



Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter

1420 East Sixth Ave • Helena, MT 59601 • 406-444-2440 • CleanDrainDryMT.com

June 2020

Note from the AIS Bureau:

The summer boating season is here. Watercraft inspection stations are conducting record numbers of inspections with boaters eager to get out of the house and on the water. We are also seeing a lot of boats coming in from out of state, presenting an elevated risk of invasive species transport.

Fortunately, we have a great group of people around the state working long hours to inspect boats and educate the boating public about the AIS issues. Thank you to everyone around the state who helps protect our waters from aquatic invasive species.

Watercraft Inspection

All watercraft inspection stations are now open except for the Eureka station due to the ongoing border closure with Canada. Most stations are now operating during daylight hours seven days a week.

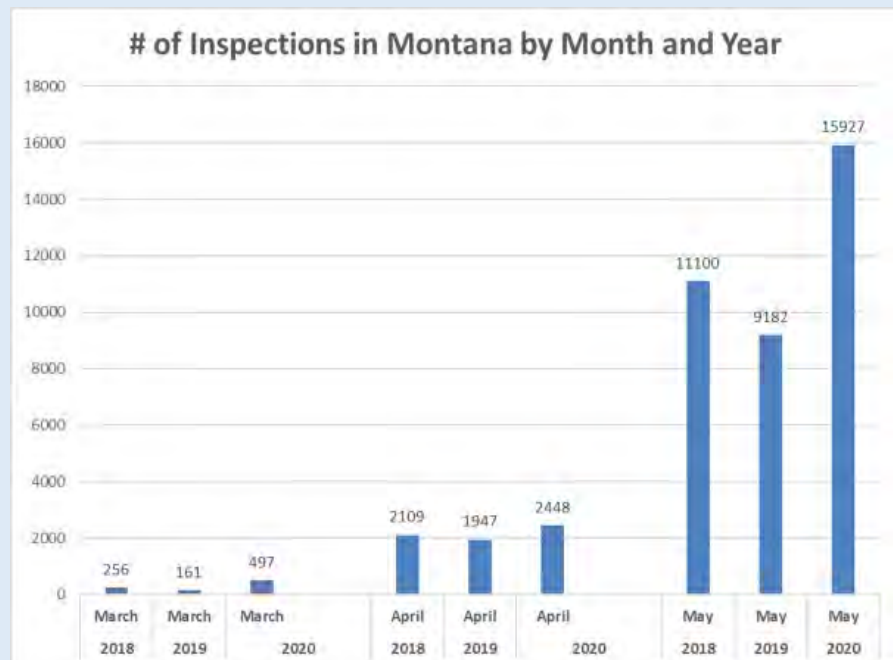
Changes for 2020 boating season include new COVID-19 safety requirements, an updated training curriculum, new quality assurance / quality control (QA/QC) protocols and targeted enforcement to address compliance. COVID-19 safety protocols include mandatory six-foot social distancing, masks and regular cleaning of equipment and surfaces.

As of June 30, more than 44,000 watercraft have been inspected.

Watercraft inspection data is available on the [AIS Dashboard](#) and will be updated weekly.

Inspection stations are busier than ever, with early season numbers higher than previous years. Out of state boat traffic is also higher, presenting an elevated risk of AIS transport into the state.

More information on watercraft inspection operations can be found here: [Watercraft Inspection](#).

