

Rapid Response Exercise

Lake Koocanusa, October 4 & 5, 2011, Libby, Montana

After Action Report

I. Overview

This document is the after action report on the Rapid Response Exercise held in the fall of 2011 in Libby, MT, 2011 testing Montana's implementation of the **Columbia River Basin Interagency Invasive Species Rapid Response Plan (CRB Plan)**. It includes an overview of the exercise, outcomes, recommendations, and summary.

The exercise scenario included a confirmed finding of dreissenid larvae in Lake Koocanusa near Libby, MT. The exercise was conducted over a two-day period. The morning of October 4 consisted of introductions, an overview of the Incident Command System (ICS) Planning Process, and a review of the CRB Plan.

After the initial training, participants were assigned to incident command system branches and positions, and participated in hands-on training activities that addressed tasks necessary during the first operational period of response. In one activity, participants divided themselves into two Operations branches based on personal experience. The Containment Branch had to decide on the best approach to containing the infestation, such as shutting down all access, decontaminating boats entering and leaving the waterbody, initiating a drawdown of the lake, or a combination of the three. The Monitoring Branch developed a plan to pinpoint the source of the infestation and ascertain whether other waterbodies in the region were also infested. The hatchery would be thoroughly tested, and crews would be sent out to survey other popular state waters. Waterbodies would be prioritized for surveying based on known boater usage and movement.

These activities carried through into the next day, and concluded with the presentation to the Multi-Agency Command (MAC) Group, Joint Information Center (JIC) conference call, and closeout.

Methodology-This Rapid Response exercise was developed by an interagency design team from the affected agencies within the State of Montana, the Province of British Columbia, and the 100th Meridian Initiative Columbia River Basin Team. The design team included:

Stephen Phillips	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Paul Heimowitz	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Joanne Grady	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Matthias Herborg	British Columbia Ministry of Environment
Eileen Ryce	Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Margaret Dimmick	Incident Concepts

The table-top exercise was facilitated by Margaret Dimmick of Incident Concepts. A participant list is included as Appendix A.

The evaluation process included a course evaluation completed by all attendees, additional post-exercise input from participants, and assessment by the facilitators. Results are described in **Section II: Outcomes**, and **Section III: Recommendations**.

Goals and Objectives-

- To test and further refine the Rapid Response protocol and mechanisms specific to increase coordination between the US and Canada (British Columbia) under the *Columbia River Basin Interagency Invasive Species Response Plan: Zebra Mussels and Other Dreissenid Species*.
- To further develop a containment strategy for watercraft moving in and out of an infested waterbody.

These goals fall under the overall 2008-2013 exercise strategy associated with the CRB Plan.

The exercise objectives included:

1. Provide an overview of roles and responsibilities under the CRB Plan and the ICS planning process.
2. Engage the Province of British Columbia and other Canadian authorities as warranted, in the multi-jurisdictional response structure established in the Plan.
3. Increase coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and other state, federal, and tribal agencies.
4. Develop a containment strategy for watercraft entering and leaving an infested waterbody in the state of Montana and the Province of British Columbia.
5. Exercise the Joint Information Center (JIC).
6. Provide ICS training to participants.
7. Through creation of an *After Action Report*, use products and lessons learned from the Exercise to refine the Plan and stimulate further planning specific to Montana and British Columbia.

II. Outcomes

General Observations (collected from participant and facilitator feedback):

- The Operations Section developed a workable response to the scenario involving boat inspection stations set up at several junctures in both Montana and Canada that would intercept all highway traffic in the area.
- Limitations, restrictions, and shortfalls identified in the exercise can be taken back to home agencies and used to enhance planning and intergovernmental agreements.
- Montana participants felt it would be very useful to conduct an exercise like this on the eastern side of the divide, which would involve many different players such as the Bureau of Reclamation.
- The exercise forced participants to consider issues that had not been looked at significantly, such as the limitations that exist for addressing a mussel infestation by adjusting water levels in Lake Koocanusa.
- The exercise further developed relationships between and among participants. The networking among participants was extremely valuable.

