

**Meeting Notes**  
**Henry's Fork Watershed Council Meeting**  
**February 17, 2009**

The second meeting of the Henry's Fork Watershed Council for 2009 was held February 17 in Rexburg at the Cottontree Conference Center. The topic of the meeting was Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS). An ANS is a non-native organism that threatens the ecological stability of native waters by disrupting the diversity or abundance of the native species.

The meeting began with introductions and community building. Immediately following, Kim Ragotzkie of the Henry's Fork Foundation gave comments from a slide presentation developed by Tom Woolf, Aquatic Plant Program Manager with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture on ANS. Kim reported of the major impacts both ecologically and economically that ANS has on areas that become infected. She also said that it is not just a problem for anglers. Invasive plants are not new to agriculture but invasive aquatic plants have now been added to the list of concerns because of the impairment it causes in canals, ditches and irrigation structures. Idaho does have a Noxious Weed Law to control listed species and gives Idaho counties authority to implement programs for better education and eradication. According to Kim, early detection and rapid response is very critical to the containment and eradication of new infestations.

The Council then heard from Bryce Fowler, Fremont County Weed Supervisor. Bryce gave an overview of the Idaho ANS program and the Henry's Lake Eurasian Watermilfoil Project. Eurasian Watermilfoil is native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa. It spreads by seed and also by fragmentation of the plant. Since it was recognized as a very aggressive risk to Idaho, Fremont County applied for a grant with the help of the High Country RC&D to begin a program to address this. Educational materials were developed, pressure washers and boat washes were purchased, and training sessions were held before the fishing season opened at Henry's Lake in 2008. With one season behind them, Fremont County will continue the program into 2009. If Eurasian Watermilfoil was found in Henry's Lake, the fishery would be gone within five years.

Bryce shared pictures of New Zealand Mudsnails and Zebra and Quagga Mussels and talked about how easy it would be to spread from water to water on watercraft and fishing gear. These invasives are very prolific and can clog water intakes at dam sites and hydropower facilities. According to Bryce, if mussels were found in Idaho, it would cost an estimated \$97 million per year to control. Bryce talked about how education and outreach will be a key component to controlling the spread of aquatic plants and animals including educating people about dumping domestic aquariums in public waters, and letting unwanted exotic pets go in the wild.

Lee Mabey of the Caribou-Targhee National was up next. Lee spoke to the group about the spread of ANS species and the effect it has had. New Zealand mud snails were first discovered in the United States at Hagerman, Idaho. It is not only spread by humans but birds can spread the snails. It only takes one to start a new colony. A better coordinated effort has developed between states and the local National Parks and National Forests have partnered through the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) to develop programs that address the threat of ANS throughout the Greater Yellowstone Area. Currently, the GYCC is finalizing an implementation plan that will guide efforts for prevention, education, and inventorying and surveying.

After a break, Dave Kumlien, Executive Director of Trout Unlimited's Whirling Disease Foundation discussed whirling disease, ANS, and changes in the angling industry to address concerns of spreading invasives and disease between waterways and watersheds. The Whirling Disease Foundation (WDF) was established in 1995 in Bozeman, Montana. In 2007 the WDF merged into TUs Cold Water Conservation Fund to expand the whirling disease model to address ANS also. Dave spoke of the economic impacts of the Great Lakes where water users spend \$30 million annually to monitor and control zebra mussels.

TU has undertaken an education and outreach role within their organization to reach out to the public with more information about ANS and what they can do to reduce the threat. One of the measures implemented by TU was their policy for no felt soles on fishing waders by 2011. In a study by scientists throughout the west, it was found that "The average angler in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is carrying 22.10 g of sediment on their boots and waders..." It was also found that there is potential that the sediment transport would move ANS between waters. Fishing retailers are working on product alternatives that will address this problem; new products have already been tested and are offered to the public. In discussion regarding other fishing gear, TUs consensus was that there is no single treatment to control all ANS but the best approach is to keep it simple, straightforward, and basic as possible. TU joined the Federation of Fly Fishers clean angling pledge to inspect and clean gear and to thoroughly dry it as well as to never transport any fish, plants or animals from one body of water to another.

A final community building session was held before the meeting adjourned at noon.