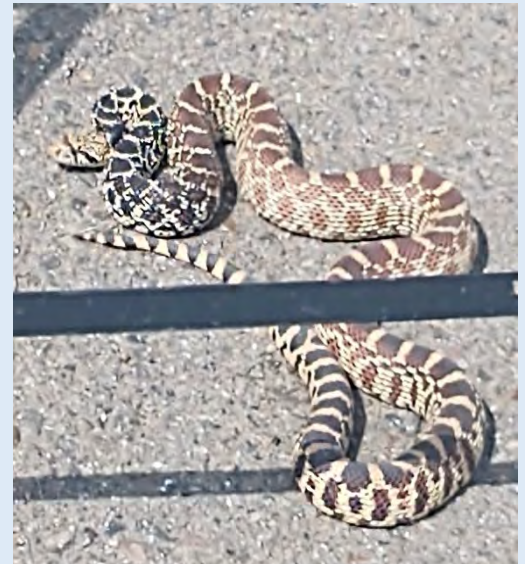




Red Rim Melania snails

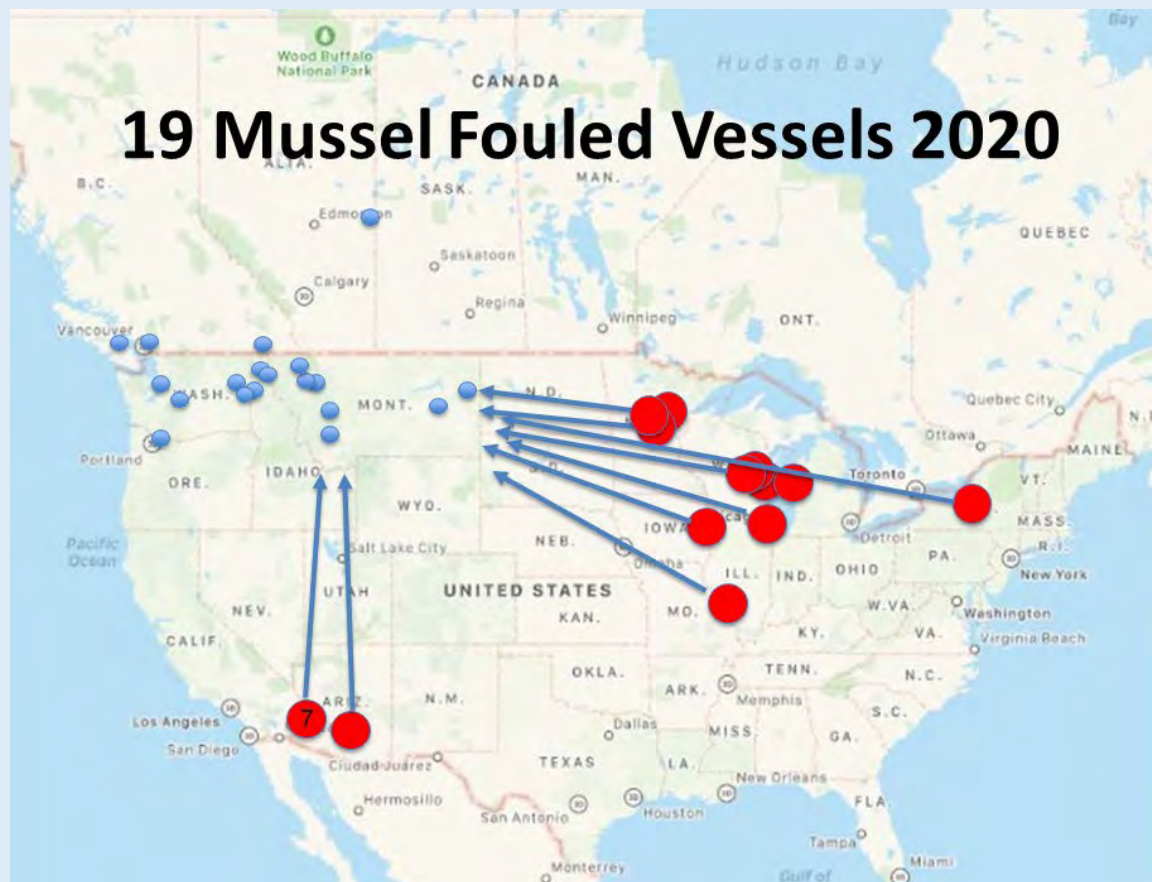
Inspectors find more than mussels on boats. Red rim melania snails are an aquarium species that is found in Lake Havasu. Inspectors at the Anaconda station identified them on a boat earlier this season.

The crew at the Flowing Wells station also found something unexpected on a boat this season. A sizeable bull snake surprised inspectors when it emerged from a boat during an inspection in May.



Bull snake at Flowing Wells station

Mussel Fouled Vessels: 19 mussel fouled vessels have been intercepted so far this season at the Anaconda, Dillon, Flowing Wells, Hardin and Nashua watercraft inspection stations.



