The Battle Against Aquatic Invasive Species

Protecting Western Waters Through Partnership

Preventing introductions of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and detecting infestations early remains among the highest return on investment opportunities for AIS management nationwide. As Congress considers reauthorizing the Water Resources Development Act of 2026 and enacting Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 appropriations, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Aquatic Plant Control and Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Program (APC-WID) Program is a foundational component of AIS prevention and management efforts.

The APC-WID partnership supports federal, state, and tribal prevention-focused AIS management across the West. Continued congressional support, clear implementation guidance, sustainable appropriations, and strong federal-state-tribal partnerships are essential to protecting western waters, economies, infrastructure, fisheries, and natural resources from the growing threat of aquatic invasive species.

Aquatic Invasive Species

AIS include certain freshwater mussels, aquatic plants, fish species, and more. Once established, they pose a growing threat to western waters, infrastructure, fisheries, agriculture, hydropower, recreation, and local economies.

For example, invasive freshwater mussels have caused billions of dollars in economic damage across North America. If these mussels become established in the Columbia River Basin, hydropower management and mitigation costs are anticipated to exceed $500 million annually, with similar costs expected for other infrastructure systems. Other species, such as invasive northern pike, have caused substantial declines in native salmonid and sportfish populations, while plants such as flowering rush can form dense infestations that impair navigation, recreation, water delivery, and aquatic habitat.

Priority Western Aquatic Invasive Species



Quagga and zebra mussels


Golden mussels


Flowering rush


Invasive northern pike

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Aquatic Plant Control and Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Cost-Share Program

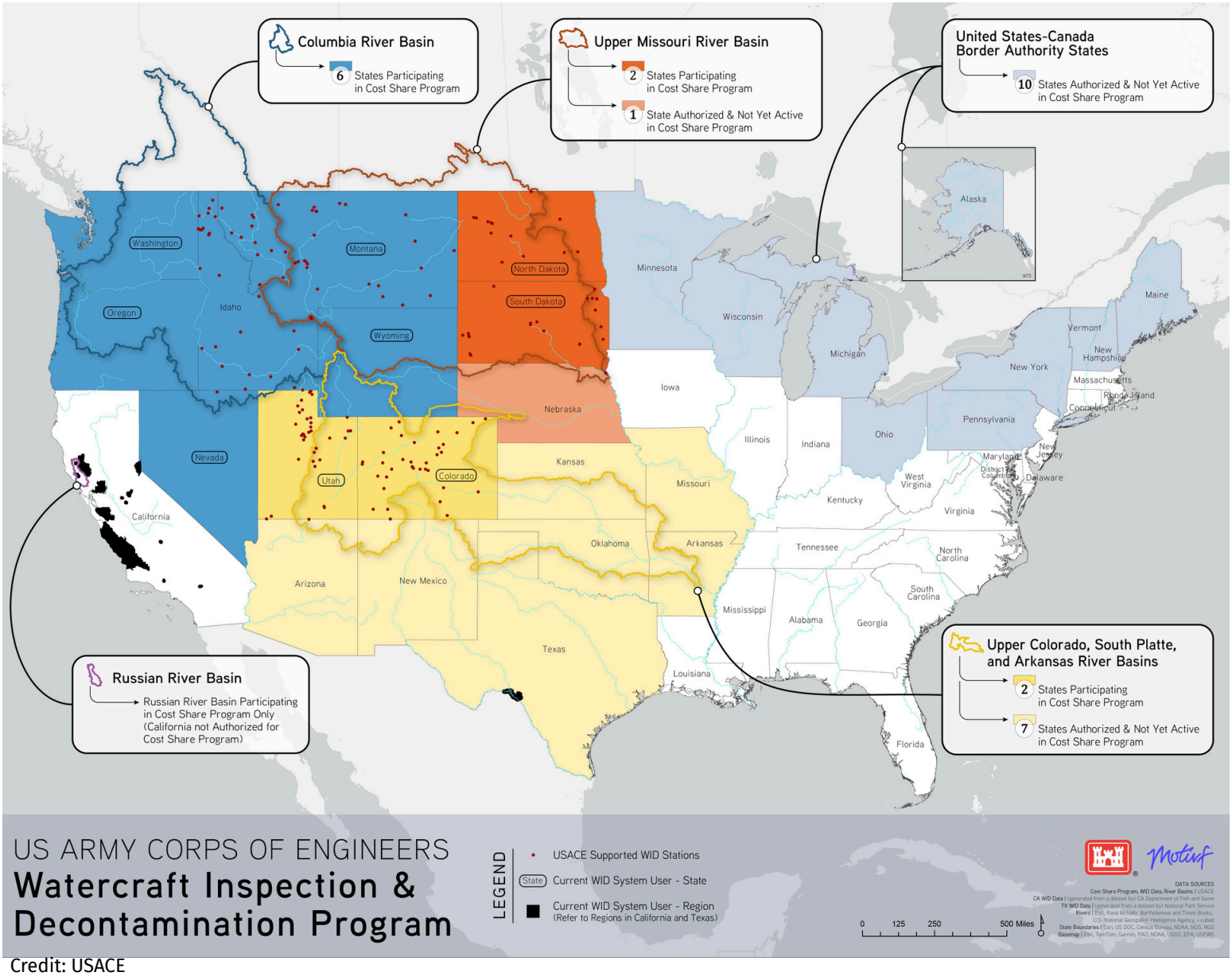
Under Section 610 of Title 33 of the United States Code (USC), Congress authorizes USACE to partner with non-federal entities to prevent, monitor, control, and respond to AIS through watercraft inspection and decontamination, monitoring, rapid response, contingency planning, aquatic invasive plant management, and related AIS management activities. To carry out its responsibilities, USACE created the APC-WID program, one of the primary federal cost-share mechanisms supporting AIS management in western states and partner jurisdictions.

