

Executive Summary

Over the years the geographic area of Utah has unfortunately become home to several aquatic invasive species (AIS). Some AIS that exist in other areas of the nation and world have not yet made their way to Utah, it is feared they could. Prior to 2007, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources only committed a small part of one staff person's time to the problem, although biologists statewide occasionally directed their efforts toward specific local AIS problems. Universities, tribal, federal, state and local government agencies, including private interests and organized sportsman groups also on occasion directed some effort toward the AIS problem. The advancing threat from *Dreissenid* mussels, of which the quagga mussel was found in Lake Mead during January 2007, spurred the state of Utah to action. It was the "straw that broke the camel's back." Threats and impacts from the multitude of AIS already in the state, not to mention those on their way, became fully recognized as needing more attention.

The Utah Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force, representing a multitude of tribal, federal, state, and local government agencies; water user interests; and organized fishing groups; was formed to prepare and guide implementation of this Utah Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan. The plan was subjected to public review via Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' five statewide Regional Advisor Councils and approved by Utah's Wildlife Board and the State of Utah's Governor, which led to ultimate approval by the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.

The main thrust of Utah's Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan is to deal with *Dreissenid* mussels. A second priority group consisting of New Zealand mudsnail and Eurasian watermilfoil will receive less, but significant management attention. And a third priority group, consisting of all other AIS will receive less management attention. This descending order of importance is dictated by a lack of authority and funds for management actions by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

A significant staff is now assigned within Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to implement the plan, accepting and directing assistance from cooperating partners, many of whom are members of the Utah Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force. Stable funding at a level of \$1.4 million per year has been provided for plan implementation by Utah's Legislature. Some of the Utah Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force partners have been able to secure additional funding to assist in this effort, while others are seeking funds.

Implementation of the plan is largely steeped in public outreach about AIS, coupled with pre-launch interdiction of watercraft and resultant decontaminations targeted on killing AIS being inadvertently transported by outdoor recreationists or other pathways.