- The exercise facilitated new connections with the Province of British Columbia, the Corps of Engineers, the US Forest Service, and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks that will benefit overall rapid response capacity in the Columbia Basin.
- The exercise was too short; 2 full days plus one half would have allowed for a more complete exercise
- A field trip to the lake or hatchery would have added more realism to the event.
- The choice of using a remote location like Libby was a good opportunity to run through the exercise with limited cell phone and internet availability.
- Still not convinced that we are ready for a real event, we need more practice.
- Allow more time to flesh out solutions in more detail.
- Additional complications should have been added to the scenario (e.g., hatchery was contaminated and had stocked fish in another waterbody).
- Develop more of the detailed tactics and actually call out to resource providers to see if they could provide necessary resources under the scenario circumstances.
- The exercise structure promoted collaboration and communication between all entities.
- There needs to be a more complete review session after the whole exercise.
- The remote JIC worked but would have been more effective had those Public Information Officers (PIOs) been on scene.
- Develop a list of ICS-trained personnel in every pertinent agency.
- Try to put together a regional team or teams that could train together for a real incident. People could apply for positions for 2-3 years.
- More and smaller break-out groups would have been useful.

Objective-Specific Comments

Objective-specific Comments and observations made by the participants and evaluators have been listed under the most appropriate objective.

1. Provide an overview of roles and responsibilities under the Plan and the ICS planning process.

Met X Did not meet Not observed

- Met during the training portion of the exercise.
- While the presentation of the ICS Planning Process was an adequate overview, and met the objective, ICS training for the agencies represented continues to be an issue that needs additional follow up (see additional discussion under **Recommendations** below).

2. Engage the Province of British Columbia and other Canadian authorities as warranted in the multi-jurisdictional response structure established in the plan.

Met X Did not meet Not observed

- The province of British Columbia was well-represented and participated in every aspect of the exercise, including participating in the MAC Group Meeting.

- Canadian participants stated their resolve to continue the conversation with other key players once they returned home.
- Additionally, the exercise increased AIS awareness within British Columbia and an increase in awareness of AIS efforts in neighboring states.

3. Increase coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and other state, federal, and tribal agencies.

Met X Did not meet Not observed

- It was very important that the Corps of Engineers participated. They had insight and information that no one else could have supplied.
- Tribal participation was lower than desired.
- Participation by regional state agency staff was low due to conflicts. Additional exercises will be conducted to increase awareness of the ICS response system in the regions.

4. Develop a containment strategy for watercraft entering and leaving an infested waterbody in the state of Montana and the Province of British Columbia.

Met X Did not meet Not observed

- The Operations team developed a containment strategy that allowed continued public access to Lake Koocanusa and focused on decontaminating every boat entering or leaving the area.
- As British Columbia does not currently have mandatory boat inspection stations, an emergency order or directive would have to be issued for this strategy to work.
- It was unclear how float planes could be properly decontaminated, and how Ops could reach those users.

5. Exercise the Joint Information Center (JIC).

Met Met Partially X Not observed

- The JIC was activated remotely via conference call. Some participants felt that this method was effective; others felt the goal of the JIC was compromised by not meeting in person.
- A mock press release about the infestation was generated. *(note-a related exercise objective to produce a real press release about the exercise via the JIC was not achieved).*

6. Provide ICS training to participants.

Met X Met Partially Not observed

- Participants were strongly encouraged to complete web-based ICS training prior to coming to the Exercise. About three-quarters of attendees completed the training.
 - A video demonstrating the ICS was shown during the first day, and ICS structure and methodology was used throughout the course of the exercise. The majority of participants said that their understanding of ICS was greatly increased by attending the Exercise.
7. Through creation of an After Action Report, use products and lessons learned from the exercise to refine the Plan and stimulate further planning specific to Montana and British Columbia.

Met X Did not meet Not observed

III. Recommendations

Recommendations, shortfall category, and responsible entity are identified in the following table.

