

WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 13, 2014

Natural Resources Building, Room 175
Olympia, Washington

WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Clinton Campbell	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Randy Kline	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Rob Pedersen	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington Department of Ecology
Pene Speaks, Vice Chair	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Pat Stevenson	Stillaguamish Tribe
Bill Tweit, Chair	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Brad White	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Lt. Eric Young	U.S. Coast Guard
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

Allen Pleus
Kevin Aitkin
Larry Hudson
Roger Woodruff
Ken Gruver
Laurence Schafer
Carrie Martin

STAFF:

Wendy Brown
Cindy Gower

OPENING AND WELCOME

Chair Tweit opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. with welcome announcements, facility safety information, introductions, and a review of the agenda.

HOT TOPIC REPORTS

Item 1: New Zealand Mud Snails

Allen Pleus

The most current detection of New Zealand mud snails is at Hanford on the Columbia River. A stakeholder meeting in that region has been scheduled to discuss the detection and next steps. Allen Pleus reported that it will likely be more of a containment situation to ensure people know how to decontaminate their field gear. This is a similar strategy to what has been done on the lower Chehalis River and Snohomish Estuary. In the case of the lower Chehalis River, WDFW has worked with DNR, local tribes and the county to complete surveys. As additional surveys were conducted, more snails were found and the infestation boundary has increased. Allen Pleus added that it has been difficult to keep the stakeholders moving forward, but he is planning to provide support without the department taking on full lead and directing management. He says that he is evaluating the process, but unsure how much his staff can do given current resource limitations.

Bill Tweit mentioned that there are a lot of people doing research on the Hanford Reach, as it is part of a national monument and there are extensive tribal interests, both biological and cultural. The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) has staff as well as other consultants working out there. WDFW staff is starting to get the word out about decontamination protocols. The protocols on the website are very useful for that effort as well. It is an unfortunate circumstance that more snail infestations are being found, but we are making use of it as an outreach and education opportunity.

Pene Speaks stated that in regard to trail development, DNR has a number of places where they are developing trails with a water crossing and have been pushing more to install bridges rather than do wet crossings. The Department gets resistance from users who like to have the experience of going through the streams. Pene suggested that perhaps DNR could provide guidance about developing trails to minimize the risk of spreading invasive species.

Item 2: Japanese Tsunami Marine Debris Update

Allen Pleus

One of the more recent findings of large Japanese tsunami marine debris was located in Longview, Washington. Jesse Shultz is currently in Longview collecting organisms from a 22-foot skiff that came ashore on the Twin Harbors beach area in January 2014.

Although there is a process to be formally recognized before any object can be identified as Japanese tsunami debris, the boat has registration numbers and Japanese characters for the name. Allen Pleus stated they are fairly sure the boat is from Japan, but have to go through an official process through the Consulate to identify the owner and ask if they want the object returned to them. On this latest discovery, most of the species attached to the boat were from the open ocean, such as loose neck barnacles and hydroids, but there is also a small amount of coastal species.

Washington State is part of the regional system that collects and preserves samples and sends them to the taxonomists across the country. It is an amazing process, but does take time to get information back on specific identifications. Some specimens have to go through genetic analysis to identify it to the species level. Allen Pleus stated that the amount of debris that is coming ashore is low, such that the state has discontinued the alert telephone line and is winding down their response activities. In regards to the most recent boat washed ashore, WDFW has worked closely with State Parks to get the debris off the beach fairly quickly. The response has been effective for the smaller debris that has come to shore in areas which are easily accessible.

Last month Allen participated in a meeting with the Japanese Consulate, in which long-term monitoring was discussed. Japan reported that the money provided to the states is suitable for long-term monitoring. There will be a regional NOAA summary meeting on May 13-14 in Seattle, in which they will discuss what has been learned and what more needs to be done.

