

Preventing Invasive Species

As our Field Journal section taught us, an invasive species is a non-native plant or animal that harms the habitat where it was introduced. In Wyoming, we have a special program called the Aquatic Invasive Species program to stop invasive species from coming into our state's waters. Josh Leonard, an aquatic invasive species specialist, tells us more about the program:

Wyoming has a few aquatic invasive species already living in our state including brook stickleback, Asian clams, curly pondweed and New Zealand mudsnails. Thankfully, Wyoming does not yet have zebra or quagga

mussels like many other states. These mussels, which look like tiny clams, can do lots of damage to an entire aquatic ecosystem. Since zebra and quagga mussels can live on boats and are often moved into new lakes or reservoirs by boats, the Game and Fish aquatic invasive species program requires all boats entering the state from March 1 – November 30 to be inspected each year. These inspections help the department stop any invasive mussels being brought into, or through, Wyoming. If adult mussels are found on a boat, or tiny young mussels are suspected to be aboard,

then a Game and Fish employee will spray the boat with a pressure washer that has very hot water in it (up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit) to kill any of the invasive mussels that might be on the boat. The aquatic invasive species program at Game and Fish helps protect Wyoming waters from zebra and quagga mussels and reminds everyone to clean, drain and dry their boats and fishing equipment!



AIS decontamination unit - the pressure washer with very hot water to clean invasive species off boats.



Regional AIS Specialist Josh Leonard holding a brown trout.



Waverunner Inspection