Issue 1: Recommendations for General Preparedness Shortfall Category: Planning

- Check on opportunities to tap into FEMA for money and resources if an event is declared an emergency.
- Follow up with State Department and/or International Joint Commission regarding how to expedite flow of money between U.S. and Canadian response organizations.
- Set up system (and provide associated “launch” criteria) to bring in Type 3 ICS teams to help fill roles where ICS knowledge is more important than AIS knowledge (e.g., Finance and Logistics).
- Work with FAA and Canadian counterpart to develop process for restricting float plane operations.
- Create dedicated internet and/or Facebook page during a real event as a way to provide information to stakeholders.
- Better define process and criteria for considering alterations to lock and dam operations as a way to contain spread.

Issue 2: Recommendations for Plan Changes

- Change Figure 3 to better reflect realities of how calls are made/routed.
- Add Canadian counterparts to Figure 4.
- Update notification lists, including a new column that briefly notes the individual’s ICS experience.
- As needed, add new material that corresponds to recommendations under #1 above.

- Include provision about providing information on response via personal use of social media from responders.
- Create a new plan appendix that provides Lake Koocanusa exercise forms 202-206 as examples.

Issue 3: Recommendations for Future Exercises:

- Less training, more problem solving (e.g., deal with implications if hatchery had been contaminated).

Recommendations for CRB Plan Participants

- For Montana, to host additional regional Rapid Response Exercises that would pull other groups and agencies in, such as the Bureau of Reclamation.
- For British Columbia, to start a discussion about the current limitations the Province would face if confronted with an infestation.
 - There are currently no boat washing stations and staff trained in watercraft decontamination available in British Columbia.
 - Closer collaboration with the Federal Government, in particular the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the First Nations is imperative for an effective response.
 - Establish regulations prohibiting the movement of zebra and quagga mussels into British Columbia (and other provinces).
 - Determine if British Columbia Environmental Emergency Declaration Regulation could be applied to mussel infestations.
 - Develop a British Columbia zebra and quagga mussel rapid response plan.
 - Hold a British Columbia-specific rapid response exercise to allow wider participation of federal, provincial and regional government, without the difficulty of international travel.

IV. Summary

This exercise was the fifth Rapid Response Exercise undertaken for the Columbia River Basin Plan but the first to focus on including Canadian partners in all stages of the exercise. All attendees responded that this emphasis on Canadian participation was highly beneficial. Canadian participants expressed their belief that their involvement in the exercise would be helpful as they pushed for stronger AIS-related regulations and more comprehensive prevention, monitoring, and education programs in Canada. Attendees reported that the ICS training that was provided increased their understanding of that system, and of the roles and responsibilities that the cooperating groups and agencies would play in such a scenario.

Appendix A: Exercise participant list (*participated by phone; (1) MAC conference call participant)

Name	Organization
Paul Heimowitz (1)	US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Stephen Phillips	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Eileen Ryce	Montana Dept of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Amy Ferriter	Idaho Department of Agriculture
Joanne Grady	USFWS Region 6
Karen Zackheim	Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Cameron Thomas	United States Forest Service
Les Jantz	Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, Pacific Region
Charlie Comer	United States Army Corps of Engineers
Graham Moffat	Canada Border Services Agency
Greg Hoffman	United States Army Corps of Engineers
Crystal Klym	Central Kootenay Invasive Plant Council
Stacy Schmidt	Montana Dept of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Matthias Herborg*(1)	British Columbia Ministry of Environment
James Boyd	US Forest Service, Rexford District
Mark Maskill	USFWS, Creston National Fish Hatchery
Eric Hanson	Flathead Basin Commission
Rick Boatner	Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Linnaea Schroeer	Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Carl Klein	Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Sheila Street	FortisBC (Hydropower Company)
Kyle Johnson	National Park Service, Glacier National Park
Marty Hafke	Eastern Kootenay Invasive Plant Council
Margaret Dimmick (Facilitator)	Incident Concepts
Tom Palmer (*)	Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Leith Edgar (*)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Emily Laing (*)	British Columbia Ministry of Environment

