

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

November 19, 2008

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Olympia, Washington

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wendy Brown	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Barbra Chambers	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Chris Christopher, Chair	Washington State Department of Transportation
Dana Coggon	Kitsap County
Doug Daoust	U.S. Forest Service
Alison Halpern	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Mary Mahaffy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bridget Moran	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Brid Nowlan, Vice Chair	Washington Invasive Species Coalition
Melodie Selby	Washington State Department of Ecology
Ted Smith	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Pat Stevenson	Stillaguamish Tribe
Mary Toohey	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Michael Valenzuela	U.S. Customs and Boarder Protection

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

William Brookreson	Washington Native Plant Society and Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Council
Kaleen Cottingham	Recreation and Conservation Office
Kathy Hamel	Washington State Department of Ecology
James Morin	Washington State Department of Transportation
Stephen Phillips	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Allen Pleus	Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife
Terry Pruit	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Lisa Veneroso	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Darrell Wallace	Backcountry Horseman of Washington
Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy

STAFF:

Clover Lockard
Lori Lawrence

Convene and Welcome:

Chris Christopher opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. He made welcome announcements, introduced new members, asked the Council and audience members to introduce themselves, and then reviewed the Council agenda. Chris welcomed Doug Daoust to the Council.

Special Presentation

Chris Christopher and Kaleen Cottingham gave a special thanks to Bridget Moran in appreciation of her work as Council Chair from January 2007 through October 2008. Bridget

commented that it was an honor to be chair. She greatly appreciated all the work done by the Council while she was chair.

Council Business Items:

Chris Christopher moved to **APPROVE** the August 20, 2008 meeting minutes as amended: Spelling corrections to the names of Melodie Selby, Doug Daoust, and Bill Brookreson; add Pat Stevenson's name to attendee list; and add Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Council to organizations Bill Brookreson represents. Melodie Selby **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the August 20, 2008 amended meeting minutes.

Announcements/Hot Topics:

Kathy Hamel shared information from a regional meeting of aquatic plant managers from Montana, Idaho, and Washington. It was a successful meeting that addressed emerging plant problems and funding issues. There will be efforts to hold this type of meeting once a year and will include video conferencing in the future. Almost all participants focused on aquatic plants. In future meetings, they will discuss aquatic animal issues as well.

Melodie Selby shared a story about a postcard that was also a packet of wildflower seeds. A relative bought the seed-packet postcard in British Columbia as a gift. When the relative tried to cross the border into the U.S. with the seed-packet in hand, the seeds were confiscated. The sender then successfully mailed a seed-packet postcard from British Columbia to Olympia. The point is that while some protections exist for entry points, the seeds still made it across the border.

Allen Pleus gave a ballast water update. There is a lot of activity with ballast water regulatory issues and Washington State rule making:

- The federal legislation has stalled primarily on the Senate side. With the severe economic conditions, no one is thinking about ballast water issues. Allen hopes to go to Washington DC and work to secure national legislation that is strong and recognizes state rights.
- The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has chosen to neither certify nor deny certification of NPDES General Vessel Permit under Section 401(a)(1) of the Federal Clean Water Act.
- U.S. Coast Guard draft treatment standards and approval processes were recently sent to Homeland Security for review.
- The California Ballast Water Draft Report on Efficacy, Availability, and Environmental Impacts of Ballast Water Treatment Systems is due to the state Legislature January 1, 2009.

To date, 16 countries have ratified the Ballast Water Management Convention, adopted in February 2004, representing about 14.24 percent of the world's merchant shipping.

In response to Ecology's position on the general vessel permit, Melodie mentioned that by doing nothing that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be able to continue to move forward. Vessels will get permits. The Department of Ecology hopes that five years from now, when this comes up again, that they will be able to establish a joint system with EPA.

Allen shared another conflict; the Coast Guard currently says you do not have to deviate from your path for exchange, however, EPA says you must deviate from your path to exchange water.

How to enforce this is still in question. California State Ballast Water Legislation will recommend keeping 2010 as the date to have treatment systems installed. They believe that technology will be ready by then to allow implementation in 2011. The International Maritime Organization has ratified the Ballast Water Management Convention. They need 30 people to approve this, but only two systems have approval and certification for implementation.

