

Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee

Project Completion Report

FY 2008

Unit: Gallatin National Forest and Yellowstone National Park
Project Name: Mobile Invasive Species Vehicle Washer Crew
Project Description: Invasive aquatic and terrestrial plants, animals, and pathogens pose one of the greatest risks to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). To confront this increasing threat, Yellowstone National Park (YNP) and the Gallatin National Forest (GNF) propose funding a crew of two seasonal employees to operate a portable vehicle washer (designed and built by MTDC with GYCC and GNF fisheries funding) at boat ramps and fishing access sites around the GNF, YNP, and Teton National Park. Functioning as a prevention measure and information and education conduit, the crew would wash vehicles and boats while disseminating information for preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species and noxious weeds. The crew would also collect data from contact interviews thus providing managers with increased understanding of threats and measures for mitigating them. To reduce the ecological footprint of the project and provide the public with an example of actions they can take to address climate change, YNP is attempting to secure a hybrid vehicle to tow the washer from site to site.
GYCC Funding Received: \$8,000: \$6,907, YNP staff (per IA), \$1093, GSA vehicle Partner Funding/In-Kind Received: Gallatin National Forest Portable Washer: \$6,500.00 Yellowstone National Park and Gallatin National Forest Project Oversight and Employee Supervision: \$3,500.00
Status of the Project: COMPLETED
Products that can be shared across the GYA: (GIS data layers, maps, new protocols and methods) There were no physical products to share, but we acquired important data and practical information over the course of the summer. These are described below.
Project results: (Information worth sharing on methods, results, partnerships, etc) A total of 305 public contacts with boaters and anglers were made as a result of this Aquatic invasive Species Outreach. These included 195 contacts at Hebgen Lake, 15 at Quake Lake, and 75 on west and north area streams in Yellowstone National Park. Twenty Additional contacts were made with non water visitors, park and forest employees and concession employees. This was an excellent opportunity for Yellowstone staff to share its ANS protocols and cleaning procedures with their neighboring Forest. However, it became immediately obvious that the ANS program on the Forest is much more complicated than conducting the same program in the park. While interviews and informational exchanges were identical and productive, the most significant

Note: You may expand and reduce size of blocks.

problem was not having any legal ability to decontaminate or deny public access to waters. It is critical that if ANS is found or suspected, that staff have the legal means to decontaminate equipment or deny access. This limitation of the program was shared within the GYA.

Fortunately, the contacts made revealed very few threats; and broadly speaking, the area can be considered a low potential for ANS spread as most users are locals using equipment that does not leave the area. Aside from the enforcement issue, the Forest areas were more dispersed with many more public access points, creating an overall challenge in catching boaters and anglers. Key road intersections, however, were identified as potential choke points for future inspections.

With regard to the cleaning trailer located at the West Yellowstone Forest Service office, it was deemed to be of little practical value for the Hebgen Lake area. The roads are too narrow and winding over a broad geographic region, that such a large trailer would entail a longer response time and just problems getting around. A more feasible alternative for the Forest is a portable unit mounted in the back of a pick up truck, supplemented with hand and backpack sprayers. The existing trailer is however a working unit that may have better use at the strategically located check points mentioned above.

Throughout this effort, the park learned the enormous value of maintaining controls over access points and interdicting users before they enter the park. The variety of jurisdictions, and the realities of a differing physical landscape with a multiplicity of water recreation attractions, promises to offer challenges for the GYA. While implementing a coordinated ANS program across the GYA should reveal many common approaches and techniques to employ, such as public education and awareness; factors such as access points, jurisdictional authorities, and public recreational preferences, will require many more unique solutions in preventing ANS spread locally. Additionally, other than sharing knowledge and techniques in conducting interviews and inspections, cross jurisdictional use of staff has very little value. It may indeed cause more confusion to the public.

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