

Mussel Monitoring and Detection Program

The Mussel Monitoring and Detection Program received \$4.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for sampling and testing reservoirs to find the extent of zebra and quagga mussel spread and provide earliest detection of possible new infestations in the western United States. Reclamation partnered with 15 states in the sampling program.

During this project, Reclamation and its state and local partners conducted regular sampling and testing of almost 400 water bodies. More than 11,000 water samples were collected across the western states and tested for the presence of invasive mussels. Reclamation had 23 reservoirs with at least one positive test result.

Benefits of the monitoring and detection program included timely and credible information for water management agencies throughout the west on the presence and spread of invasive mussels. The program also provided broader data of the environmental conditions tolerated by the mussels.

The extensive testing program led to improved sample preparation methods, resulting in substantial increases in the sensitivity of tests for detecting the presence of mussel larvae in raw water. Reclamation has continued its efforts to monitor mussels and develop methods to protect water and hydropower infrastructure from infestations.

The funding provided more than 20 young college graduates the opportunity to work as contract employees in the Reclamation mussel lab and/or participate in reservoir water sampling during the ARRA project.