Through Project Partnership Agreements and cooperative implementation arrangements, the APC-WID Program supports collaboration among states, tribal nations, interstate organizations, local governments, institutions of higher education, and other eligible non-federal entities.

The APC-WID Program provides substantial value by:

- Supporting prevention before costly establishment occurs.
- Leveraging state, tribal, and partner investments.
- Enhancing interstate coordination.
- Improving early detection capacity.
- Supporting rapid response readiness.
- Protecting critical water infrastructure and natural resources.

Prevention investments supported through APC-WID are widely recognized as among the highest return-on-investment opportunities for aquatic invasive species management nationwide.



Credit: USACE



Current Western Appropriations and Program Needs

Congress has expanded Section 610 eligibility from an initial focus on the Columbia River Basin and western basins to include additional basins and regions nationwide, including the Great Lakes and Canadian border states. As the scope of the program has increased, funding has not kept pace and the program risks being depleted – leaving western states without necessary financial support for critical prevention and monitoring activities.

In FY 2026, Congress appropriated $36.5 million to the APC-WID Program, a fraction of the $130 million authorization level, including $15 million for watercraft inspection and rapid response, $3 million for monitoring, $3 million for flowering rush, and funding for additional activities like research and development of aquatic plant control.

Current APC-WID appropriations may not fully meet:

- Implementation needs of current program participants in western states.
- Monitoring and rapid response capacity.
- Long-term prevention and preparedness goals.
- New eligible basin participation.
- Increased operational and staffing costs.

Additional pressures on available funding include:

- Increased need for interstate coordination and monitoring.
- Rising operational costs associated with watercraft inspection and decontamination programs.
- Growing invasive species threats, including golden mussels, zebra mussels, quagga mussels, flowering rush, and invasive fish species.





WRDA 2026 Reauthorization Considerations

In the 119th Congress, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works developed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2026, continuing the longstanding bipartisan practice of enacting WRDA on a two-year cycle to authorize USACE studies, construction projects, and water resources policy updates, including the APC cost-share authorities. Congress is considering two policy updates with relevance to the APC program and protection of western waters: Clarification of Indirect Cost Eligibility, and Consistent 65% Federal / 35% Non-Federal Cost Share.