Item 3: AIS Model Law and Capitol Lake Update

Allen Pleus

Since 2012, the western states have come together to be consistent in regulations and inspection and decontamination protocols, so that if a boat is inspected in Arizona, we know what level of inspection was done and we have confidence in the risk management conducted. At this point the model law is focused on watercrafts and what authorization is need for inspection, decontamination, and quarantine. Randy Kline asked if WDFW coordinates with the State Parks boater education program. Allen Pleus replied, yes, they have been trying to maintain coordination between the Washington Boating Alliance, State Parks and the boating program at WDFW. Bill Tweit reminded the Council that Wendy Brown distributed copies of the AIS Model Law. It is a great opportunity to influence future state legislation, as these model laws do get used a lot. And also, the proposed WDFW AIS bill moving through the Legislature right now has already made use of an early draft of the model law.

Allen gave an update on Capitol Lake and recent efforts to control New Zealand mud snails. He reported that a draw down and freezing treatment was recently completed to kill New Zealand mud snails in the lake. During the first freeze event, the Department of Enterprises Services drew down the water level to the lowest extent possible for 5 to 6 days of freezing weather conditions. Given the bathymetry of the basin, the water in the lower basin closest to Budd Inlet does not empty out completely and that is where the heaviest concentration of mud snails exists. Looking at how much water was left and how much sediment was exposed in the mid and upper basins, Allen estimates 40-60% New Zealand mud snail mortality in total across the three basins.

Item 4: Ecology Aquatic Weed Grant Program Update

Lizbeth Seebacher

Lizbeth Seebacher provided an overview of the Freshwater Aquatic Weed Management Program at the Department of Ecology. The program funds grants to prevent, remove, reduce and manage aquatic invasive plants. They also fund demonstration or pilot projects; however, control and eradication is their focus. One third or less of the appropriated funds is used to develop public education programs and provide technical assistance to local government and citizen groups. These projects are funded by a \$3 fee on boat trailer licenses.

In situations of a high-priority projects, Ecology recruits and funds local entities in the area to take care of the problem. Lizbeth presented an example of this – flowering rush in Silver Lake, Whatcom County where they have been working with the Whatcom County Noxious Weed Board Coordinator to treat the infestation with a contact herbicide. The lake residents and local Boy Scout camp nearby have had problems with swimmer's itch over the years, and researchers have found that the snail that harbors the parasite causing swimmer's itch has a high affinity for flowering rush. Since successfully controlling much of the flowering rush last year, no additional problems with swimmer's itch have been reported.

Ecology's program also funds research. One project underway involves an examination of herbicide impacts on amphibians (northern red-legged frog); another is on the restoration of habitat following removal of invasive cattails.

Item 5: *Arundo Donax* listing on the Prohibited Plant List
Wendy Brown

Wendy reminded the Council of our petition to the Washington State Department of Agriculture to list *Arundo donax* on the plant quarantine list. There was a public hearing on the proposed revisions to the plant quarantine list, in which Council staff participated. The Department approved our proposal to list *Arundo donax*, effective April 12, 2014, with the exception of variegated cultivars.

Item 6: New Professional Educators Standards on Invasive Species
Wendy Brown

Margaret Tudor worked on the Council's behalf to include an invasive species requirement in the professional educator standards. The new science standard requires teachers to 'demonstrate responsible use and disposal of live organisms according to Washington State law.' This standard applies to both early and elementary education.

Item 7: Lake Wanapum Drawdown and Species Survey
Kevin Aitkin and Allen Pleus

To address a significant structural crack on the Lake Wanapum dam, the reservoir was drained about 25 feet. Alleviating the pressure helped stabilize the spillways and allowed the crack to close by nearly an inch. It is still unknown when the water level will be back up to normal level. Kevin Aitkin reported that during the drawdown, a large population of invasive *Corbicula* clams was found (which were already known to exist in the Columbia and Snake Rivers).

Kevin Aitkin stated that given safety concerns no one is allowed to enter the lake, including tribes and state agencies. Both tribes and state and federal agencies recognize an opportunity to survey for other invasive species, especially zebra and quagga mussels. Kevin spoke with staff at the PUD, who said that allowing people to survey is a goal of theirs, once they take care of the safety and cultural resources issues.

Bill Tweit said that the PUD understands our concerns and have been saying that perhaps in a week or so people will be granted access for surveying. People protection is the main issue – they pulled one woman out waist deep in mud – due to soft sediments, unstable environments and steep banks. The cultural resource issues are being carefully dealt with also, as there are over 150 known sites that had been submerged and are now exposed. Jesse Shultz, WDFW, is on list to receive authorization as soon as surveying is permitted.