Chris asked Allen how he thinks the Council could help with these issues. Allen responded that the Council can help by expressing support to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for funding and refocusing on legislation in the next session.

Stephen Phillips thanked the State of Washington for signing the Columbia River Basin Interagency Management Plan for Zebra Mussel and Aquatic Species. Oregon, Idaho, and Montana also signed. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has not signed the plan yet. It is hopeful that they will sign it before January 2009.

In October, there was a “rapid response” exercise using the scenario of a zebra mussel attached to a barge. There will be another “rapid response” exercise in the spring of 2009 hosted by Idaho. They may hide dead zebra mussels in the sound, have divers out, and allow the state agencies to coordinate with each other. The latest version of the rapid response plan is located at the 100th Meridian Initiative Web site. They will be looking for additional funds in the coming year for more exercises.

Allen expressed his appreciation for Stephen’s work to create a model plan that looks at the federal and state responsibilities. Puget Sound Partnership, Action Agenda number 8.5 mentions a rapid response effort. However, it does not go into detail, so the Council may be able to focus on defining rapid response as a way to help.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Budget Update:

Kaleen spoke of how the revenue forecast would affect state agencies. She suspects the new projected deficit will be \$4 billion or higher. Agencies are directed to cut their own budgets. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is conducting an exercise to cut \$648,000 as requested. Because of the underfunded status of the Invasive Species Council, it should not have additional funds cut. However, agencies will not know what to do until the Governor’s budget comes out in December 2008.

Staff asked the Council to think about how to frame its accomplishments in the annual report to the Governor and Legislature in relation to the budget. The Priorities of Government placed the continued funding of the Invasive Species Council in the “high” category and the budget decision package of \$494,000 in the “next steps” category. The Puget Sound Partnership listed Invasiders at the Gate and the baseline assessment in their action agenda. There is still a short time to comment on the action agenda. They are looking for focused, concise comments.

Chris discussed a Washington State Department of Agriculture handout and Maritime Trade handout. These handouts point to the fact that there is a lot of money and jobs associated with

agriculture and trade. The chart shows the metric tons of trade and shows the 2020 projection. It appears that the inspection challenges associated with invasive species and increased trade will carry into the future.

Where do we go from here (Presentation):

Chris shared his vision for ways the Council can begin implementation immediately. He started with the purpose of the Council and the reason it was formed. The legislation asked for a strategic plan and the Council completed that charge in June. The plan identifies the purpose of the Council and the top five strategic goals. The strategic plan also provides a road map to where the Council needs to be.

Next, the Council needs to develop a priority list for Council action. Chris is concerned that if we do not have a list, we will lose traction as a Council. The Council should be able to provide an invasive species focus list to the Governor. This will improve the chances of funding.

Chris provided ideas on how to move forward if the Council is funded for the 2009-2011. If the Council is not funded then the Council could choose several invasive species from the list and work forward with five key strategic action items.

The overall goal of the Council is to provide high-level direction for combating invasive species and guarding against future threats.

Council Response

Melodie agreed that shrinking down the scope makes sense. There is a growing theme to start small, see if it is successful, and then grow from there. In terms of funding, in-kind donations may be an opportunity for additional support.

Bill Brookreson said shrinking the scope is necessary in order to have an effective list to coordinate with non-government organizations as well as agencies.

Chris would be satisfied if the Council agreed to talk to agency Directors about a specific list of the five or six biggest threats to Washington State.

Mary Toohey would like to see Japanese knotweed and zebra mussel on the list. She has a concern about the arrival of unknown invasive species that agencies cannot plan to prevent or control. There is no way to fit the unknowns into a scheme like this. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) efforts need to be increased. Chris agreed that the Council should agree on a framework for dealing with EDRR. Mary thinks that sorting out agency responsibilities in the case of new invasive threats will help. Melodie agreed that we need a plan for this issue.

Wendy Brown commented that because the legislation asks us to develop criteria for a priority list of species, the Council should do that first.