Date	Inspection Station	Boat Type	Origin	Destination
3/16/2020	Dillon	Outboard Pontoon	Arizona	Creston, BC
3/21/2020	Dillon	Outboard Pontoon	Lake Havasu, AZ	Jordan, MT
3/24/2020	Dillon	Outboard Pontoon	Lake Havasu, AZ	Lloydminster, AB
4/22/2020	Dillon	Sailboat	Lake Pleasant, AZ	Preist River, ID
4/29/2020	Dillon	I/O Pontoon	Lake Havasu, AZ	Hauser Reservoir, MT
5/1/2020	Anaconda	Outboard Pontoon	Lake Havasu, AZ	Columbia Falls, MT
5/2/2020	Anaconda	outboard pontoon	Mississippi River, IA	Lakeside, MT
5/20/2020	Hardin	Inboard Jet Motor	Geneva Lake, WI	Georgetown Lake, MT
5/21/2020	Dillon	Outboard Fishing boat	Lake Havasu, AZ	Deer Park, WA
5/24/2020	Anaconda	Cabin Cruiser/Yacht	Mississippi River, IL	Priest Lake, ID
5/28/2020	Flowing Wells	Pontoon Boat	Minnesota	Fort Peck, MT
5/30/2020	Dillon	Pontoon Boat	Lake Mohave, AZ	Post Falls, ID
6/5/2020	Anaconda	Cabin Cruiser	Illinois	Belview, WA
6/7/2020	Nashua	Sail Boat	Lake Michigan, WI	Blain, WA then BC
6/12/2020	Anaconda	Outboard Fishing boat	Lake Winnebago, WI	Vancouver, WA
6/15/2020	Anaconda	I/O pleasurecraft	New York	Manson, WA
6/19/2020	Hardin	Cabin Cruiser	Mille Lacs Lake, MN	Vancouver, BC
6/20/2020	Anaconda	Sailboat	Lake Michigan, MI	Lake Pendoreille, ID
6/28/2020	Nashua	Outboard Pontoon	Lake Pleasant, MN	Whitefish, MT



FWP Enforcement staff issued over 80 citations and 95 warnings from May 1 through June 24. FWP wardens have increased enforcement efforts this season focusing on watercraft inspection stations that have a high drive-by rate. They have conducted 116 traffic stops.

Early Detection Monitoring

The AIS monitoring team has begun collecting AIS early detection samples for the 2020 season. To date, 389 of 435 collected samples from Montana have been analyzed for mussel veligers. For Tiber reservoir 19 samples have been analyzed so far this season with no dreissenid veliger detections.

- Faucet snails were identified in two new locations in northwestern Montana in Smith and Lost Coon Lakes.

Faucet snails are known to occur in the Flathead Basin as well as several other locations in the state. More information about faucet snails can be found here:

[FWP mollusks](#) and [USFWS faucet snail](#).



Faucet Snail

- FWP is working with the Custer Gallatin National Forest to eradicate curlyleaf pondweed (CLPW) in three newly acquired ponds on Slip and Slide Creek near Gardiner. Because the dams are at risk of failure, the Forest Service plans to drain the ponds and they are taking precautions to reduce the spread of the weeds downstream. This is the only known population of CLPW within the Yellowstone River Drainage in Montana.



Pond on Slip & Slide Creek

- FWP will partner with the Flathead Lake Biological Station and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to conduct eDNA sampling on Tiber Reservoir, similar to sampling conducted in 2018 and 2019. Other sampling methods on Tiber Reservoir will include monthly plankton samples, shoreline surveys, substrate sampling, and benthic sampling.
- FWP and the Whitefish Lake Institute will conduct Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) survey and removal on Beaver Lake near Whitefish in July. This is a small population that threatens downstream waters including Whitefish and Flathead Lakes. The FWP Dive Team will conduct an extensive lake-wide AIS survey and will remove EWM with diver assisted harvesting and hand pulling.