Item 8: DNR's Work to Prevent the Spread of Noxious Weeds from Fire-Fighting Equipment Update
Pene Speaks

Pene Speaks introduced Larry Hudson, Assistant Manager of the Okanogan Noxious Weed Board. Larry reminded the Council of the concern in Okanogan County last year that DNR firefighting trucks were driving through patches of spurge flax, a Class A noxious weed, and possibly spread it outside of the known infestation area. He would like to work with the Council and DNR to find a solution to this situation and to eliminate future spread of invasive species via this particular vector.

Larry Hudson stated when they found out about the wildfire last year in Okanogan County that was in the area of the spurge flax, DNR was already at the mopping-up stage. There was a discussion with local crews in which he requested they wash their trucks before moving to a new area. The local crews were supportive, but when discussed with their supervisors, they were told not to do it. Another issue mentioned was the need to know where the fire trucks have been and where to look for the potential spread of spurge flax. Larry Hudson added that this area was heavily infested with spurge flax and had just been treated with herbicides 4 days prior to the fire. Spurge flax is currently only known to be in Okanogan County and could easily be carried by fire equipment and spread to other areas. Randy Kline asked if spurge flax is mapped and if someone could have looked at a map and been aware of any noxious weed at that site. Larry Hudson replied, yes, there are 3 known sites, all of which are mapped. The Okanogan Noxious Weed Board would be willing to work with their regional DNR staff and provide infestation sites before the fire season so crews and dispatch could be made aware of them.

Currently, DNR ensures mechanical cleaning is conducted when possible. DNR has firefighting crews, firefighting teams, local fire departments, local people and vendors all responding to wildfires, which makes it difficult to track the movements of all responders. While DNR does have control over their own fire trucks and staff and can direct them to put in place certain protocols, DNR does not have the authority to control other people in the area. The agency is trying to maximize what they can do now, and hopes to do more in the future, but it all depends on having the funding.

Randy Kline asked if DNR has GPS on their trucks and could they be tracked and identified where the trucks are at any certain fire response location. Pene Speaks stated the trucks do not have GPS on them, there are too many fires and it would be difficult to know where they go, but the management team is very aware of the issue. Allen Pleus asked when there is firefighting, is DNR the centralized source and would it be possible to identify a key emergency center, create a map and make those regions part of their protocol. Pene said that there is central dispatch unit in Wenatchee, but it depends on whose land it is and where the fire is located.

Pene said DNR hopes to work towards developing protocols for controlling weeds but that their first job is to suppress fires immediately. Ninety percent of fires in Washington are fewer than 10 acres and are put out right away. Randy Kline asked if the U.S. Forest Service has any protocol around weed management and firefighting. Pene said that the Forest Service does, and they have looked at some of their best management practices as a potential model. Bill Tweit expressed appreciation to Larry Hudson for his time and bringing issues to the Council. One function of the Council is helping individual agencies work together and resolve issues that come up. Pene indicated that she had arranged for Larry to meet with Mary Vernor, DNR's Deputy Supervisor for Resource Protection, to discuss the county's concerns while he was in Olympia.

Item 9: 'WA Invasives' – Invasive Species Reporting App Wendy Brown

Wendy Brown mentioned that the Council's invasive species reporting application – WA Invasives – is available for android and apple phone users to download. It is free to everyone. The Council needs to discuss how to roll it out to the public. It was previously discussed about starting it out in state government to test as there may still be bugs in the system. Kevin Aitkin asked if they are able to find out how many times it has been downloaded. Wendy Brown did not know, but will find out.

Bill Tweit stated that it will benefit from additional testing and asked Council members to identify field staff in their agencies to test the app for a couple of months before we do a bigger launch. In the meanwhile, look at what a roll out might look like after people have gained some experience and you have an idea of its

strengths and weaknesses. Pene Speaks asked if Wendy Brown could send out a blurb to the Council so they could send out an email to send out to field staff. Wendy Brown mentioned that she has applied for another grant to complete the baseline assessment and enhance the app. Wendy Brown continued by saying she would like to see all the noxious weeds on the app, as well as other invasive animal species.