Dana Coggon mentioned that there are already some great lists for criteria to reference. Alison noted that the State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB) has had a long history of figuring out a risk assessment for invasive species. She will send this out to the Council. Pat Stevenson

said the microbial world has not been addressed. He would like to identify who would be responsible for this area. Chris agreed that this needs to be considered.

Doug Daoust said the Council should compare notes with the Oregon Invasive Species Council. The work they are doing appears to be parallel; Doug is on both councils and can be a connector.

Kathy Hamel recommended that the WSNWCB list and the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Committee list be used. These lists are already prioritized, so the Council will not be reinventing the wheel.

The Council is concerned with all invasive species, but they need to focus on a select few. It is time to prioritize. If the Legislature or Governor's office asks what we are doing we need to show our focus, and how it connects to what other groups and states are working on. When the Council presents information, only a small amount of time is available, so we need to make the biggest impact.

Allen noted that the suggested structure is species management, but there are different ways to accomplish this. He encouraged the Council to look at pathways, which are just as important as focusing on specific species. Preventing invasive species from entering the state is very important.

Dana noted that it might work to merge the idea of an invasive species list with pathways. In other words, if we focus on specific species while putting it into a pathways approach, we will have an integrated approach.

Wendy noted that the Council can come up with its own method to prioritize species. The Council just needs to choose some species and start taking action. Mary added that whatever the Council does it must remain simple due to the budgetary issues. If the Council does not simplify what it does, it will not move forward.

WorkDay Reports:

The Council reviewed the handout on the breakout sessions.

Baseline Assessment

Alison Halpern spoke on the baseline assessment. At both workdays, participants acknowledged that there is a lot of information on plants, but there are huge gaps regarding animals. Participants seemed to fixate on the details of having a database, verses a snapshot assessment. There is not a concise understanding of a baseline assessment. The Council needs to look at where invasive species are, and where they are not, including all species in the state and those that have not yet come into the state. Bridget noted that it might make sense to look at a smaller subset of species instead of all invasive species or potential species that are out there.

Alison mentioned that the WSNWCB addresses not only where weeds are but also includes what action is being taken to control them. Initially getting a prioritized list of key species is most important to move forward. The Council also needs to decide which species to address, at what scale, what areas have been checked and what areas have not been checked, etcetera. The

Council could “piggy back” on the WSNWCB’s work with the ANS Committee to gather some basic information.

Bridget agrees that step one is to figure out a prioritized list and then find out who has the information the Council needs to start gathering the information for a baseline assessment.

Ted Smith added that we must first define our criteria for listing. Chris agreed, but emphasized that there are already criteria lists out there and we do not need to make this more difficult than need be.

Alison noted that the Council’s criteria list should be able to refer back to the WSNWCB or the ANS Committee. The most valuable thing coming out of this is an expansion of invasive species information. We will have tangible evidence because we will have the baseline assessment to use as a tool and data to back the Council’s reasons for addressing specific species.

Allen said when he thinks of a baseline assessment, he thinks of looking at all of the species, for multiple purpose references. How does the Council include invasive species that are not in the State yet? If your highest priority is keeping things that are not here from coming, how will you show that this has been achieved? If invasive species that are not yet here are identified in the baseline assessment, it can be used as a measurement in later analysis.

Alison used the example of the Gypsy Moth to explain that if the State had a baseline in 2009, which found nothing, and then in 2012 still found no species, there could be a way to identify where and how they were treated between 2009 and 2012 to keep them out.

Bill said the baseline is not a solution unless you have a way of getting this information to the Legislature.

Mary reminded the Council of a discussion from a previous Council meeting regarding “How do you define success?” Finding a new introduction is a success. However, because a pathway allowed entry it is also a failure.

Chris summarized that the Council needs to have some sort of structure outlining how to move forward with the baseline assessment. Doug noted that the Oregon Invasive Species Council is only budgeting \$38,000 for their assessment. Doug will send further information on this to the Council. Chris highlighted again that we need to keep it simple.

