associated environmental compliance activities).

Suggested Lead(s): PSMFC, state ANS coordinators, Northwest Power and Conservation Council

28. Adopt a statewide water quality permit for most probable control measures, similar to efforts by the Washington Department of Ecology.

Suggested Lead(s): States of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Nevada; U.S. EPA