



## **Montana Fishing Outfitters Join Forces to Fight Invasive Species**

The Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana (FOAM) is highlighting its fight to protect Montana's waters from invasive species by implementing a special program in conjunction with National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) February 26 – March 3. The key part of the program will see FOAM members teaching about the need for all anglers to carefully clean their equipment to avoid spreading aquatic invaders.

"Prevention is the keyword here; we cannot allow aquatic invasive species (AIS) to take hold in our recreational waters. Education is good, preventive actions are better," said FOAM's Executive Director, Robin Cunningham. "Unlike battling Whirling Disease, we can stay ahead of the curve by rigorously monitoring against the introduction of AIS in Montana,"

FOAM will be reaching out to their members and fellow Montanan's during NISAW by:

- 1) Encouraging them to take the Clean Angling Pledge to work against the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species
- 2) Co-sponsoring with the Clark Fork Coalition a new public boat-cleaning station at the Missoulian Angler in Missoula.
- 3) Advising our outfitter and guide members to provide their clients with waders and boots rather than bringing their own gear, or cleaning their client's wading gear before heading out to fish Montana's waters
- 4) Continuing our one-on-one education program with clients about the dangers of AIS

"Montana's fishing professionals understand the serious threat that invasive species pose to our economy and ecology" explains Cunningham. "Our members want to teach all fisherman the simple cleaning that needs to be part of every fishing trip. We know that we are role models for our clients and many others, so we are committed to setting the best possible example."

National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) is scheduled for February 26 - March 3, 2012 to bring attention to invasive species issues. NISAW is coordinated by the staff of the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) and many other partners. NISC was formed by executive order in 1999 and is co-chaired by the Secretaries of Commerce, Agriculture, and the Interior.

Founded in 1980, FOAM is a non-profit business association of licensed Montana outfitters and guides. Its mission is: To protect and preserve Montana's fish, wildlife, and aquatic resources, to promote and maintain Montana's fishing outfitting industry and to work with individuals, groups, and agencies in all matters of administration and regulation affecting fisheries and our fishing industry.

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