

# **Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes**

**Natural Resources Department**

**Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation & Conservation**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ***Tribes Announce Emergency Watercraft Closure and Restrictions***

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council took action on Thursday to issue a watercraft and trailer closure on Flathead Reservation waters in response to the recent detection of invasive mussel populations in Montana.

Effective immediately all watercraft must be inspected and cleared for launching into any Flathead Reservation water body by a certified boat inspector. All watercraft, trailers, water based personal equipment must be completely clean, drained and dry on all interior and exterior surfaces before launching into Flathead Reservation water bodies.

Felt soled waders are prohibited from use in any Flathead Reservation water body. Recreationists and waterfowl hunters must dry dogs to prevent movement of mussel larvae in wet fur entering lakes and rivers.

The following watercraft type restrictions will be added to the Flathead Reservation's existing boating regulations for all Tribal water bodies with the exception of Flathead Lake and the Lower Flathead River: Only hand propelled, non-trailer watercraft; including kayaks, canoes, rafts and paddleboards will be permitted for use.

These measures are being implemented in accordance with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Aquatic Invasive Species Technical Teams recommendation. The closure includes all privately owned motorized and trailered watercraft.

A partial listing of Flathead Reservation Water bodies that are included in this emergency boating closure are:

1. Lone pine Reservoir
2. Upper Dry Fork Reservoir
3. Dog/Rainbow Lake
4. Twin Lakes

5. Upper Jocko Lake
6. Black Lake
7. St. Mary's Lake
8. Mission Reservoir
9. McDonald lake
10. Kicking Horse Reservoir
11. Crow Reservoir
12. Turtle Lake

“Tribal scientists and managers are working with the State of Montana and other water quality experts to understand the potential impacts from this threat, and identify steps the Tribes will take to further protect the waters of the Flathead Reservation,” said Tom McDonald, Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation.

Georgia Smies, CSKT Aquatic Biologist, reported that “In November 2016, the CSKT Department of Natural Resources and the MT Fish Wildlife and Parks reported that invasive mussel larvae had been discovered in the waters of Canyon Ferry and Tiber Reservoir. The CSKT water quality program immediately partnered with the scientists at Flathead Lake Biological Station to assess the waters of Flathead Lake. A total of 130 samples were collected around the perimeter of the lake as well as in open water locations.”

“CSKT developed and finalized a Tribal AIS plan that address response, monitoring, analysis, and containment/control measures if they become necessary,” added Smies,

According to Brandon Couture, Investigator for CSKT Conservation Officers, “Officers will patrol and enforce the closures effective immediately.” Violators may be cited for criminal trespass and removed from the area.” Penalties may include confiscation of watercraft and suspension and/or revocation of fishing, hunting and recreation licenses along with monetary fines.

For more information on this closure contact Tom McDonald, Georgia Smies or Germaine White at 675-2700.