

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

March 10, 2008

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Olympia, Washington

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kate Benkert	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Wendy Brown	Department of Natural Resources
Joan Cabreza	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Chris Christopher	Department of Transportation
Dana Coggon	Kitsap County
Bob Koch	Franklin County
Gene Little, Vice Chair	Washington Noxious Weed Control Board
Bridget Moran, Chair	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Brid Nowlan	Washington Invasive Species Coalition
Niles Seifert	U.S. Coast Guard
Melodie Selby	Department of Ecology
Pat Stevenson	Stillaguamish Tribe
Mary Toohey	Department of Agriculture

Convene and Welcome:

Bridget Moran opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Bridget went over the day's agenda and asked Council and audience members to introduce themselves. Welcome announcements were made.

Bridget reviewed the meeting agenda and discussed the process for the day.

Hot Topics:

Columbia River Basin Zebra/Quagga Mussel Response Plan

Allen Pleus, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, noted that the Ballast water rule making process is still moving along, and is close to setting new standards. The next Ballast Water Work Group (BWWG) rule meeting is April 2, 2008. The Council is welcome to sit in on the meeting. The Environmental Protection Agency is completing a draft permit, which should be released April 1, 2008. There will be a public comment period for this draft. The BWWG group will bring key issues about ballast water to the Council. Allen noted that he would provide copies of the BWWG charter for the Council to review.

It was requested that the Council not be put in a decision-making role in the BWWG charter, as this should not be done without Legislative authority. The Council is not a governing body, and does not have regulatory authority over agencies. There is probably a middle ground, however where the Council would be useful.

The Council discussed their relationship with other critical partners. The Council would like to explore this topic further and requested that it be added to the May agenda.

The 100th Meridian Rapid Response Plan

Allen reported that the 100th Meridian Rapid Response Plan is available for comment through March 17, 2008. In early February a vessel from Lake Mead slipped through California and was decontaminated in Oregon. California is currently swamped. They have inspected over 100,000 boats and 10,000 have been decontaminated. California is closing some lakes to avoid chances of a Quagga/Zebra mussel infestation.

Kathy Hamel, Department of Ecology, reported that Idaho is pushing to have quarterly, regional aquatic meetings, including Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia. They will begin addressing aquatic plants and will then address aquatic animals as well. Hydrilla is an aquatic plant, originally introduced into Florida which is making its way north. Washington has had a hydrilla infestation since 1995 in two interconnected lakes. Last year no hydrilla plants were found in either lake for the first time since the state started its eradication program in 1995. A well established population of hydrilla has been found in Idaho's Bruneau River, which connects to the Snake and Columbia Rivers. Partners working on this are looking for federal dollars to investigate the potential damage and spread into Washington. In addition, tropical plants and fish have been found, along with the hydrilla, flourishing in the geo-thermal areas of the Bruneau River.

This is Joan Cabreza's last Council meeting before retirement. Bridget thanked her for all of her work with the Council and Aquatic Nuisance Species.

Legislative Update:

Bridget provided a Legislative update. Staff issued a handout with bills of potential interest to the Council. HB3186, authorizing the creation of beach management districts and SB6532, authorizing certain cities to enter into lease agreements to use state-owned aquatic lands to operate a publicly owned marina, and HB2815, which addresses greenhouse gasses, have been sent to the Governor for signature. Other bills are still pending.

Council Business Items:

Gene Little moved to **APPROVE** the January 23, 2008 meeting minutes. Bob Koch **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the January 23, 2008 minutes.

Public Comment:

Fritzi Cohen, offered the Council a handout "Rethinking Invasive Plants". She commented on the use of pesticides in past *Spartina* clean up efforts. She wants to make sure there is not more damage caused by removing the invasive species than the invasive would have caused if left alone.

Keith Stavron, independent shellfish grower, feels that spraying weeds is economically feasible, but not environmentally feasible. It damages his spat. He feels mowing is as, or more, effective than spraying. Recovery is essential, or he feels Washington will lose its oyster population.

Draft Strategic Plan:

Bridget outlined the process for the Council to use when reviewing the current draft of the strategic plan. She noted which items were new in the draft. A customs and border control section had been added. There was also an added climate change section and new text placed in section three.

A graphic designer has been hired to design the layout of the strategic plan. The draft layout was distributed to the Council for review. Bridget also reminded the Council of the timeline for future drafts of the strategy. The strategic plan will go out at the end of the week for a three-week public comment period.

Bridget acknowledged the Council's technical writer, Filiz Satir's hard work on the strategic plan, and thanked her for her patience. Filiz thanked staff for all of the work they have contributed as well.

Bridget suggested that the Council walk through the strategy section by section. At lunch the group will receive a handout for prioritizing action items and objectives. She reminded members to focus on the content rather than wordsmithing at this time.