Information Clearinghouse

Brid handed out additional information on the Information Clearinghouse session. The ANS Committee is looking at how to do similar work. The breakout group also discussed bioinformatics, which is the automatic processing of information. This system will automatically update new information and pull it from various other Web sites or data that is on-line. This technology allows the Council to have a portal that is regularly updated. There are several models out there: the Consortium of Pacific Northwest Herbaria, NatureServ, the Seattle Urban Nature Project, and the USDA/NRCS Plant Database. Brid also discussed data sources, the server, Web site, and staffing needs to get a database up and running. Managers wanted a place

to turn to for information on control methods or accessing journals. For next steps, participants suggested forming a workgroup, developing a method of quality control, and identifying the kinds of expertise that would be needed, such as people with education and outreach background. The groups thought that RCO could be the host of the portal, however not necessarily in charge of the Web site.

Bridget mentioned that the information clearinghouse recommendation was the one that excited the public the most during the public comment period for the strategic plan. However, this recommendation certainly requires funding. If the Council does not receive funding for this the Council can start by clarifying what people most need first.

Brid talked about how an information clearinghouse would also help the Biodiversity Council and the Puget Sound Partnership. The Council needs to make a case that it will be doing work for these other organizations. Melodie mentioned that invasive species also affect the economy and funders need to be reminded of this. Brid thinks the Council should start a workgroup to discuss how the site should look, how it can be developed as inexpensively as possible, and how to gather information from other agencies with authorization to use their data. Bill asked the Council to recognize that the annual maintenance cost may be as expensive over time as the cost to just to get it started.

Education and Outreach

Dana discussed the breakout session in Parkland. The education and outreach group thought that the Council was going to tell them what they were supposed to do. It was obvious quite quickly that there were 100-200 different educational materials in that room alone. However, the group agreed that there is no overall, statewide invasive species motto to grab public attention. The group discussed social marketing. Various audiences asked, "Why should I care?" Participants noted that there is no phone number to report invasive species information. It was also clearly stated that the Council needs to integrate invasive species information into a variety of curricula (for example the master gardeners and zoos) to educate people about invasive species while they are enjoying other things.

Bridget noted that breakout session members suggested changing the RCW of the WSNWCB to include all invasive species. Alison did not feel this was a very good idea. Wendy said this also came up in the EDRR session. Melodie noted that this idea is also gaining credence in the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda and expressed concern about who would staff a job with so many responsibilities. When you spread yourself too thin you cannot do any of the jobs well. Having a team of coordinated inspectors is a useful model for dealing with all invasive species. Alison suggested that all inspectors should have information on how to contact other inspectors focused on aquatic or terrestrial species. Trying to change the mission of a group may not be a valuable approach. Chris agreed that we do not want to overwhelm the WSNWCB by asking them to take on animals in addition to weeds.

Dana suggested hiring a full-time employee (FTE) to do a marketing plan as a next step. Without funding, the Council could work closely with the information clearinghouse workgroup to brainstorm whom the Council wants to target with messaging.

The decision package included funding for education but not for an FTE. The Council discussed working with Oregon due to limited resources.

There are so many invasive species brochures, the Council does not need to develop more, but putting the Council logo on these items to show support is a good idea. The Council could use the same logo as Oregon so that the message works across borders.

Explaining pathways in the Council messaging will help the public better understand the issue.

Chris and Dana discussed “branding - working with over invasive species councils to use the same logo to create something highly recognizable to the public. Also, educating kids about invasive species is an important piece of outreach. This was effective in seatbelt education. It is important to get the message to schools.

Dana will continue with the education workgroup. By January, this group will come up with a draft logo to present to the Council.

Communication and Tools Discussion:

Breakout session participants noted that there is a long-term need for coordination across invasive species work. Getting people to talk to each other will continue to be an issue. The group determined that while the Council should exist, they should not be the authority on every invasive species. They should help people doing invasive species work to clarify who is the authority on each area of invasive species. Participants from this session also emphasized the need for a flow chart that lists authorities for invasive species. This will help clarify where gaps in authority exist.

