

Pathfinder Reservoir Zebra and Quagga Mussel Rapid Response Plan

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has been working on rapid response plans in preparation for a potential zebra or quagga mussel infestation. These plans may include restrictions that could impact you as a recreationist at Pathfinder Reservoir.

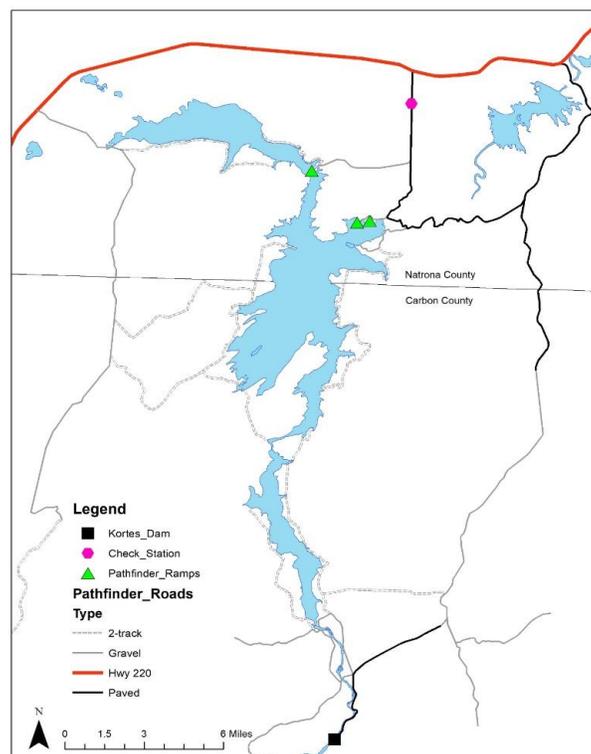
How will Wyoming respond to detection of dreissenid mussels in Pathfinder Reservoir?

Year 1

- Prohibit launching watercraft in that part of the reservoir in Carbon County, including the North Platte River upstream to Kortez Dam (Miracle Mile). Prohibit launching on the west shore in Natrona County, from the Buzzard Road Bridge over the Sweetwater River, east and south to Carbon County.
- Establish exit inspection and decontamination station on Pathfinder Road, utilizing the current inspection pullout. All watercraft will be required to exit the reservoir through this station during operating hours (8 a.m. – Sunset)
- Closed to all watercraft from November 1 to March 31.

Years 2+

- Institute a local boater program. Enrolled watercraft will be exempt from launching prohibitions, may exit the reservoir outside of established hours and may boat during the seasonal closure. All non-enrolled watercraft will be subject to the restrictions outlined in Year 1.
- **If Pathfinder Reservoir moves directly to infested status:** It is likely the reservoir (including the river upstream) would be closed to all watercraft immediately for at least six weeks to allow Game and Fish to mount a response given the need to fully decontaminate all watercraft.



What are zebra and quagga mussels?

Zebra and quagga mussels are aquatic invasive species from Eurasia that have spread to most of the lower 48 states.

Why are we so concerned about zebra and quagga mussels?

Zebra and quagga mussels have caused fisheries collapses, damage to boats and motors, hazards to swimmers and waders, poor water quality, and significant damage to water treatment facilities, hydroelectric power generators and irrigation systems. Since Wyoming is a headwater state, these impacts would cascade down the Columbia, Colorado and Missouri river drainages if they become established here.

Are zebra and quagga mussels found in Wyoming?

No, Wyoming is one of six contiguous US states where they have not been found.

What is Wyoming doing to keep zebra and quagga mussels out of the state?

For over 10 years, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Aquatic Invasive Species program has worked to keep invasive species, such as zebra and quagga mussels, out of the state. Watercraft inspections are a major line of defense and are focused on identifying AIS before they enter Wyoming.

What would happen if zebra or quagga mussels were detected in Wyoming?

If zebra or quagga mussels were detected in a Wyoming lake, efforts would shift to keep them from spreading to other waters. Rapid Response Plans have been developed for 23 Wyoming lakes and reservoirs that describe how that would happen. All boats leaving the lake would need to be inspected to ensure they are free of zebra or quagga mussels.

How would a detection of zebra or quagga mussels affect the boating experience?

Wait times may be an issue, since all boats would require an inspection (and possibly decontamination) before leaving a zebra or quagga mussel water. In addition, launching of boats may be restricted to fewer ramps, and shore launching may be prohibited. When possible, closures and restrictions will be avoided, but some may be necessary. Local boater programs may be pursued that allow boats that are only used on that particular water to "fast-track" the exit inspection process.

If zebra or quagga mussels are detected, are they there to stay?

Detection of zebra or quagga mussels does not mean they will establish themselves. In many waters (particularly in the western US), initial detections did not lead to infestations. Once mussels are detected, monitoring and containment efforts will begin. If mussels are not detected again for several years, the water will be considered negative. However, if mussels establish themselves, they are likely there to stay, since there are currently no tools available to eradicate them.

Thanks for your interest in the Pathfinder Reservoir Rapid Response Plan. We would appreciate your feedback. Please take a few minutes to respond to our [survey](#).

For questions or more information, please contact:

Josh Leonard, WGFD AIS Coordinator, joshua.leonard@wyo.gov, 307-721-1374

Matt Hahn, WGFD Casper Regional Fisheries Supv. matt.hahn@wyo.gov, 307-473-3415



We want your feedback on this plan. Submit comments by May 16 Visit:
<https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Fishing-and-Boating/Aquatic-Invasive-Species-Prevention/AIS-Rapid-Response-Plans>
or scan the QR code for more information and to access the survey.