Clarification of Indirect Cost Eligibility

Questions regarding whether indirect costs are eligible under APC-WID cost-share agreements have created uncertainty for participating entities. USACE asserted that indirect costs are not eligible for cost-share reimbursement, although a survey of western APC partners indicates that ten entities have been reimbursed for indirect costs in the past, including those participating through a Project Partnership Agreement directly with USACE, or indirectly as a subrecipient through an organization such as Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. Though indirect rates vary across organizations, the average is 11.3 percent, a fraction of the overall program cost.

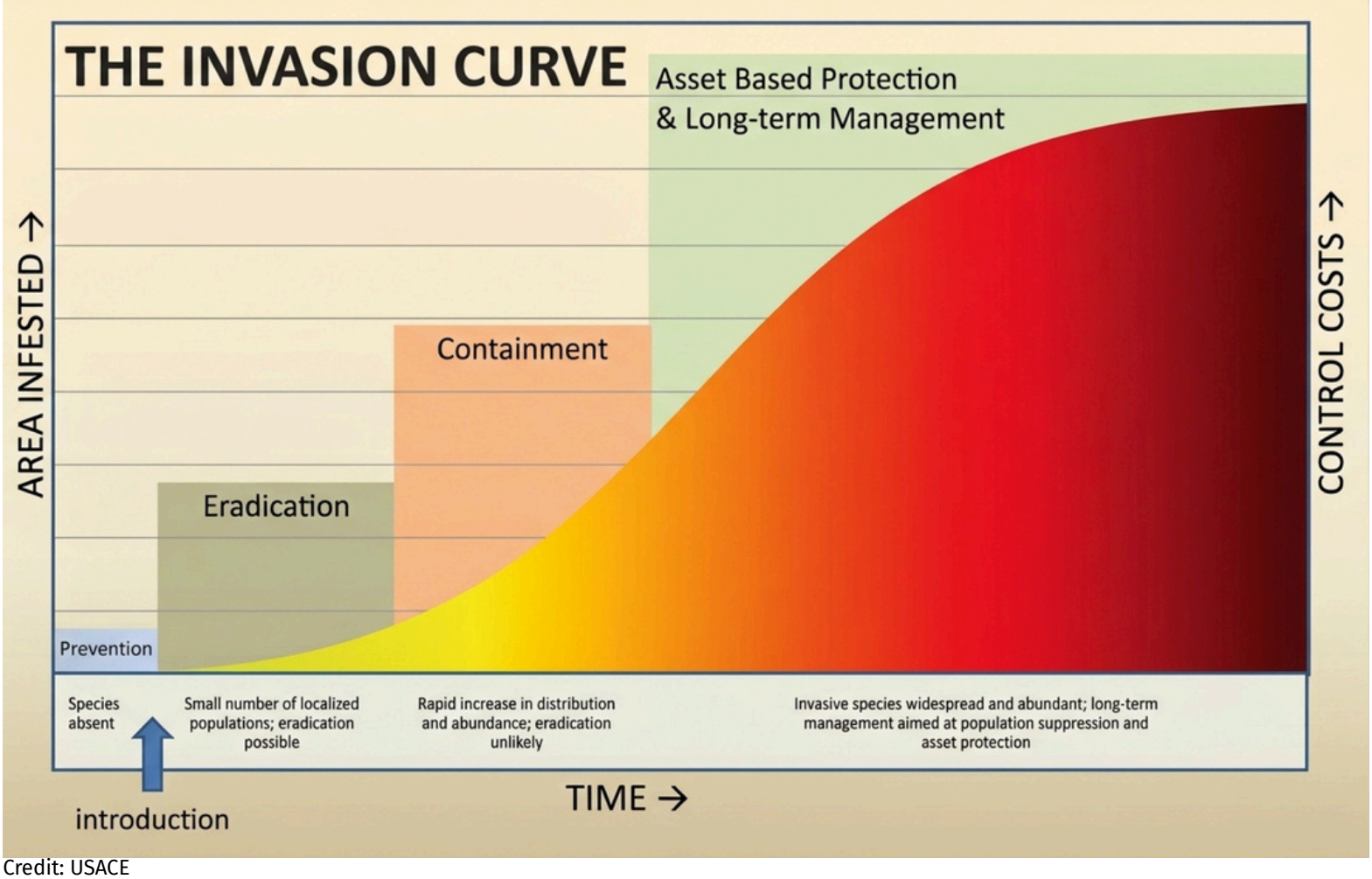
Reauthorization may clarify that:

- Reasonable, allocable, and allowable indirect costs are eligible under Section 610 partnership agreements.
- Federally negotiated indirect cost rates may be utilized consistent with standard federal grant and cooperative agreement practices.

