

Study: Not All Montanans Aware of Invasive Mussels

Just 21 percent of residents knew about water closures last fall due to aquatic mussels or parasites

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MISSOULA — A new report suggests state agencies should take advantage of social media to inform younger residents of the threat that invasive aquatic species pose to Montana waterways.

A University of Montana study found that while nearly three-fourths of state residents

participate in outdoor water recreation activities, just 21 percent knew about water closures last fall due to aquatic mussels or parasites.

The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research surveyed nearly 12,000 adults at gas stations and rest areas and found less than half of those between the ages of 18 and 25 knew about the November closures at Tiber and Canyon Ferry reservoirs due to mussel larvae or the Yellowstone River closure due to a parasite that was killing fish in August.

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Institute director Norma Nickerson says if young people don't know about the threats, the spread of invasive aquatic species is more likely.