Outreach and Education

AIS Outreach

- Steve Tyrell, member of the Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team (CEMIST), was interviewed on the Northern Ag Network about the impacts aquatic invasive species can have on irrigators and agriculture producers. The interview was heard on the state-wide radio program in May and was used to develop two 30-second radio ads that will run throughout the summer. [Listen to the interview.](#)
- Big Sky Watershed Corps member Brant Dupree has been visiting marinas and retail boating and fishing stores in western Montana to share information about Montana's aquatic invasive species prevention program. Brant visits with key staff members, provides outreach materials, and encourages them to become an AIS Program Partner. *Brant Dupree is hosted by the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission and Missoula County Weed District.*
- Big Sky Watershed Corps members Abby Schmeichel and Emily McGurit were able to share the [Flathead Lake Aquatic Research Education program \(FLARE\)](#) before Covid-19



Jessco Marine is an AIS partner

impacted in-person meetings. FLARE Education Coordinator Holly Church quickly adapted the Be AIS Aware lessons for teachers to use with students who had internet and those who did not have internet. Their educational activities include:

- Met with Flathead Basin teachers to demonstrate the Be AIS Aware teaching trunks.
- Taught four Be AIS Aware lessons to Swan River School 7th grade class.
- Educated students, teachers and community members at the Flathead County Science Fair and Dayton Family Science Night.

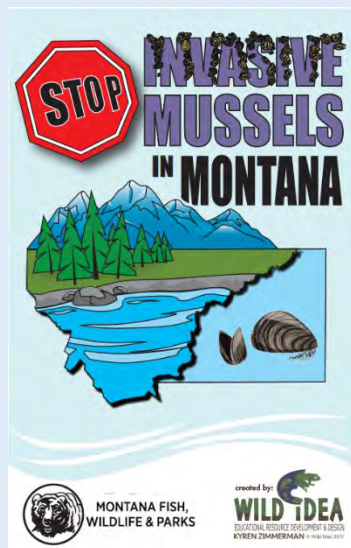


Abby Schmeichel at the Flathead County Science Fair

- Met with three 7th grade classes at Bigfork via Google Meet and provided an introduction to the Be AIS Aware lessons.
- Transformed the annual Mussel walks into individual walks the public could do on their own anytime. So far five groups have conducted mussel walks around Flathead Lake. Mussel walks are a partnership between the [Flathead Lake Biological Station](#), [Flathead Lakers](#) and [CSKT](#).

Abby Schmeichel is hosted by the Flathead Lake Biological Station. Emily McGurit is hosted by the Clearwater Resource Council.

- Activity books for kids are available to download from CleanDrainDryMT.com in the Resources and Reports tile. Look under EDUCATION and JUST FOR KIDS sections.
 - [Stop Invasive Mussels in Montana](#) activity book is for grade school age children.
 - [Help Protect Montana from AIS](#) coloring book with Riverman Otter is for anyone who loves to color.



- FWP offers two information rack cards available to download or request hard copies.

Boaters Protect Your Lakes and Rivers:
lists Montana AIS rules and tips to
Clean.Drain.Dry watercraft.

BOATERS
PROTECT YOUR LAKES AND RIVERS
STOP AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES



CLEAN, DRAIN, & DRY Your Watercraft
MONTANA AIS REGULATIONS

- Stop at ALL open watercraft inspection stations as directed by signs.
- When traveling west across the Continental Divide or into the Flathead River Basin, watercraft must be inspected before launching.
 - Boats with bladders or ballast tanks, such as wakeboard or wake-surfing boats, must obtain a decontamination before launching.
- Inspections are required for all watercraft coming off Tiber reservoir. Decontamination may be required.

Once established, AIS are nearly impossible to eradicate.

PREVENTION IS OUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST AIS!

PROTECT OUR WATERS **CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.**
CleanDrainDryMT.com



CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.
KEY AREAS



BEFORE LEAVING THE WATER BE SURE TO:

CLEAN

- Remove mud, plants and organisms from boat, trailer and gear.
- Clean anchor, lines, live-wells and waters.
- Check rudder, hatches and cockpit.
- Clear through-hull fittings.

DRAIN

- Eliminate water from boat and equipment.
- Remove drain plugs.
- Lower motor and allow to drain.
- Drain live-wells, pumps, bilges, and ballast tanks.

DRY

- Allow time for boat and equipment to dry before your next trip.
- Open compartments and towel dry.
- Wipe bilge and live-wells dry.

DISPOSE

- Place unwanted bait in the trash, never in the water.

NEVER

- Transport water, plants, fish, or animals into a different body of water.