Appendix B: Other Information and Notes:

According to Canadian Customs and Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, goods such as watercraft washing stations that are temporarily imported into Canada on behalf of a federal provincial, or municipal employee involved in coordinating an emergency response or for use in an emergency response training exercise are free of duties and tax exempt under the authority of Customs Tariff Item No. 9993.00.00 and the Goods for Emergency Use Remission Order as long as the goods are to be used in an emergency situation that fits the following definition:

“emergency” means an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that

- (a) Is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province or municipality to deal with it;
- (b) Is caused by and actual or imminent
 - (i) Fire, flood, drought, storm, earthquake, or other natural phenomenon
 - (ii) Disease in human beings, animals or plants,
 - (iii) Accident or pollution, or
 - (iv) Act of sabotage or terrorism; and
- (c) Results or may result in
 - (i) Danger to the lives, health or safety of individuals,
 - (ii) Danger to property,
 - (iii) Social disruption, or
 - (iv) A breakdown in the flow of essential goods, services, or resources.

In the event of such an emergency, it is recommended that wherever possible, responsible authorities contact the Canada Border Services Agency in order to provide specific ports of entry with advance notice of the intent to import goods in response to an emergency. Alternatively, responsible authorities may wish to contact specific ports of entry directly. For Kootenay Area Ports, responsible authorities may wish to contact a Superintendent and/or Chief of Operations via the CBSA Port of Kingsgate: 250-424-5391.

Likewise, it is advisable that a Temporary Admission Permit, CBSA Form E29B be completed and presented to the CBSA in order to facilitate the clearance of emergency goods. According to CBSA Memorandum D8-1-1, “No security deposit will be collected and, where the inspecting CBSA officer deems it necessary, only a simple blotter record on a Form E29B will be kept describing the goods in general terms.” Special Authority Code: 73-2529 and Memorandum D8-1-1 should be cited in box 6 of the Temporary Admission Permit, CBSA Form E29B.

For further details and instructions see CBSA Memorandum D8-1-1: <http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/publications/dm-md/d8/d8-1-1-eng.pdf>

For an electronically fillable Temporary Admission Permit, CBSA Form E29B: <http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/publications/forms-formulaires/e29b.pdf>

Similarly, emergency service providers (i.e. emergency service personnel required to operate the emergency watercraft washing stations) that are not Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents of Canada may work in Canada without a work permit under R186(t) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations provided the purpose of entry is for rendering urgent services in times of emergency. According to departmental policy as outlined in Section 5.21 of the FW 1 Temporary Foreign Worker Guidelines,

The intent of R186(t) is to facilitate the admission of persons who come to Canada for the purpose of rendering services in times of emergency. These services should be aimed at preserving life and property. The emergency may be the result of natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and fires. It may also be the result of industrial or commercial accidents threatening the environment or it may simply be a medical emergency where admission should be facilitated to preserve life regardless of whether it involves one or more persons.

For non-urgent emergency situations, US citizen-emergency service personnel are not exempt from a work permit. However, as long as an applicable bilateral agreement exists between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States (such as the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States on Co-operation in Comprehensive Civil Emergency Planning and Management, 1986), emergency service personnel may be exempt from seeking a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) from the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) using LMO exemption code: T11 – Canada-International Non-Trade Agreements, R204(a). In this case, US citizen-emergency service personnel can simply apply for a work permit at a CBSA port of entry.

Wherever possible, non-Canadian citizen and non-permanent resident emergency service personnel should be prepared to present documentary evidence (e.g. a letter of introduction from the BC Ministry of the Environment or other responsible authority) sufficient to satisfy an officer that an emergency situation exists and that such situation requires the presence of international emergency service personnel.

For further details, see Section 5.21 and Section 5.27 of the FW 1 Temporary Foreign Worker Guidelines: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/fw/fw01-eng.pdf> and the “Emergency Services” category of FW 2 Temporary Foreign Worker: Quick Reference Guide: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/fw/fw02-eng.pdf>.