Mary noted that the breakout group in Pasco tended to be more agriculture oriented. They focused on specifics. They wanted a detailed chart. The group also wanted a single place for people to call or e-mail with questions about invasive species. Ecology’s spill reporting phone number structure works well. Who has the resources to put this into place? People will not necessarily be calling about a new species. The person receiving the call could send inquiries to a person with expertise on the subject.

Permits were also a discussion item. However, there were no specifics discussed on how to accomplish improving the permitting situation. Melodie mentioned that funding is needed to accomplish this.

Melodie noted that no outside Council or agency should decide who the lead authority on specific invasive species should be. The agencies should decide with each other and the Council should help to get them in the same room to make these decisions.

Chris asked how mapping out authorities should happen. Melodie clarified that it would be helpful to get a group together to map this, using the zebra mussel plan as a starting point. She recommends that the Council get agency members at the table to decide who will handle what, possibly splitting it between aquatic and terrestrial, with contact people identified, so in an emergency people know who to call.

There are already models out there to reference. Rather than listing who has authority on what, the Council should address how agencies would work with each other when questions arise. However, authorities are not yet clear. The work is broader than just clarifying authorities, it is about figuring out how authorities can effectively work together. Breakout session members really felt it was important to work and coordinate with the Puget Sound Partnership.

Emergency Funding and Early Detection and Rapid Response

In terms of early detection, the breakout session participants noted that there were many private groups and little coordination, interaction, or oversight. They saw that having one person to coordinate communication would be useful.

Prioritizing species was a major gap. The group emphasized that it had to be easy, simple, and doable to ensure early detection. Counties are limited in their ability to deal with invasive species. They felt this should be handled at a state level. The Council needs to educate the Legislature that funding needs to come before there is an emergency, not once there is an emergency. It is cheaper to fix a problem from the outset before it is a disaster.

The discussion also noted that there should be an incentive or mechanism to compensate private landowners (why should they pay to remove something on their property for the good of all?). There is also a lack in taxonomic expertise. Allen reminded everyone that agencies want landowners to alert them when something is on their land, and unless it will help them, rather than hurt them, they are not likely to do that.

Compensating landowners can get very expensive, although it would be a good incentive. In the RCW for the WSNWCB, it states that it is the private landowner's responsibility to deal with invasive weeds.

When discussing risk assessments a control strategy is also needed. Balance is needed between the risk of the control versus the species being controlled. If the biggest benefit does not come from the control activity agencies need to consider why they are doing the control activity.

Allen discussed the various stages of risk for certain species, yet there are so many species that they are not all identified on a 1-4 risk level. There may be a need for a statewide rapid response team to address questions when they arise. We need to get invasive species at the introduction stage. This group would be dedicated to understanding the risks and able to identify how to move forward.

In a way, there is a group like this in every agency, and when the alarm bells sound, the agency moves quickly. While the suggestion of a dedicated group to invasive species is ideal, it is difficult to foresee a group actually dedicated to doing this work. This kind of group might be appropriate if can lay out the structure of it on a smaller scale, for example with the Quagga mussel.

When Oregon went to the Legislature for sudden oak death, they received funding because there was a pot of money used for emergency funds. Mary remarked that the Governor did have a

specific pot of funds for emergencies. There was governor's emergency funding provided in 2006 for tunicates.

The Council will move forward with a workgroup to identify authorities.

Moving Forward after Workday discussion:

Now that the Council has discussed the workdays, proposed work groups, and next steps, Chris proposed identifying Council members to take on parts of this work.

Melodie thinks that the Council needs to start with a list of identified species before workgroups begin. Since the WSNWCB is already working on an impact assessment, Alison Halpern is willing to take a lead on developing a list of species to bring to the Council before its next meeting. Alison will bring information from the WSNWCB related to risk and impact criteria factors. Chris would like to see this list done by the next meeting so that the Council can agree on the priorities at the next meeting.