BRIEFINGS

Item 10: WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species Bill

Allen Pleus

The WDFW aquatic invasive species proposed legislation (ESSB 6040) went to the House and passed yesterday 91-1. He reminded the Council that the bill addresses policy provisions only, not funding. Allen Pleus stated that getting this portion done now is a victory; it made the cut and will hopefully be adopted and off to the Governor's office for signature. We have received full support from the Governor's Office for funding this proposal and will bring forward funding options for the 2015 Legislative session. The project started out with a \$3.8 million per year request, with one million dollars allocated to a local government grant program. The local grant management program will do similar things as the Department of Ecology, giving grants to people in local areas to prevent or control aquatic animal invasive species.

Bill Tweit said that the only reason the bill is alive is due to a tremendous outpouring of stakeholder support and agency support. Bill thanked all who had a hand in getting the bill pulled for a final vote.

Allen Pleus reported that once the bill is signed, he and Bill will direct their focus on the 2015 funding proposal and rule making. Randy Kline asked Allen Pleus if he wrote this bill. Bill Tweit stated that Allen Pleus wrote a big portion of the bill and did a great job. Wendy Brown asked how the need to address funding will affect any proposed ballast water legislation in 2015. Allen Pleus said that in order to have ballast water legislation they need to provide a report to the Legislature on the ballast water activities conducted by WDFW since 2008. They then need to collect and analyze that data, do a gap analysis and provide detailed recommendations.

Item 11: USDA Wildlife Services Feral Pig Monitoring and Nutria Control at Capitol Lake

Roger Woodruff, Ken Gruver, Laurence Schafer, USDA Wildlife Services

Carrie Martin, Department of Enterprise Services

Wildlife Services is a division under the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service of USDA. The mission of Wildlife Services is to minimize wildlife and human conflicts. Another mission is to control invasive animal species like feral hogs, nutria, starlings and pigeons.

The feral swine infestation in the United States began in the south. The pigs breed twice a year and have grown to be one of the top predators in the USA. Funding to address the pig infestation was provided in the current Farm Bill and states have been assigned categories depending on the number of feral swine they are known to have. Those states with the most pigs, like California and Texas, are assigned a Category 5. Washington is a Category 1 state, which has brought us \$68,000 to monitor for pigs. The western Washington office of Wildlife Services is assigning their staff biologist, Laurence Schafer, to be in charge of feral swine monitoring and control in Washington.

Roger Woodruff mentioned that there are already over one thousand feral pigs reported in Oregon and that it is important for Wildlife Services to work cooperatively with Oregon, Idaho, and Washington to come up with

a plan for monitoring and response. Bill Tweit mentioned the three-state *Squeal on Pigs* outreach campaign and asked how useful that has been from the Wildlife Services' perspective. Roger Woodruff stated that they received a call from Wendy Brown about a pig sighting in Vancouver a year ago and another one more recently.

Bill Tweit asked if it is worth re-running the *Squeal on Pig* campaign if funding is available. We received good media on the subject. Roger Woodruff agreed the campaign is a great idea. Bill Tweit suggested developing cooperative agreements with DNR, State Parks, WDFW and others to pre-authorize for land access to control feral pigs. We can provide the appropriate contacts for each of our agencies to get those started.

Roger Woodruff discussed the nutria control work they have done in Washington, including areas of the Skagit River, Clark County, and possibly Capitol Lake in Thurston County. Randy Kline asked if it is legal to trap, eat and wear nutria. Ken Gruver stated live trapping is legal. Laurence Schafer advised that they primarily do not use lethal force, but in regard to invasive species, the nutria need to be eliminated.

Carrie Martin with the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) has contracted with Wildlife Services to survey for nutria and possibly control them at Capitol Lake. The survey will inform DES of how many nutria may be living around the lake, where their colonies are located, and how much damage they are doing. Randy Kline asked if there have there been any instances of nutria aggression at Capitol Lake. Carrie Martin said that they have not been made aware of any instances. Ken Gruver mentioned that, in general, they can be aggressive to dogs and children.