Why It Matters:

Without indirect cost reimbursement, some non-federal entities may face reduced participation capacity or increased pressure on limited state and tribal funding sources:

- States and tribes may need to identify additional non-federal funding sources.
- Existing APC participation capacity could be reduced.
- Prevention and monitoring activities may be constrained.
- Smaller jurisdictions may face disproportionate administrative burdens.



Credit: USACE

Consistent 65% Federal / 35% Non-Federal Cost Share

Current APC cost-share requirements vary by activity category. Watercraft inspection and rapid response activities currently use a 65% federal / 35% non-federal cost share. Monitoring and contingency planning activities have a 50% federal / 50% non-federal cost share. Participating organizations have identified this inconsistency as a constraint on expanding monitoring and preparedness activities.

Reauthorization could:

- Apply a consistent 65% federal / 35% non-federal cost-share structure across all authorized APC activities.
- Improve state and tribal ability to expand monitoring and contingency planning efforts.
- Strengthen prevention and rapid response capacity nationwide.

APC-WID Funding Scenarios

(Dollars in millions)

Activity	Estimated annual non-federal contributions	Federal funding: current status	Federal funding: consistent 65%/35% cost share	Federal funding: consistent 65%/35% cost share plus eligible indirect costs*
Watercraft inspection activities	$13.93	$25.88	$25.88	$28.80
Rapid response	$1.58	$1.58	$2.93	$3.62
Monitoring	$4.08	$4.08	$7.58	$8.44
Contingency planning	$0.23	$0.23	$0.42	$0.47
Flowering rush control	$0.36	$0.36	$0.67	$0.75
Invasive northern pike suppression	$1.22	$1.22	$2.26	$2.51
Additional eligible activities	$0.04	$0.04	$0.07	$0.08
Total need	**$21.43**	**$33.38**	**$39.80**	**$44.30**

* Indirect rates vary across organizations; this chart uses the 11.3% average reported by states to estimate federal cost-share funding.

Western Governors' Association APC Survey Project

The Western Governors' Association (WGA), in partnership with the State of Washington, conducted a survey of AIS cost-share partners across western states and territories, including tribal nations and interstate partners participating in activities authorized under 33 USC 610.

The survey collected high-level information about current APC-WID program activities, estimated non-federal implementation costs, program coordination and operational needs, indirect cost considerations, and potential effects of federal policy proposals being considered in 2026 WRDA reauthorization and appropriations discussions.

Survey results are intended to help participating jurisdictions and federal partners better understand the regional scope, value, and implementation needs associated with aquatic invasive species prevention, monitoring, rapid response, and management activities across the West.

WGA received 19 survey responses, including:
California (Sonoma Water); Colorado (Colorado Parks and Wildlife); Idaho (Idaho State Department of Agriculture); Montana (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks); North Dakota (North Dakota Game and Fish Department); Oregon (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland State University Center for Lakes and Reservoirs); South Dakota (South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks); Utah (Utah Department of Natural Resources, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources); Washington (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Recreation and Conservation Office, Washington State University); Wyoming (Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

Tribal nation participants:
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Kalispel Tribe of Indians; Nez Perce Tribe; Spokane Tribe of Indians

Interstate organization participant:
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Participating Organizations

Sonoma Water
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Idaho State Department of Agriculture
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
North Dakota Game and Fish
Oregon Fish & Wildlife
Center for Lakes and Reservoirs
South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks
Utah DNR Natural Resources
Utah Wildlife Resources
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
Washington State University
Wyoming Game & Fish Department
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Kalispel Tribe of Indians
Nez Perce Tribe Treaty of 1855
Spokane Tribe of Indians
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission