

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

May 7, 2009

Room 172, Natural Resources Building
Olympia, Washington

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wendy Brown	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Clinton Campbell	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Chris Christopher, Chair	Department of Transportation
Dana Coggon	Kitsap County
Doug Daoust	U.S. Forest Service
Alison Halpern	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Lisa Macchio	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mary Mahaffy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brid Nowlan, Vice Chair	Washington Invasive Species Coalition
Niles Seifert	U.S. Coast Guard
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
Bill Tweit	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Lisa Veneroso	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Control

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

Jim Fox	Recreation and Conservation Office
Devi Watson	Recreation and Conservation Office

STAFF:

Clover Lockard
Gen Keesecker
Lori Lawrence
Rachel LeBaron Anderson

Convene and Welcome:

Chris Christopher opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. with welcome announcements and facility safety information, introductions, and a review of the agenda.

Hot Topics:

Chris Christopher introduced Jim Fox and Devi Watson from the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to give updates on the hiring process for the Council's executive coordinator position and the 2009 Legislative session.

Legislative update:

Jim Fox, RCO legislative liaison, said this was a difficult budget year as none of RCO's decision packages were funded; RCO's budget was impacted, but not to the point of layoffs, and all programs were funded even though they were funded less than in previous years. Jim went over the funding amounts and highlights. Senate bill 5070 did not pass and several bills that would have ended the council did not pass.

Council Executive Coordinator Position:

Devi Watson, RCO Human Resources, gave a hiring update for the executive coordinator position, which posted on April 29, 2009. After an initial screening of applicants, Kaleen Cottingham, RCO Director, will review the finalists, have interviews, and conduct reference checks. They are shooting for a hire date of July 1, 2009. Chris Christopher complemented Clover Lockard, retiring executive coordinator, on the wonderful job she has done while working for the council. Clover's hard work has also resulted in the council receiving a grant allowing our strategy to move forward.

Chinese Barge:

Allen Pleus, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), gave an update on the Chinese barge that arrived in Bellingham. The barge was unable to exchange ballast water in open sea so the water was treated instead. Invasive species were not found on the hull.

The Asian (Chinese) Frog Incident:

Allen Pleus, WDFW, informed the Council about a frog recently found in cargo going to Pasco. As a precautionary measure, the cargo was fumigated and is being identified to the species level. A detailed report was filed, and recommendations were made to allow unidentified species to enter Washington as long as they are not released. Allen suggested that Lisa DeBruyckere, from Oregon Invasive Species discuss the incident with the council.

Agency Comments from the Council:

Melodie Selby, Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) shared a flowchart with the Council. The flowchart is for the Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) to minimize the spread of invasive species from EAP field work. She thought the process displayed could be helpful to the council. There is a contact number at the bottom to get more information about the program. She said the council could use this information in its Emergency Response planning work. Chris Christopher commented that this was valuable from a council standpoint as we are often trying to identify who is in charge of various issues.

New Council Member:

Bill Tweit will replace Lisa Veneroso on the council due to reorganization within WDFW. Lisa introduced Bill Tweit, saying he has a wealth of knowledge, he is the policy lead for Columbia River Basin issues, and water management projects, and serves on a fisheries council. Lisa Veneroso will share what she has learned working on the council with other forums. This is Lisa's last meeting.

Council Business Items:

Doug Daoust moved to **APPROVE** the January 8, 2009 minutes as presented. Wendy Brown **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the January 8, 2009 minutes.

Public Comment:

Keith Starum, Individual Shellfish Growers of Washington, noted that in his experience mowing is effective in removing Spartina, a class "A" weed, and that herbicide is not necessary. He is concerned about having herbicide drift on his land, organic garden, and oysters. Having herbicide drift over his oysters would prevent him from selling them for two years. He says there are 327 independent shellfish growers with concerns about herbicide use and have contacted legislators to discuss their concerns. He stressed the importance of weed control methods beyond herbicides.

Fritzi Cohen, Moby Dick Hotel and Oyster Farm, has been trying to protect Willapa Bay since 1988. She advocated for alternatives to herbicides and pesticides when controlling invasive species. She is concerned about Carbaryl use to remove native ghost shrimp in order to protect non-native oysters and its impact on salmon. She thinks the cost of removing Spartina has been underestimated. She noted that chemical risk assessments only review the single active ingredient, they do not test the total product, or

how it effects the environment when products are mixed. She is concerned that adequate assessments have not been conducted on pesticide and herbicide impacts on human and environmental health and thinks pesticides have been overused in Washington.

Alison Halpern, Washington Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB, addressed Fritz's concerns about the processes used at the WSNWCB meetings. She also updated the council and audience about a project they are working on with Pierce County and Puget Sound beekeepers to create a brochure addressing how noxious weed control fits in with responsibly to protect bees.

Lisa Macchio, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), agreed it would be great if we could better control chemicals and said the EPA is working on permitting to get better control, it is not a fix, but a starting point.

Steve Bova, private citizen, said that in recent fishing around Willapa Bay, he has not found many crabs and is concerned and has questions about the use of pesticides and herbicides used to combat invasive species. He wanted to know the danger of *Spartina*. The council clarified that *Spartina* kills native grass and destroys key shorebird habitat areas.

Puget Sound Partnership/EPA Grant:

Chris Christopher went over the details of Puget Sound Partnership grant. Clover thanked Mary Mahaffy and Kevin Anderson for their help in the application process. The council will need to match grant funds dollar for dollar, or with in kind contributions of staff and council member time. The council will focus on the top three priorities presented to the Governor, with a focus on Puget Sound. This project will continue over a two-year period, ending in June, 2011.

Council members asked if there were other grants available to allow more focus on the rest of the state. Clover Lockard said this project would set the framework for the rest of the state and make it easier to get future grants. Brid said Puget Sound includes watersheds so it is not as limited as it seems, but to begin we need a narrower focus. Mary Macchio clarified that EPA still has 20 million in their budget. They are working on a competitive process to for 2009 grant money.

Lisa Veneroso congratulated Clover Lockard on her work to gain this grant. Staff is working with council members to clarify some information before we can begin and to draft an request for proposals to hire contractors for the project.

Implementation Workgroups:

Wendy Brown, presented the model for designating priority species using a power point presentation. First, the work group looked at invasive species assessment tools currently in use. None of them covered aquatic, land, insects, and weeds in one assessment. So they created a single assessment tool that will work for all. Wendy reviewed the assessment categories with the council. The assessment gives two scores, an impact, and a prevention score. Ecological, economic, human health impacts, and feasibility of prevention were all considered. They looked at how prepared our state was to prevent or to act early on a species and to be proactive rather than reactive. One flaw of this assessment is that it will not show if a species is only going to have a big economic effect on one industry, it could have a low score but still have a big effect. The tool looked at pathways, current regulations, and the degree of control that is currently mandated. Lisa Macchio asked about the flaw in how the economic impacts are weighed. Since there are only four economic questions maybe they could carry more weight. Wendy Brown said the workgroup was concerned about having one section weigh more than another. They did not weigh human health as high as other categories because major human health issues would be taken care of by the Department of Health.

The prioritization workgroup made a list of what they thought were the worst invasive species in Washington at their first meeting and ended with 46 species, which were evaluated as “worst of the worst”. They plotted the species based on their impact and prevention scores rather than creating a list. The scatter plot allows focus on species that need better early action response and it identifies other management techniques that are either working or need to be addressed.

Melodie Selby said the Council should address what their role is within the scatter chart. Randy Lumper, Skokomish Tribe, asked if the Council had an analysis to show cost of inaction versus cost of action. Alison Halpern said it was done in Oregon and would be great to have in Washington. It would define why the public should care about a given species. Alison said it would also be good to show the changes in the scatter graph over time. This is a good tool for the council. Lisa Veneroso liked the scatter graph as an adaptive management tool.

Audience and council members discussed potential concerns with the tools and its results and indicated ideas for future use. Lisa Younger reminded everyone that the tool is not scientifically based; it is a quick assessment by a group of experts using opinions. It is a starting point to trigger questions that need to be asked.

Allen Pleus commented on how some of these species were qualified in the graph and how the different mandates effected the assessment. Many of the scores were influenced by “unknown” information. The laws and mandates for the various species are not comparable. Chris Christopher explained that the purpose of this tool is to prioritize council goals and top inform the workgroups. We are hoping the tool will move us forward in these directions. Pat Stevenson said we need to be careful to keep the list as a Council tool and not let it gain a life of its own. We need caution in how this tool is used, so we do not affect other groups’ grant funding. Lisa Veneroso says we should use the graph and call it a management tool, and get away from the “list” idea and the dangers attached to having a list. Different audiences will focus on different parts of the graph.

Vicki Yund likes how adaptable the tool is, and that it can be applied to any specific group to gain a useable result. Melodie Selby would like to offer the assessment tool to other groups so they can come up with their own priority species to focus on. Chris Christopher summarized that the Council has workgroup projects, the species for Council action, and the EPA grant that ties our work to Puget Sound and the Council needs to figure out how to juggle all these things together.

Lisa Veneroso moved to **APPROVE** the criteria and species for Council action as a management tool. Melodie Selby **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the criteria for Council action as a management tool.

Ray Willard asked if this would go out for peer review. Wendy Brown does not feel this is necessary. Chris Christopher said we can still make small changes but it is time to move forward. We need to clarify the differences between science and knowledge and clarify that this is based best professional knowledge as a management tool. Wendy Brown said we could evaluate species yearly to see where they are. Lisa Younger said to be cautious, that trying to create the “perfect” tool is becoming the enemy of the “perfectly adequate” tool. The tool will never be perfect, but it will serve the purpose of the council. Ted Smith said the highest value was that it identified many things we did not know. Brid Nowlan suggested we open the tool up for comment with the plan to reevaluate the tool in a year using all the feedback. Chris Christopher said a few of the small changes that were suggested today would be added to the tool right away. Chris congratulated Wendy Brown on all of her work. Chris finished the PowerPoint presentation with some ideas on how to move forward. As the species are prioritized the council will develop and provide access to information for each species to the public and will have clear guidelines for the public to report a species to.

Implementation Workgroups cont:

Education and Outreach

Dana Coggon joined the meeting by conference phone for her workgroup update. The education workgroup have been reviewing posters for use at events. They are also looking for a council reporting number. Dana would like the Council to discuss a number today. The council showed most interest in using the number 1-877-946-3378 (1-877-9INFEST) unless other more suitable options are available.

Dana explained how Oregon's reporting hotline is managed. Two people answer the phone calls and they additionally have a voicemail box. She would prefer that Washington have an open phone line at the RCO where staff would be able to answer questions. Staff would transfer calls to the appropriate point person. . This would not be an emergency number. Another option is an automated system to route calls to the correct person according to which button the caller pushes. Wendy Brown wants the council to have a way to track the number and type of calls. If there is an easier way staff could track the information.

Brid Nowlan prefers a live person answer calls and refer them. Wendy Brown suggested we have a pre-prepared script for answering calls. Brid Nowlan also suggested that we could have an online form The form and script would ask for the information we need to move the caller to the right person. Lisa Veneroso said that workloads will dictate how much time is spent answering phones. When the number of calls increase the Council can switch to an automated system. We must have voicemail for calls coming in after office hours and on weekends.

