

**INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL**

**DRAFT MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING**

December 3, 2009

Room 172, Natural Resources Building  
Olympia, Washington

---

**INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Barbara Chambers         | U.S. Department of Agriculture                   |
| Chris Christopher, Chair | Washington State Department of Transportation    |
| Dana Coggon              | Kitsap County                                    |
| Doug Daoust              | U.S. Forest Service                              |
| Rob Fimbel               | Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission   |
| Alison Halpern           | Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board      |
| Kathy Hamel              | Washington State Department of Ecology           |
| Lisa Macchio             | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency             |
| Mary Mahaffy             | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                   |
| Brid Nowlan, Vice Chair  | Washington Invasive Species Coalition            |
| Pene Speaks              | Washington State Department of Natural Resources |
| Pat Stevenson            | Stillaguamish Tribe                              |
| Brett Thompson           | U.S. Coast Guard                                 |
| Mary Toohey              | Washington State Department of Agriculture       |
| Bill Tweit               | Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| Vicki Yund               | U.S. Customs and Border Protection               |

**GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Kevin Aitkin   | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                 |
| Jenifer Knauer | Jones & Jones Associates                       |
| Kari Stiles    | Jones & Jones Associates                       |
| Allen Pleus    | Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife |
| Brad White     | Washington State Department of Agriculture     |

**STAFF:**

Wendy Brown  
Gen Keesecker  
Rachel LeBaron Anderson

---

**Convene and Welcome:**

Chris Christopher opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. with welcome announcements and facility safety information, council member introductions, and a review of the agenda. Chris introduced new Council member, Brett Thompson, from the U.S. Coast Guard.

**Hot Topics:**

Chris Christopher introduced Allen Pleus and Kevin Aitkin to discuss the New Zealand mud snail infestation found in Capitol Lake. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have confirmed the presence of these invasive snails in Capitol Lake. So far, the snails are confined to the lake; they have not been detected in Deschutes River or Percival Creek. The north basin of the lake is the most heavily infested. Allen and Kevin thanked the Council for coordinating the emergency response efforts.

Washington State General Administration (GA) closed public access to Capitol Lake. There was a press release and a media event on Wednesday, November 25, 2009. Public response was positive. The emergency response team is looking at strategies to move forward in phases, beginning with detection, containment, and control, and then further prevention to allow the lake to open. Decontamination stations will likely be set up around the lake. The emergency response team is employing the 2007 National Nuisance Species Plan. So far, public education and outreach efforts have been successful, as it was a member of the public that found and reported the infestation in Capitol Lake.

The Council discussed their priority species management grid and noted that while the New Zealand mud snail was not on the list of first 15 species, it is on the Council's full priority list and is critical to apply a rapid response strategy to this species.

Bill Tweit asked what the upcoming funding challenges and decision-making processes are. Allen says there is internal funding in use now that was set aside for handling zebra mussels and tunicates. At some point, WDFW and others should discuss how much more funding should go towards the mud snail while depleting other funding sources.

Chris Christopher explained that this situation provides the Council with a unique opportunity to further explore their role in emergency response efforts. The Council should work with partners to further consider the threat of the mud snail, funding options, and what the appropriate next steps are. There is no question that the snail needs to be dealt with right away. It is a containable situation, but requires a multiple agency response. Pat Stevenson asked how GA was able to close Capitol Lake. Chris Christopher explained that GA is the main property owner. Individual property owners along the lake waters were also contacted in regards to the snail infestation.

Pene Speaks asked if Allen Pleus had an idea of the potential cost of this infestation. Allen says they are working on a strategy and will then have a better idea of the cost. Eradication will cost a lot, but exact costs will vary depending on the strategy used. Pene asked if WDFW has other examples of places where this species has been controlled. Allen responded yes, but clarified that he is still looking for examples of successful control in natural settings. WDFW is also researching containment options.

Pene noted the risk of spread when multiple landowners are involved. Allen commented that this lake has many political interests as well, that can further complicate matters. However, Kathy Hamel replied that Capitol Lake does not have the same shorefront issues as other lakes, because private property owners are so far up on the bluff and therefore not using their beaches regularly for sporting.

Allen says the snails will die if frozen, and so one idea is to drain the lake. However, if salt is present temperatures that are colder than zero may be required to kill them. WDFW is working with GA on a low cost solution. Bill reminded others that the snail can be transported by birds and fish as well as humans. Fish can eat them and some will pass through alive, while snails may be caught in bird feathers and moved from water body to water body. This makes eradication extremely difficult. Allen thinks next steps will likely be decided in January. Having GA drain the lake will also kill aquatic plants attracting the birds and help to contain the snail.

Rob Fimbel asked how the snail got into Capitol Lake in the first place. Allen says it could have come on a boat, booties, animal's feet, or a large number of other possibilities. Kevin says the known vectors are fishing and boating. Mud snails can live in salt water and be carried alive in the gut of a fish. The fish does not get nutrition from them and will lose weight. Allen says it will take many, many years before the true economic and environmental harm from the New Zealand mud snail can be measured. The Council will continue to coordinate response efforts. Dana Coggon suggested we send education information to kayak and canoe user list serves and shops since most of the recreational boaters within this water system are using kayaks and canoes. The Council chair and staff will keep the Council informed of any updates.

#### Update on Zebra Mussel tabletop exercise and Ballast Water:

The U.S. Coast Guard sent out proposed ballast water rules in August with responses due December 4, 2009. WDFW and members of the Ballast Water Work Group have worked hard to get a Washington comment letter sent in. The proposed standards are presented in two phases. Phase 1 would allow the use of approved, but less-stringent, IMO treatment systems as an open sea exchange alternative, while phase 2 has a standard that is 1000 times stricter than the IMO standard. Following a review of feasibility, the Coast Guard rules allow for a decision to be made as to actually implement the phase 2 standard. WDFW voiced concern about phase 2 such that reviews need to happen as quickly as possible. Bill offered to send electronic copies of the comment letters from California, Oregon, the Great Lakes, and the Atlantic states to interested Council members. Washington and Oregon are both advising that phase 2 is expedited. If it does not happen quickly, the states will set timelines for them. By 2016, all vessels must have technology installed. California and New York want to skip phase one and insist technology be installed by 2016 with certainty. Bill will provide opportunity for the Council to be involved in next steps. Brett confirmed this might be several months from now to allow time for the Coast Guard to review all of the comments.

WDFW does not have an update on the tabletop exercise, but is considering Lake Roosevelt for the location of the exercise.

#### Spotted Fruit Fly

Brad White reported that the Spotted Fruit Fly was found this summer in Oregon and Washington. Fruit flies usually wait until fruit gets mushy to infest them, but the Spotted fruit fly is different. It can rasp through the skin of ripe fruit and lay eggs in otherwise saleable fruit. It has been in Florida for several years and in Hawaii a long time. When it was recently detected in California in 23 counties, Washington and Oregon began looking for it and was found everywhere traps were set. It is not a quarantine issue between states. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) does not know how it will affect tree fruit but it should be covered by other treatments. The spotted fruit fly is well suited for temperate climates.

#### Public Comment:

Keith Stavrum shared a Willapa Bay post card with the Council. He feels that regular people have not been listened to in Willapa Bay. The State did not recommend eradication of *Spartina* there, but the County Weed Board mandated it as a Class A weed. Keith spent \$25,000 in court fees to fight spraying of his property. His preferred form of treatment is mowing. He wants the Council to acknowledge what has happened on his farm. Spraying puts poison on his oysters. He asked that the Council pay attention to how counties respond to issues, so that unintentional problems are not created. He asked the Council to encourage control methods for invasive snails and mussels that do not involve pesticide use. He asked the Council to consider the source of the scientific information they use as references and resources for best practices.

#### Council Business Items:

Doug Daoust moved to **APPROVE** the September 10, 2009 minutes with a correction on page nine. Vicki Yund **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the September 10, 2009 minutes with the correction on page nine.

#### Budget Update

Wendy Brown, reported that the Council took a requested 3 percent cut this year and the Office of Financial Management has asked for another 10 percent reduction. Between the two requests, a total of 11% was removed from the Council's budget. Wendy solved this by cutting 0.1 of her FTE. She will keep the Council informed of future budget issues.

#### Recommendation on formation of Council Advisory group(s)

Staff supplied a handout with a draft list of potential organizations and members to comprise one or many advisory groups to the Council. Staff reminded the Council of their interest in such groups as discussed at the

last Council meeting after hearing about the Oregon Invasive Species Council's advisory group. The Council discussed potential membership and potential issues they would want to be advised on. Some members asked how advisory members would be invited. It was agreed that rather than using a general advisory letter to solicit the input of varying organizations that an issue specific letter would be sent to entities directly involved with the species of concern. The Council decided that they will postpone the formation of an advisory group until a later time.

### **Report from Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee has been working on the transforming the natural resource agencies comment letter, baseline assessment project review, and crayfish policy changes. Wendy asked the Council if the executive committee should continue. If it does, she would like to begin taking minutes at these meetings and present minutes to the Council. Pene thinks having this group is important. Bill said the mud snail has shown why this committee is important - they had an important role in the effectiveness of the New Zealand mud snail response. Mary Mahaffy saw value in the committee's role of reviewing which work needs to be brought to the full Council and what could be handled by an executive committee. This allows the Council to work on only the most important issues. Pat Stevenson asked if in the future the executive committee might make recommendations to the Council. Chris says yes, but they will not make actual decisions on behalf of the Council. Rob asked if there was anything in the Council bylaws regarding an executive committee. Doug thinks the ground rules will continue to be updated as the Council continues. Rob does not see why this would not be a permanent committee because it can act quickly for the Council. He sees this group as an asset. Vicki asked if we need to reselect the members since the current members were selected for a temporary committee only. Chris says this will be done at the next Council meeting.

Doug Daoust moved to **APPROVE** the continuation of a temporary Executive Committee until it can be formalized at the next Council meeting. Pene Speaks **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the continuation of the temporary Executive Committee.

### **Implementation Work Group Updates:**

#### Priority Species

Alison Halpern says this workgroup will resume meeting in January. They will review species previously considered to take a second look at how species are considered. They need to evaluate how priorities are established for species that are not yet here. Pat asked if they would reevaluate criteria in January and how that would affect the baseline assessment. Alison feels the top 15 are serious species and should continue. Alison says we should also be able to sort species by funding needs. In January, they will work on different options of sorting so the education group could work on their own top 15 species that need public education. Chris reminded the Council that the first 15 were also focused on Puget Sound because of the source of grant money received.

#### Education/Outreach

Mary Mahaffy said the workgroup is continuing to spread awareness via the Council website with additional text and downloadable factsheets. The group considered using a national hotline, instead of the Council's current reporting number because it can be manned 24/7. However, since staff is only receiving a few calls at this time the group decided to shelf this idea until a later time. Capitol Lake's mud snails reinforced the importance of public awareness. The workgroup has provided input and review of priority species factsheets for many of the first fifteen species; half are ready for posting to the web. Since the last Council meeting, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provided money to purchase new educational products.

Gen Keesecker reviewed the changes to the Council web page. Mary Mahaffy says the plan is to continue creating the factsheets and have all of them available on the website in the near future.

Lisa Macchio noted that she recently took a boating class for work and learned that, dependent on age, people will need licenses to drive boats. She sees these classes as an opportunity for more invasive species outreach and education.

Mary Mahaffy directed the Council to a handout referencing upcoming events and to let Gen know if they will be attending any. Staff will mail materials to Council members attending these events. Bill asked if Council staff has gone to the sportsman or boat shows in the past or if staff have worked with other trade booths. He wants to know if we could share a booth with one of the major trade groups for better outreach. Kevin Aitkin says USFWS has funding for several boating and trade shows, and they visit the shows every two to three years. Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission also has a booth. Kevin thinks it is more useful to have people at booths and not just stand-alone information. Both of these organizations need help working the booths. Chris asked if the education workgroup needs more help from the Council. Mary says they could use help with technical information for factsheets and for members to distribute education and outreach items.

Dana says the Puget Sound Partnership has upcoming events to coordinate with as well. Dana also has classroom information ready for use. She would like to see the Council more closely aligned with the Puget Sound Partnership. She reminded the Council of its role in educating the public. She would like to see every Council member participate in one event. Dana referred to other efforts currently under way by groups such as Beach Watchers and the Washington State University extension offices. Lisa Macchio also encouraged the Council to work closely with the extension programs. Wendy strongly requested Council members to attend upcoming events for outreach. It is a good opportunity for Council members to work with the public and get feedback.

#### Emergency Funding and Early Detection and Rapid Response

Wendy Brown said this workgroup did not meet for a long time, but has new leadership under Brad White from the Washington State Department of Agriculture. The group met last week and planned out work for 2010. Going back to the first 15 species they will identify and clearly define the lead agency, supporting agency, jurisdictions, RCWs and authority, permit information, and responsibility for funding response on each species. They will create Memos of Understanding so that all the pieces are in place for rapid response on each of the priority species. This will allow for flexible and quick response when needed. Chris said the Council will be making a mud snail recommendation and this is the workgroup to focus on it.

As members look at the role of the Council in an emergency how do they see the Council's role? Alison feels the Council fulfilled its role by coordinating the agencies involved in the New Zealand mud snail response. She feels the next step is to identify the gaps in the process to avoid redundancy by only coordinating and supporting.

Mary Toohey wants to allow for some flexibility because each situation will be different. Bill said we should be operating proactively instead of reactively. Bill sees the need for a reserve pool of resources and budget that the Council could oversee. More money and staff are needed to work on invasive species emergencies. All invasive species will have some consequences. Natural resource agencies need help making decisions about these consequences. The State Department's of Ecology, GA, and WDFW are all overwhelmed with the mud snail right now. It would be ideal, of course, to have the tools needed on hand. Then if something comes out of nowhere there is more ability to act rather than to just detect. Bill requested the continued help of the Council with facilitation, presentations, and news releases.

#### Top Priorities

Chris says that ultimately he would like to see the Council list their key recommendations on their web site in addition to the factsheets. They would not need to be in depth, but should cover the initial steps following detection. Pene says the key recommendations should allow the Council to move forward when something is found by the public. She likes using the New Zealand mud snail as an example to create a template of what is

needed. She feels developing that same information for each species will help us find the current gaps. Lisa noted that she is not sure what she would expect to find under the key recommendations. Are they to be directed at government decision makers or the public? Chris says it will be big picture, policy-level information of how the Council thinks the state of Washington should respond. Individual citizen information is covered within the fact sheets. Chris requested that each workgroup get together in the very near future and identify gaps and key issues so that each of the first 15 species has clearly identified next steps for the state to consider.

Lisa is still unclear if the Council is a coordinating body or just an entity that comes up with a plan. The Council is here to facilitate action. Chris says that is our struggle as a Council - we need to decide what our goal is. Doug says for now the Council can facilitate and be a clearinghouse and that is okay now, but next steps should be similar to those that Oregon took. Washington needs an emergency fund to tap in emergency situations. Oregon asked for \$1 million and received \$350,000. He feels we should have a similar pot to get a response started when there is another invasion.

Mary Toohey does not see that happening right now in this state due to current budget issues. Chris says this is the timeliest moment for the Council to ask for funding with the mud snail and perhaps it is the Council's responsibility to ask in spite of the current state budget. Doug says Oregon got money from an all terrain vehicle restoration fund. Bill likes Chris's idea about timing with the legislature. None of the natural resource agencies are currently funded for adequate emergency response. This is a chance to ask the legislature what they want to do, if nothing else it will plant the seeds for a future biennium.

Pat noted that instead of asking for money, the Council should ask for a new usage fee as Idaho has done with boats. Idaho is generating \$2-3 million per year. Rob seconds what Pat says. There is no sense in robbing Peter to pay Paul. The State Park and Recreation Commission are continuing with license fees. The Council could do something similar if it is not that expensive. Wendy replied that some Council members have already discussed Idaho's idea to the Senate natural resources committee. Pene feels we should take a stronger role in advocating this idea. Chris feels we have the ability to do this, but we must run it through an agency. The Council is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Rob sees this as another task for the executive committee. Brett asked if the Council is ready to implement spending of that money. Chris says that in this case we need to look at a user fee to move this forward. Brid clarified that Brett is asking about a general emergency fund and she says the RCO has a lot of experience in managing money. Therefore, there is a structure in place for that to happen.

#### Policy workgroup

Brid Nowlan reported that the policy workgroup started where the previous Council regulatory workgroup left off. The previous group recommended looking more closely at gaps and how to repair them. The newly formed group has created a spreadsheet, showing prevention, funding, enforcement, active detection, rapid response, control, eradication, and regulations for each of the 15 priority species. The goal is to identify gaps and to come up with recommendations or draft legislation to address them. Brid says they will not move forward with any legislation until they have full Council consensus. Policies need to be reviewed to see how they are working on the ground. This group also proposed the idea of an advisory group to help with this process. This group would allow them to fill gaps that they were unaware of. Doug asked if federal roles were included. Brid says that they only started with state agencies but ultimately they will look at federal and international roles.

#### Crayfish

Brid discussed the new proposed rules. The new rules prevent non-native species being removed from the current waters they are in – if people catch the non-native species, they can not possess or transport them. The concern is that some people might release them in ponds near their homes in order to create a harvestable population closer to them. The new rules specify that crayfish must be dead prior to transport. If you have them alive, they will be taken from you. Bill said he would appreciate a Council letter commenting on the

proposed rule. WDFW would also like to see more education about non-native and native crayfish. They will try additional education with anglers. It is not easy to tell juvenile native and non native crayfish apart. At present, regulation of crayfish is the best tool. This will be difficult for people accustomed to taking the crayfish home to boil. Lisa asked if there is some sort of companion information sheet for the people currently enjoying fresh crayfish. Yes, was the response, but the fishing regulations book does not always help because anglers do not always carry it with them and read it.

Brid noted that other organizations have investigated the role of teachers in the spread of crayfish. Native crayfish life cycles are not timed with education schedules. Therefore, teachers are mailing non-native species in. You can actually order rusty crayfish, which is prohibited in Washington. This is an enforcement issue, as well as an education issue. An alternative species such as salmon or the native crayfish would be preferred for teachers to use in schools rather than highly invasive species.

Alison says Tom Wessel is working on writing a quarantine permit for schools using invasive plants; it makes the schools liable if a crayfish is released or if it escapes. The hope is that the permits will come with educational material that could also be shared with students. Mary Toohey said until recently schools were exempted from quarantine rules. WSDA has now removed that exemption. Wendy suggested that the Aquatic Nuisance Species workgroup also work with Tom Wessel and create a general invasive species permit. Brid would rather see improved enforcement instead of encouraging the status quo. Mary Mahaffy is concerned that permitting something would deter efforts to stop it in the future. Lisa would like to add the suggestion of education materials in the comment letter.

Chris asked what key things Washington should be doing to protect our state. He wants each workgroup to have their recommendations for the key 15 at the next Council meeting.

### **Potential to use call center, National reporting hotline**

Since the launch of the reporting hotline in September, Council staff has received 13 reports. Generally, staff have been forwarding the calls and emails to the appropriate people. Some great responses have been given, and the species have been identified, and in some areas added to an agencies surveillance area. It will be interesting to see if reports increase in the spring when people are outside more. If staff receives a call about sumac, how should they respond to the caller? It is not a priority species but staff want to ensure that callers feel their reports were helpful. Also, how do staff or other agencies verify these reports? How should staff set public expectation about what will happen when they report something?