Draft Strategic Plan Discussion:

- Should the group add an executive summary at the beginning to define what an invasive species is? The Council agreed that this was important and it was suggested that this be written during the public comment period.
- Members also noted that many people will only read the sidebars. So it was suggested that the definition of invasive species, as defined in the Council's legislation be included in a sidebar in the introduction section of the plan.
- The Council questioned whether or not the action agenda should be a stand-alone document.
- Bill Brookreson, from the audience, suggested that the introduction be more compelling and explain the importance of needed action and consequences. How do invasive species affect the state, the economy, and me? Are legislative mandates the only way to fix this?
- Members would like to separate the economic impacts from other invasive species impacts so the plan is more streamlined and visually separate.
- Members suggested that staff and Filiz explain "non-native" and "invasive". The Council can acknowledge that non-natives come purposely or inadvertently, but they are not necessarily harmful or invasive.
- Some of the facts currently listed in the draft are not correct. Council suggested that sources be checked to ensure accuracy.
- Members would like to see more graphics throughout the plan. Perhaps a graph can better describe the economic impacts of invasive species. This might be more compelling to the reader instead of the current bullet points.
- This document should be a "call to action". What should the Council add to make this happen?
- The Council wants to hear if the public reads this and then feels alarmed. That is the desired outcome.
- Should the economic, environmental and public health issues be addressed early in the document? Should the impacts of managing invasive species, including the money and

environmental damage of eradicating them, using pesticides for example, also be mentioned?

- With climate change there will be a decline of some species, the Council needs to address the species that are expected to have changes in range. They need to be watched and monitored so they do not become invasive. Identifying species the State will be vulnerable to is important. What is inevitable versus what is within the state's means to control or prevent?
- Pene Speaks, Department of Natural Resources, commented on the disproportionate number of economic impacts listed in the plan versus the environmental impacts. She recommended an even number of bullets or listing additional economic statistics in the appendix.
- The Council discussed the relationship between invasive species and public health. Is it a health department issue or an invasive species issue? Gypsy moth can be invasive and can cause an allergic reaction too.
- The term "regulator" has been overused in the document.
- Chris Christopher used the white board to propose a diagram idea. He wanted to show how the Council is connected with various organizations such as the Puget Sound Partnership, Biodiversity Council, and other state agencies. He suggested using a type of organizational chart to visually display how the council coordinates.
- The Council noted the importance of establishing what the Invasive Species Council role is so that all members are consistent in their messaging.
- The draft needs to spell out why this strategy is important, and what people should do to make the actions in the plan happen.
- Keep the goals up front and simple.
- Add in percentage of State budget and Natural Resource budget.
- Objectives and goals could come up sooner in the document. One way to do this is to merge sections 3 & 4.
- Should the objective and goals be moved to the front and then followed up with supporting evidence?
- Who is the Council's audience? Members listed the Legislature, critical partners, private industry, and the public.
- Is the first section too long? Could the narrative text be shown next to the objectives in another column rather than on its own before the objectives?
- Members discussed the need for a printable strategy and an electronic version that can be accessed and searched on the web. In the web document, people could click on the objective and then read more background information if desired.
- Members suggested that an objective be added to recommend that all restoration project managers consider the potential to unintentionally make room for new invasive species.
- Add a transition sentence to the risk assessment section before this goes for public review.
- Make sure objectives can stand alone without the action items below them.
- The tie between risk assessment and prevention must be clear.

Suggested Questions for Public Comment Period:

- "If you are a land owner how will this plan better help you manage invasive species?"

- Ask for input on document length.
- Ask the public, "Does this document help you or are there unintended consequences?"

Working Lunch:

Council members used handouts provided by staff to prioritize objectives and action items in a ranking order and within a short, mid or long-term timeline for completion.

Objectives and Action Items Tally and Review Results:

Staff tallied all scores provided from working lunch exercise to show Council members the results of their work. The Council used this information to further discuss the ranking order and timelines associated with the strategies objectives and action items.

Discussion of Future Meetings:

Bridget discussed the option of having the May meeting on the eastside of the state. Since there is so much work to do on the plan she would like to have a working meeting here in Olympia and would like to reserve the eastside meeting to launch the strategy after it is released, perhaps in August. She also proposed having a strategic plan launch meeting on the westside of the state. The Council agreed that the May 20, 2008, meeting will be held in Olympia.

Next Steps:

Bridget reminded members to forward any specific comments on the draft to staff by the close of business Tuesday for inclusion in the public comment period draft, which is scheduled to be released on Friday.

The public comment period ends April 3, 2008. The draft will be sent to the Council by email for review before the final draft is presented to them at the May meeting.

Adjourned:

Meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Next meeting:

May 7, 2008

Room 172, Natural Resources Building

Olympia, Washington

Invasive Species Approval:


Bridget Moran, Chair

May 9, 2008
Date