 **CleanDrainDryMT.com**
f: Protect Our Waters Montana
t: 406.444.2440

50,000 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$1.00 per copy for a total cost of \$50,000, which includes \$10,000 for printing and \$40,000 for distribution.

Bringing Your Boat to Montana:
informs non-residents what is required
to bring watercraft into Montana and
how to purchase the Vessel AIS
Prevention Pass.

BRINGING YOUR BOAT TO MONTANA
STOP AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES



MONTANA AIS REGULATIONS

- Watercraft transported into Montana from out-of-state must be inspected before launching.
- Stop at all open inspection stations as directed by signs.
- Out-of-state boats with bladders or ballast tanks, such as wakeboard or wake-surfing boats, must obtain a decontamination before launching.
- Inspection is required when traveling west across the Continental Divide or into the Flathead River Basin.
- It is illegal to transport aquatic invasive species, live fish, bait fish or surface water into Montana.

PREVENTION IS OUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST AIS!

PROTECT OUR WATERS **CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.**
CleanDrainDryMT.com



VESSEL AIS PREVENTION PASS
Non-resident watercraft launching in Montana must purchase a Vessel AIS Prevention Pass (Vessel AISPP).

- Purchase the Vessel AISPP online at CleanDrainDryMT.com or at any FWP office.
- Motorized watercraft fee is **\$30**. Required for all watercraft that have a motor.
- Nonmotorized watercraft fee is **\$10**. Required for all nonmotorized watercraft.
- Proof of purchase is electronic (on your cell phone) or a paper receipt. There is no decal.
- Vessel AISPP expire on **December 31**.
- Not transferable between vessels.
- Not required if nonresident is transporting watercraft through Montana and not launching.

HELP PROTECT MONTANA'S WATERS. CLEAN, DRAIN & DRY YOUR WATERCRAFT AND FISHING GEAR.

CLEAN


- Remove mud, plants and organisms from boat, trailer and gear.
- Clean anchor, lines, live-wells and waters.

DRAIN

- Eliminate water from boat and equipment.
- Remove drain plugs.

DRY

- Allow time for boat and equipment to dry before your next trip.

 **CleanDrainDryMT.com**
f: Protect Our Waters Montana
t: 406.444.2440

50,000 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$1.00 per copy for a total cost of \$50,000, which includes \$10,000 for printing and \$40,000 for distribution.

Events

- Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team meeting: August 6 in Winnett.
- Upper Columbia Conservation Commission: August 19th virtual meeting. [UC3](#)
- Montana Invasive Species Council: September 3rd virtual meeting. [MISC](#)
- Western Regional Panel for aquatic invasive species: September 16-18th virtual meeting. [WRP 2020](#)
- North American Invasive Species Management Association: October 6-8th virtual meeting. [NAISMA](#)

Meet the AIS Staff: Kathi Montgomery has been a watercraft inspector at several stations in the Helena area. She and her husband Bill started working at the Goosebay station on Canyon Ferry in late 2017. They moved across the reservoir to work at the Silos station in 2018 and 2019. In 2020 Kathi started work at the Highway 12 station west of Helena. In June she became the temporary AIS Supervisor for Region 8.

Kathi says the best part of her job as a Supervisor is make sure the inspectors have everything they need to do a good job. Kathi says, "I want to let them know how much I appreciate the hard work they do every day." Kathi wishes every boater would go to the website www.CleanDrainDryMT.com. They can read about what is expected of boaters to prevent the movement of AIS. In her experience most out-of-state boaters come prepared and want to comply with the AIS rules while some resident boaters don't understand the risks associated with transporting AIS on watercraft.



Kathi Montgomery

Kathi retired from a 30-year career with the MT Department of Environmental Quality. In the off-season Kathi and her husband spend 4 months on a sailboat in the Caribbean. They've traveled from Martinique to Grenada and hope to travel further north this winter.

Don't Let It Loose

FWP is asking the public to report sightings of snapping turtles in western Montana, especially the Clark Fork, Bitterroot and Blackfoot watershed.

In Montana snapping turtles are native to locations east of the Continental Divide but are not native west of the Divide. Snapping turtles likely ended up in western waterways through illegal release of aquarium pets.