Bill Tweit asked the Wildlife Services representatives if they are using decontamination protocols while surveying around the lake. Ken Gruver reported, yes, they are working with WDFW to decontaminate to their level of satisfaction. Kevin Aitkin asked what areas of the Capitol Lake are being surveyed. Ken Gruver replied that they are going up the Deschutes River as far as they can, but will need to get permission from landowners. Ken Gruver reported that they are working with the City of Tumwater for permission to survey a golf course along the river.

DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS

Item 12: Council Business

Bill Tweit

Action Item: Approval of December Minutes

Pene Speaks moved to APPROVE the December 2013 minutes. Vicki Yund SECONDED. The Council unanimously APPROVED the December 2013 minutes.

Item 13: Baseline Assessment Final Report

Wendy Brown

The baseline assessment final report has been completed, and the Council walked through the summary of findings. Here are some of the findings:

- Of the Council's 21 priority species investigated by the baseline assessment, 15 have been documented in the Puget Sound Basin.

- There are pathways of spread for some of these species that are not being addressed by an agency – garden soil and gravel, for example.
- Multiple levels of government are involvement in the same type of activities such as prevention, management, education and detection of invasive plants. Fewer organizations have programs to address priority invasive animal species.
- Most counties survey and collect data on terrestrial invasive plant species, but not for marine and freshwater species.
- Methodologies to survey and collect data used across jurisdictions are not standardized; as a result there is a wide variety of quality and type of data received, making it difficult to draw conclusions and make comparisons across the region as a whole.
- Property ownership limits the ability of agencies to obtain accurate survey results on private lands.
- There are varying levels of coordination among neighboring weed boards, federal and state tribal and local entities.

Wendy Brown stated there are numerous opportunities to improve how we collect data, standardize collection and reporting methodologies, and develop a protocol for continued data and information submission to the Council. It was suggested that the Council closely coordinate with other entities involved in invasive species and participate with other groups that have regional programs with goals and objectives that overlap our own. It was proposed that the Council choose a widespread invasive species and conduct a pilot project, which will pull groups together to become more efficient in addressing invasive species. Wendy Brown added this is an opportunity is to increase marine water surveys, fresh water animal surveys and work with agencies on under or unaddressed pathways.

Eric Young stated that this is an excellent product, very comprehensive, but at the same time things have changed. He asked if there was a plan to bring in new species or have analyses of different species conducted. Eric also asked if there a time schedule for getting future analyses done. Wendy Brown stated it is opportunistic and depends on funding we can get from outside grants, which she has applied for. The original idea was to look at all 50 of our priority species, which we've almost done but not completely. The fatal flaw is that the report is static; we need to figure out how to make it more up-datable, dynamic, and accessible.

Lisa Younger commented that, by definition, the baseline is a snapshot in time and was not designed to be a dynamic document. It is supposed to give you a sense of where we are starting. She is not concerned about updating this product and thinks the next step is Wendy determining how we act on it. Kevin Anderson stated that, if product is finalized, we need to do some advertising and get the information out there.

Wendy Brown advised that she sees the next steps as getting this information on the web page, getting the information out to those who contributed and perhaps issuing a press release. Bill Tweit added perhaps synergy between this information and the app would be most effective. What we would like to see in the next five years is a new snapshot with more information, which is where the agencies come into play. I see the two fitting together and wonder if we should organize meetings with non-governmental organizations to provide the baseline information and app to volunteer groups.

Item 14: Industry Work Group Follow-Up Discussion **Bill Tweit**

Bill Tweit reported that the Executive Committee recommends going forward with creating an Industry Advisory Panel. The Panel would consist of 5 to 7 people representing industries affected by invasive species. It would provide an avenue for industry to bring forth perspectives, opinions and needs to the Council. The Executive Committee took the liberty of discussing the work group with some industry people to see if they were interested in participating. They received some initial commitments from several individuals representing a broad range of interests. Some of the industries we are interested in having participate are aquaculture, agriculture, marine trade, boating, irrigation, and forestry. There is also a strong interest from one of the PUD's on the main stem of the Columbia River.

