



The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.

July 27, 2010

Beth Bear
Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
528 S. Adams
Laramie, WY 82070

Dear Ms. Bear:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the Draft Wyoming Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan (Plan) prepared by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD).

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal has major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it is important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and provide us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA greatly appreciates the proactive approach the WGFD has taken with the release of the Plan. We believe recent efforts to inform recreationists and inspect their watercrafts is proving successful thus far. The introduction of species such as the Zebra mussel and Quagga mussel to Wyoming waters could have significant negative impacts to Wyoming agriculture, specifically those landowners who depend on irrigation.

Zebra and Quagga mussels as well as rusty crayfish transported from contaminated water bodies through irrigation canals would likely reach irrigation pivots and side rolls. Damage from mussels or even crayfish to irrigation equipment would cost agricultural producers thousands of dollars in repairs and lost crop productivity. We strongly encourage the WGFD work closely with and educate Wyoming Irrigation District staff and irrigators on invasive species identification. Irrigators regularly monitor an expansive area and can quickly notify WGFD of any possible findings.

Additionally, we believe field staff working for Weed and Pest Districts, Conservation Districts and Department of Environmental Quality provide additional opportunities for timely identification of possible invasive species. The staff are out in the field on a regular basis sampling water bodies and implementing water related projects and would provide an additional resource enhancing WGFD's efforts for surveillance and early detection.

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We support the Plan as proposed and look forward to your implementing the final draft statewide. The WDA thanks the WGFD for their efforts and for the consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Jason Fearneyhough

Director

JF/jw

Cc: Governor's Planning Office
WDA Board of Agriculture
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