Chris proposed that Wendy and Alison lead an effort to identify a list to bring to the Council. Ray or James will participate in this discussion. Allen Pleus will bring a list of aquatic species including nutria. Kathy Hamel will bring a list of aquatic plants. Brad White will bring a list on bugs and plant pathogens. Alison will bring a list of terrestrial plants. This does not account for terrestrial animals. Allen Pleus will follow up on marine algae. The Nature Conservancy will help take an overarching look because they are less invested in specific species and more invested in the overall look.

The Council could more easily come up with a list once the Council agrees on the criteria for developing a list. The priorities will come to the surface from there. Chris stated that he was less concerned that there is a 1 - 20 order, and more concerned a list is made. There are certain species that should be set aside because of political issues. Brid agrees, but this should not be decided without an agreed upon criteria list for the Council to work from. Melodie is thinking maybe six species total, rather than 20. Emphasizing that these six are the main focus, yet there is plenty of other important work to do out there.

Members discussed calling them case studies and not priority invasive species. Case studies look less important than prioritized species and they do not imply that the Council is moving forward. Bill suggested "aggressive action priorities" as the title for these species because the need is to emphasize action. Focus on actions the Council can take to bring this to the Governor for funding. The new workgroup will meet in December and come back to the Council with a list.

Members of the Council have agreed to participate in one of five workgroups, based around the top five recommendations from the strategic plan. These groups may or may not fully develop, but the need to start is immediate.

Discussion on implementation workgroups

The five discussed groups may become our next round of workgroups. Allen noted that the education and outreach group and the information clearinghouse group could be combined at

some point. Dana sees them working together as well. She is willing to pull together an education and outreach group to discuss key communication messages specifically before the next Council meeting. Brid will organize the information clearinghouse work group. Members should figure out whom to invite to participate. Chris would like every Council member to be on at least one workgroup. January 8 is not that far away, so selecting members for the new workgroups must move forward. They can then decide what other expertise needs to be included.

Deliverables by Next Council Meeting

Each group will assemble a list of participants for their workgroup and bring this list to the January 8 meeting.

Action Item: New groups for Implementation

Council “Focus” Species - Alison Halpern, Wendy Brown, Ray Willard, James Morin, Kathy Hamel, Brad White, Lisa Younger

Next Step: Develop criteria and list of invasive species for Council attention by January 8. Council will focus on a limited number of species that are a threat to the state and that make the most sense for Council action. They may begin with the WSNWCB and the aquatic nuisance species lists.

Baseline Assessment – Alison Halpern, Ted Smith

Next Steps: Doug Daoust will share information regarding Oregon’s baseline criteria. Begin to identify and enlist expertise needed for work group.

Information Clearinghouse – Brid Nowlan, Dana Coggon

Next Steps: Begin to identify and enlist expertise needed for work group. Wendy Brown wanted to be sure that Lynn Helbrecht, Biodiversity Council executive coordinator, was invited to be part of the clearinghouse group.

Education/Outreach – Dana Coggon, Mary Mahaffy, Doug Daoust, and members of the former education work group.

Next Steps: Check with Oregon Invasive Species Council regarding logo and message sharing and regional approach to marketing. Bring ideas for common message to January 8 meeting. Alison will share Montana marketing information.

Communication & Tools – Mary Toohey, Melodie Selby

Next Step: Begin to identify and enlist expertise needed for work group.

Emergency Funding & EDRR – Wendy Brown, Allen Pleus

Next Step: Begin to identify and enlist expertise needed for work group.

Report: Annual Report Discussion:

Staff went through a draft outline for the annual report, including a message from the chair, Council progress, and information on the strategic plan, regional collaboration, emerging threats, and 2009 projects.

The next steps are key to a meaningful report. Having the workdays report should emphasize key points for moving forward if it is included in the annual report. To show the link with the Puget Sound Partnership and the Biodiversity Council and that the Council is working on issues that these entities also identified as priorities.

Next Steps:

- January 2009 agenda review
- Staff will get a draft annual report out to the Council as soon as it is available.

Adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 2:50p.m. Chris thanked the Council for a productive meeting.

Next meeting:

January 8, 2008

Natural Resources Building

Room 172, Olympia, WA

Invasive Species Approval:

Chris Christopher, Chair

Date