#### Council Discussion:

- Will the council get more calls as the WSU Extensions lose funding and are no longer able to follow up?
- It depends on how much staff can help the public through the maze.
- Staff needs to be honest about their capacity to respond and why they must prioritize some things, and not others.
- This is an important part of the Council's gap analysis. The Council needs to communicate that agencies do not have capacity to handle nutria at this time. This should not be sugarcoated.
- It is worth finding out if county extension offices still provide this service to the public.
- Staff should not be the ones to take this on, they should transfer calls to the correct agency, and the agency should be the ones to pass on the information about constraints.
- Agencies response might not be consistent. A caller could get someone great answering the phone or someone in a hurry, but Council staff would give consistent answers. The Council does not want callers to be passed around. A potential solution is to at least let callers know that the report has been filed.
- Should the Council consider transferring the number to another group? If the Council goes away the reporting number should continue. One option is to forward the number to the national call center with a script of questions and a list of contacts to which to forward the reports.

- Are people just calling to report or do they want follow up information as well? Is this really the Council's responsibility or should the Council role to just inform the responsible agencies?
- The Council wants a system that works for everyone and if it is not the Council should address it. The goal for the reporting number was to have a central place for people to call.

### **Baseline Assessment Project Update:**

Brid introduced the consultants, Kari Stiles and Jennifer Knauer, from Jones and Jones Consulting. Jennifer reported that Jones and Jones are working on outreach to non-respondents of the baseline assessment survey. The project really kicked off this fall; they are working on tasks two and three of the work plan, which is the information-gathering stage. They designed an online survey and began soliciting information. They will deliver a report by the end of December. Jennifer reviewed some of the survey responses; they have had 58 respondents, which is more than they expected. They also followed up with respondents that indicated they had more information. Kari showed the Council a PowerPoint presentation detailing the survey results species by species. The survey was designed to get a broad look at what data are out there.

Roger Woodruff, from USDA, will provide nutria information. Lisa recommended contacting dive associations for tunicate information. Wendy says they were contacted and did not respond. Lisa will help with getting a personal contact. Jennifer wants the council to really look at the non-respondents and if there is someone that should really be pushed harder she would like to know. Lisa says that non-profits get overwhelmed and do not have time to respond. However, agencies should respond. Lisa wants to make sure the Council gets the most bang for their buck. Jennifer does not feel that government agency information is necessarily better than information from private organizations.

Brid asked Council members to think about who their contacts are and to let Jennifer know. Jennifer will send an email to the Council so that they only need to hit reply in order to share information. Pat asked if all the tribes were contacted. Wendy says probably not. Pat recommends going through the NW Indian Fisheries Commission and he will try to provide tribe contacts. Brid says it is important to remember that the Council is not the owners of the data, but wants to provide a portal that directs people to the information. Staff will give Jennifer more detailed project information and direction about the information clearinghouse scope of work.

### **Information Clearinghouse Project Update:**

Wendy Brown reported that the request for proposals for the information clearinghouse project will be adjusted to reflect the comments and feedback received from the last round of proposal respondents. Rather than a 2 year timeline it will be shortened to 6 months. Additionally, some deliverables will be adjusted so that they align with the baseline assessment deliverables. It is hoped that the project will start in February and end in July or August.

### **Annual Report Discussion:**

The annual report is due December 15, 2009. So tomorrow is the deadline for Council comments in order to make all of the other review deadlines. The New Zealand mud snail finding and Council response will be included in a sidebar.

### **Next Steps to be completed before the February 25, 2010 Council Meeting:**

- Lisa Younger will replace Brid at the next Council meeting. Bill Tweit is the new Vice Chair.
- Council members should respond to the baseline assessment email by providing additional contacts for invasive species information and data.
- All workgroups will meet to fill in gaps on priority species and to draft key recommendations by the next Council meeting.
- The executive committee will work on executive committee roles and responsibilities to adopt at the next Council meeting.
- The policy workgroup will complete a comment letter to the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission on the proposed crayfish rule.



- The Council will be kept up to date during legislation, especially on emergency response issues.

**Adjourned:**

The meeting adjourned at 2:20p.m. Brid thanked everyone for attending.

Next meeting:

February 25, 2010

Natural Resources Building

Room 172, Olympia, WA

Invasive Species Approval:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chris Christopher, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date