

June 4, 2008

**RE: Bottom Barriers for Eurasian Water Milfoil**

Dear Permittee,

The following information describes efforts the Eurasian Water Milfoil Task Force (Task Force) is taking to limit the spread of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). Please read this information completely. The Task Force is made up of the following organizations: Montana Department of Agriculture, Avista Utilities, Sanders County, MFWP, Noxon Cabinet Shoreline Coalition, Green Mountain Conservation District, DNRC, CSKT, Tristate Water Quality Council, and MSU Extension Service

The Task Force is moving forward with plans to install bottom barriers to suppress Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) in some areas. The barriers will be installed in areas that have a concentrated population of EWM and experience high boat traffic. Based on your response to the post card questionnaire sent out in March 2008, you may be eligible to receive bottom barriers for your dock at a reduced cost.

The barriers will be installed on inundated land owned by Avista Utilities and the US Forest Service. Both organizations have obtained the needed permission for the barriers to be installed. In addition, Avista and the Task Force have received the following permits for barrier installation: 404 permit from the US Army Corps. of Engineers, 318 permit from Montana Department of Environmental Quality and a 310 permit from Green Mountain Conservation District. The permits are specific as to the type and method of barrier installation. Adjacent landowners cannot install home made barriers as they are not covered by the above permits.

The bottom barriers are made of 3 ounce spun bound landscape fabric attached to a weighted PVC pipe frame. The barriers will be installed in 10' square sections by a professional diver. At this time installation is scheduled for late June, weather permitting. Although these barriers have been used with some success in Idaho, this effort is experimental in a reservoir environment. The barriers will be removed in September and their performance will be evaluated for future use. The barriers remain the property of the contractor. If the barriers are beneficial and permits for long term use are received, there could be an annual maintenance costs for installation, moving and repair of the barriers for those dock owners that are interested.

The installed cost of the bottom barriers is \$1.00 per square foot or \$100.00 for each 10' square section. Installation of the bottom barriers will be funded through a grant received from the Noxious Weed Trust Fund, funding from Avista Utilities and interested dock owners. Based on available funds and projected need, interested dock owners may have the opportunity for up to 800 square feet of bottom barriers. Dock owners that request bottom barriers will be charged \$250.00 (a \$550.00 savings). Please note the following conditions:

- The bottom barriers cannot be used to target native plants
- The barriers are intended to provide limited boat mooring and access to open water, not suppress all aquatic vegetation.
- Limited additional barriers can be purchased by the dock owner if necessary at \$1.00 per square foot.
- Bottom barriers may not be installed in all requested locations.

**If you are interested in bottom barriers please fill out and sign the enclosed form. Please estimate the number of 10' sections you will need.**

I am hopeful that everyone participating in this program understands that bottom barriers are experimental and that coordination of this work is going to be challenging. We will attempt to get the needed barriers installed in a timely fashion and are optimistic that they will be beneficial. I do not expect things to go perfectly so please be patient.

I am grateful for all the help provided by Jim Marshall of the Noxon Cabinet Shoreline Coalition. Jim has many, many hours of work researching EWM control and assisting with the details of this program. I encourage you to give thanks to Jim too, as all of this would have been much more difficult without his assistance and leadership.

I look forward to implementing this project and I am optimistic that this will be a big help. When firm installation dates are set I will contact all the individuals that have requested bottom barriers. Please contact me by phone or email if you have questions.

Respectfully,

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