Allen Pleus stressed the importance of having live people answer, most callers prefer it, and the person answering can triage the importance of the calls as they come in. Dana Coggon asked if we could turn the decision over to the workgroup to decide on. Melodie Toohey agreed that the council is getting too involved in the details when some of these things should be decided in the work group or by the staff. Chris Christopher assigned Gen Keesecker and Dana Coggon to the issue, with an initial plan to have a live person answer until we can move to an automated system, and to work on website forms. Dana and staff updated the Council on the progress of the State Parks poster project.

Chris Christopher asked Dana Coggon how the education group would focus on the priority species. Mary Mahaffy said that they are the focus of the posters. Allen Pleus asked if we could include the aquatic hotline on the same poster. Brid Nowlan thinks having two numbers on a poster is confusing. Dana thanked Gen Keesecker for all of her work.

Information Clearinghouse

Brid Nowlan worked with Gen Keesecker and Susan Zemek to rewrite and redesign the invasive species website. The new website will go online this summer. They have added a page to report sightings and Brid is working with staff to create a reporting form to add to the web page. They may use Survey Monkey to compile the information as the forms come in. They will also add some of the case study information from the strategic plan to the site.

Brid Nowlan asked the group to email her any suggestions or ideas they might have. She said the costly part of the Information Clearinghouse project is the initial building of the website infrastructure. Several council members asked how the portal would work. Brid Nowlan said they would have a special search engine that would send people to various pre selected sites. Our website would be a central location for people to ask a question and get routed to the correct place for the answer.

Lisa Macchio asked what the long-term management of the portal would be and how we would update it with new websites. Brid Nowlan clarified that we would only access Web sites that have databases of information, our Web site would search their databases and refer the person to the other Web site only if it

contained the information they were inquiring about. Brid says next steps are working on a RFP and hiring a contractor. The first step is to determine which databases they will access and begin gaining permission to use them. Chris Christopher asked if we could add the “Stop the Invasion” logo to the web site.

Baseline Assessment

Alison Halpern’s workgroup was on hold while waiting for the prioritization workgroup’s species for action management tool, since this time the Council has applied for grant money from EPA. The requirements of the grant focus on invasive species in the Puget Sound area. For the grant, the assessment will be more of a spatial GPS assessment. She assumes they will be developing an RFP for this project. She is also looking at how we will gather information on individual species locations without having the map light up a whole county. She wonders if we should do a Meta analysis first. She also asked if we should still do an initial knowledge gathering of what is already in place, so we are not limited by only having spatial data. Brid Nowlan agrees that it would be more useful to see what knowledge we already have, and then build on it so we can identify gaps.

Lisa Macchio asked for clarification on whether workgroups are focused on Puget Sound or looking at the whole state. Chris Christopher says we are looking at the whole state and Puget Sound. Lisa Macchio asked if we are being realistic about what we can do with our funding. We do not want to agree to deliverables we cannot afford. The proposal should have phases, so deliverables are clear. Council members are interested in paring down the scope of the baseline assessment so that it is truly achievable with the amount of funding coming from EPA. The Council chair proposed an advisory group made up of work group leads to develop specifics on the scope of work and language for the RFP.

Communication and Tools

Mary Toohey said the workgroup needed to wait for information from other workgroups before they could move forward. She merged her group with the Emergency Funding workgroup and they will continue to work together. Her next steps are to work on emergency response flow charts to determine who is the lead on actions and ways to find gaps in the process. Chris Christopher volunteered Ray Willard to join in them in deciding what will be completed before the September council meeting. Mary Mahaffy says it seems important for the coordinators of the workgroups to meet and look at their overlaps. Chris asked to have a leads meeting before Clover Lockard retires.

Emergency Funding and Early Detection and Rapid Response

Wendy Brown says this group discussed interstate compacts and rapid response plans. She shared her action flow chart with the council. Chris liked the flow chart because it shows a very general process. Brid Nowlan asked if the flow chart would work, or if people will trip up in places. Will they be able to identify who the authorities are? Wendy says the flow chart assumes you know who the authorities are and that it changes according to each situation. Brid asked if we could use it to find gaps in the process. Wendy said yes, the information is not all in place yet. Mary Toohey says this is a road map of how things are currently working.