Snapping turtles can cause significant harm to native populations of frogs, snakes, ducks, fish, and turtles outside of their native range.

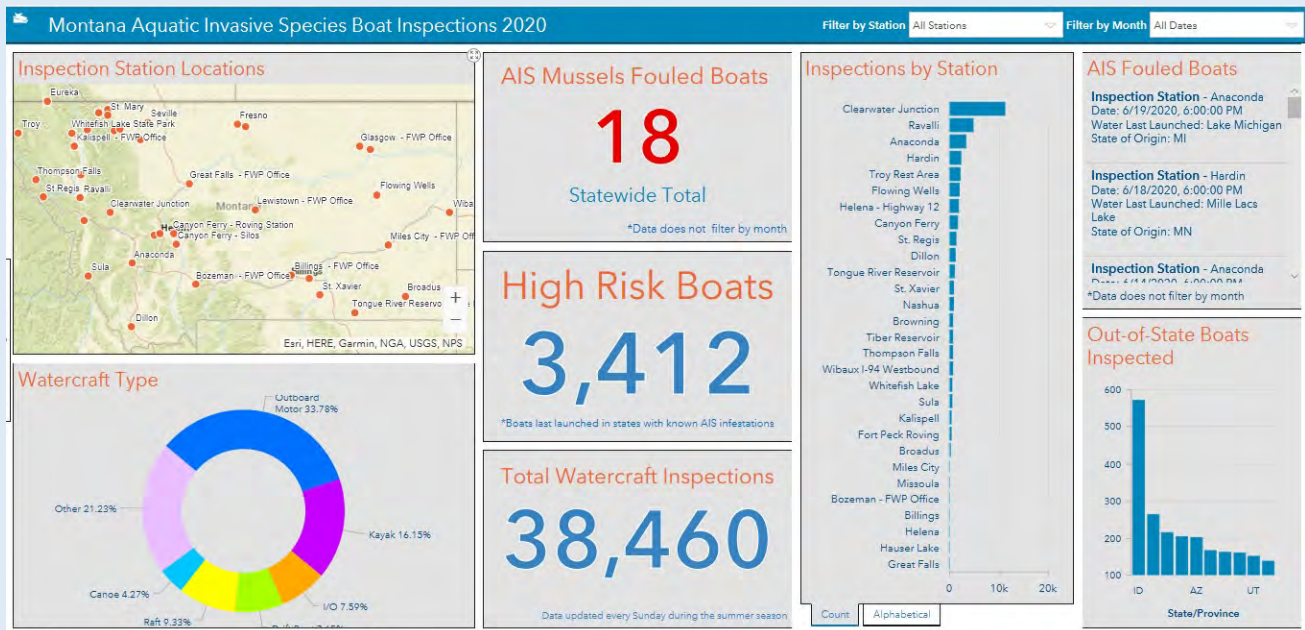
[Read more and report sightings here.](#)



Snapping Turtle

In the News

- Record number of inspections for Montana: [High traffic](#)
- The busiest watercraft inspection station in the state: [Clearwater Junction](#)
- Targeted outreach to wakeboard boaters: [Wildlife Forever Wakeboard outreach](#)
 - [Ballast boat draining video](#)
- Agriculture AIS impacts: [Northern Ag Network Interview](#)
- Columbia River Basin Worth Protecting: [Flathead Beacon](#)
- Limited lake access in Glacier National Park: [Boating Limited](#)
- Study Helps Wildlife Managers Predict Illegal Fish Introductions: [MTPR](#)
- Report sightings of snapping turtle in western MT: [See Something Say Something](#)
- Eurasian watermilfoil near Whitefish: [Beaver Lake](#)
- Western Governors Association webinar: [COVID-19 and Invasive Species Programs](#)
- Invasive Mussel Collaborative webinar: [COVID-19 and Watercraft Inspection](#)
- Code Girls app for cutthroats and rainbows: [Cutthroat Catastrophe](#)
- Flooding aids Asian carp spread: [Asian carp](#)
- Utah encouraging invasive bullfrog harvest: [Eat More Frog Legs](#)
- South Dakota steps up watercraft inspection effort: [Boat Inspection](#)
- Check out what is going on at watercraft inspection stations (updated weekly): [AIS Dashboard](#):



CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.