Diane Cooper from Taylor Shellfish thinks the work group is a great idea, but that the Council does not have to re-invent the wheel. The National Invasive Species Council already has an advisory committee with stakeholders that advise the Council. Even though they are a very diverse group of people, they still caucus and come together with a process. Diane Cooper stated that once you put together a panel of industry representatives, word will get out fast. Diane advised the industries not represented will come forward and recommended the Council let them participate and engage.

Action Item: Approval of Creating an Industry Advisory Panel

Pene Speaks MOVED to create an industry advisory panel for a one-year trial period. Bill Tweit SECONDED. The Council unanimously APPROVED the creation of an industry advisory panel for a one-year trial period.

Item 15: Strategic Plan Update **Bill Tweit and Wendy Brown**

The Council reviewed the Council's 2008 strategic plan and discussed a plan to update it. Jen Masterson, RCO's strategic planning expert, was introduced and will assist Wendy Brown and the Council in updating the plan. Wendy Brown said she started looking at other invasive species strategies from other states and put together a table to compare differences. Kevin Aitkin asked if these are different from management plans or covering everything in theory. Wendy Brown answered that these are statewide invasive species plans. Vicki Yund asked how the original strategic plan was funded and what kind of budget we have now. Wendy Brown believes it was funded through the Council's main budget and that the Council no longer has that budgetary capacity. We have a great document; maybe we just need an addendum to change our objectives if needed and update the actions. Vicki added that we could include our accomplishments.

Jen Masterson asked the Council who the customer is for this update. Is it to provide guidance to the Council and future members, is it for the public at large, or is it both? Bill Tweit said the first customer is the Council to guide our actions and keep us focused. Another key audience will be the Legislature and discussing the future of the Council in the 2015 session. Pene Speaks said it is a policy statement for the state.

Regarding public participation, the Council should start looking into options. Wendy Brown advised there are web-based town hall options that we could explore. Jen Masterson said that the Governor's office is using new tools and perhaps we could look into those and present options at the next meeting.

Bill Tweit stated that RCO will come back with more options on how to engage the public and our stakeholders. The Council also needs to think about a time frame. Vicki Yund suggested the Council have a work plan at the next meeting, unless the Executive Council wants to come up with a draft plan and present at

the next meeting. Lisa Younger suggested that perhaps a good first step would be the Executive Council working on objectives and bringing a recommendation forward at the next meeting.

ESSB 6040: Ann Larson, WDFW Legislative Liaison, briefly attended the board meeting to share the good news that ESSB 6040 had just passed the 2014 Legislative Session with strong Legislature support. The bill is now headed to the Governor for signature. The bill only contains policy at this point, rather than policy and funding, but Ann does have commitment from leadership to work on funding for next year. She thinks there is a strong interest in using the watercraft excise tax as a funding mechanism, but also that members are going to want to look for user fees.

Item 16: Prevention/Decontamination Workshop – Discuss Ideas from Agency Workgroup
Wendy Brown

At the Council's last meeting, Wendy Brown was tasked with forming a work group to discuss the idea of hosting a one-day workshop on decontamination protocols. WDFW, DNR, WSDA, and Ecology met and agreed that creating a training video would be a better way to reach the intended audience. Wendy Brown added that this approach could reach more people and perhaps could be required in order to receive a grant or permit from a state agency. Kevin Aitkin commented that federal employees get this type of training all the time and that it is really the type of training we want for this issue. Wendy Brown stated we are now just discussing the basic-level training (Level 1) of how to clean your gear, and then we will need to discuss what the next steps will be. Allen Pleus stated what is needed is Level 1 training that advises how to clean and drain your equipment and how to get that information out as broadly as possible.

Kevin Anderson asked if there is a way to put out a training module and then see if it is working. Wendy Brown said that perhaps a follow up email or a survey that asks certain questions – did it work for you, how we can make it better – would work to get that information out and keep lines of communication open.

Item 17: Public Comments

There was no public comment today.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Next meeting:

June 12, 2014

Natural Resources Building

Room 172, Olympia, WA

Minutes approved by:

Bill Tweit, Chair

Date