Chris Christopher said we do not want to get too far into creating processes for agencies. We need to identify the gaps. These are what a state agency might need to make an action on private property. This process should be outlined for each species listed in the council’s species for action management tool.

Council Policy and Processes:

Clover Lockard introduced some possible additions to Council Policy. We have requests for council support and need a way to handle them. Previously, staff brought requests to the council meetings for decision, but we need a way to make quick decisions when working with contractors without holding a special council meeting.

Melodie Selby said she felt comfortable if the Executive Coordinator and Council Chair made decisions. Wendy Brown and Brid Nowlan agreed they would also be comfortable with this. Ted Smith is uncomfortable with this, because council members represent agencies in decisions. He would like to be emailed for input. Clover Lockard said an email usually goes to the council to inform them of issues. However, legally we cannot vote or answer “reply all” to an email. Bill Tweit said we do not want proposed legislation to go through this process; it should be examined in detail by each agency representative. Chris Christopher said they would remove “Proposed Legislation” from the process. Mary Mahaffy said there should be a timeline for when a decision is made based on turnaround time. Chris Christopher said it is more important to keep council cohesiveness than to meet tight turnaround times. Brid Nowlan said we should establish an approved amount of time for the Council to respond. Chris Christopher suggested two weeks. Mary Mahaffy suggested we should have a special council meeting during legislation when needed.

Council Attendance at Events:

Gen Keesecker reviewed the events handout and asked Council Members to contact her with additional events and if they plan to attend.

Project Updates

Park posters:

Ted Smith is working with Dana Coggon and the education workgroup to get 200 posters on State Parks bulletin boards. This project will get invasive species information out to a large amount of people quickly. Gen Keesecker says we can have more posters printed if other agencies are interested in displaying them.

Scorecard:

Brid Nowlan updated the group on the “Biodiversity Scorecard”. Biodiversity is now referring to this project as “Biodiversity Trends”. She is working with the Biodiversity Council to include invasive species information in their trends. She will continue to follow up with them.

Next Steps

To be completed before the September 10, 2009 Council Meeting:

- Fall Legislative Tour- Brid Nowlan thinks we could target and educate some key legislators. This tour would give us photo opportunities and media opportunities with our new wallet cards, numbers, and posters. Alison Halpern suggested we collaborate with the State Weed Board in September. Bill Tweit said this is an important way to get Legislative attention. His agency would be happy to give a tour around Puget Sound or in Grant County collaborating with a zebra mussel group at a site near a dam. He said they could show the multi-million dollar investments for salmon using pipes and the damage that zebra mussels could do. Good visuals would be helpful. Brid will take the lead and coordinate with staff.
- Work group leads will develop specifics on the scope of work and language for the RFP
- Wendy Brown will update the assessment tool and species chart with feedback from the Council meeting.
- Gen Keesecker and Dana Coggon will work on choosing a reporting number and Gen will work with the web site workgroup to develop a reporting form.
- Gen will continue work on the invasive species web site and will continue working on the State Parks poster project and the design team to create two logo designs, one that includes the “Stop the Invasion” logo and one original.
- Mary Toohey’s workgroup will create visuals to show who is the lead on actions and ways to find gaps in the process. Ray Willard will join them.
- A leads meeting will be scheduled before Clover Lockard retires on May 22, 2009.
- The council will receive the September agenda and meeting materials including work group handouts at least a week in advance for review.

- Council members will contact Gen if they are attending events and bring invasive handouts.
- Ted Smith will work with the Education workgroup to get 200 posters out to park bulletin boards
- Brid will work with Biodiversity Council to include invasive species information in their trend data.

Adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m. Chris Christopher thanked everyone for attending.

Next meeting:

September 10, 2009

Natural Resources Building

Room 172, Olympia, WA

Invasive Species Approval:

Chris Christopher, Chair

Date