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February 7, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Stacy Horton, Washington Policy Analyst/Biologist

SUBJECT: Invasive Species that Threaten Fish, Wildlife, and Habitats of the Columbia River Basin

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: **Blaine Parker**, Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator; **Nick Zurfluh**, Section Manager, Invasive Species Coordination and Outreach, Idaho State Department of Agriculture; **Liz Lodman**, Administrator, Montana Invasive Species Council; **Rick Boatner**, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Invasive Species Wildlife Integrity Supervisor; **Justin Bush**, Executive Coordinator, Washington Invasive Species Council.

Summary: Invasive species can have devastating impacts on ecosystems, food webs, and biodiversity. Habitat investments can be diminished, and ecosystem function degraded when invasive species become a problem as their environmental cost is vast - they transmit disease, increase predation, compete for resources, outnumber native species, reduce species diversity, and create cascading ecosystem effects like trophic food web changes. To raise awareness of this issue and share simple actions to prevent and stop the spread of invasive species, regional state and tribal invasive species coordinators will discuss some of the Northwest priority invasive species, as well as prevention and management efforts to address them.

Relevance: The 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (Program) includes a strategy (P. 46-48) to address non-native and invasive species. The Program acknowledges the threat to fish habitat and wildlife mitigation projects that invasive species pose through competition, predation, and habitat modification. In providing guidance to Bonneville on emerging program priorities, the Council's third highest priority is to 'aggressively address non-native and invasive species ...important to preserve program effectiveness.' (P. 116 Program)

Background: Prevention, suppression, and eradication efforts are called for in the Council Program strategy on non-native and invasive species. The Council acknowledges the direct threats to the program's fish and wildlife restoration efforts from invasive and non-native species.

The 2014 Program defines an invasive species as:

"A species that establishes and reproduces rapidly outside its native range. It may threaten the diversity or abundance of native species through predation, competition, parasitism, hybridization with native populations, introduction of pathogens, or the physical or chemical alteration of the invaded habitats."
(P. 135 Program)

Principles developed by the Council to address invasive species include early detection and rapid response, public education, coordination, and shared data efforts, legislative work, and other actions to rapidly respond, prevent, contain, eradicate, enforce, educate, and conduct outreach to control species where they threaten the Columbia Basin ecosystem and the regional hydropower system.

Some of the actions called for under the General measures on non-native invasive species in the Program call for:

- **Evaluate potential adverse impacts**, to include coordination with federal, state, tribal and regional partners such as the 100th Meridian Initiative.
- **Prevent establishment in conjunction with partners**, to include monitoring and managing pathways of introduction, development of control strategies, public outreach tools, and a request that Bonneville Power Administration assist state efforts to prevent the establishment of zebra and quagga mussels.
- **Monitor and control introductions and dispersal** by calling on the four Northwest states to closely coordinate species management plans and prevention efforts, to include British Columbia.

- ***Remove and eradicate*** by applying new and existing research to maximize effectiveness, using removal methods that are effective and protect native species, monitor success, use lethal control methods consistent with laws, prioritize control actions to address most significant threats, and finally calls on BPA, federal agencies, and FERC-licensed utilities to support rapid response efforts should zebra and quagga mussels become established.
 - ***Regional Coordination*** directed at addressing those species that pose the greatest risk to the Columbia River Basin and the regional hydropower system by assisting with regional communication, coordination, and public outreach efforts, by facilitation of science/policy forums on non-native invasive species issues and helping with legislative efforts directed at invasive species.
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- More Info:
 - [Western Aquatic Invasive Species Resource Center](#)
 - [Western Governors' Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative Special Report](#)
 - [Western Governors' Policy Resolution 2022-11, Biosecurity an Invasive Species Management](#)
 - [Washington Invasive Species Council Website, 2020-2025 Statewide Strategy, and 2021-2022 Biennial Report](#)
 - [\[Washington\] State of the Salmon in Watersheds Report, How Invasive Species Threaten Salmon Story Map](#)
 - [Montana Invasive Species Council](#)