

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

February 25, 2010

Capitol Room, WA Department of Transportation
Olympia, Washington

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Clinton Campbell	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Chris Christopher, Chair	Washington State Department of Transportation
Rob Fimbel	Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission
Alison Halpern	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Kathy Hamel	Washington State Department of Ecology
Gene Little	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Lisa Macchio	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mary Mahaffy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pene Speaks	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Brett Thompson	U.S. Coast Guard
Mary Toohey	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Bill Tweit, Vice Chair	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Bob Koch	Franklin County

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Allen Pleus	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Brad White	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation
Tom McDowell	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

STAFF:

Wendy Brown
Gen Keesecker
Rachel LeBaron Anderson

Convene and Welcome:

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

Hot Topics:

New Zealand Mud Snail Update

Allen Pleus, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), noted that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service first received a report of New Zealand mud snails in Capitol Lake in November. Many agencies joined in an effort to remove them. In early December with days of freezing temperatures, a partial drawdown of the lake was conducted to freeze the snails. Survey results before and after the drawdown showed a 98 percent mortality rate. WDFW and partners are looking at longer-term plans and will try a saltwater back flush of the lake this week. After a few days, the lake will be drained and then

refilled with fresh water from the Deschutes River and Percival Creek. There will be pre-treatment and post-treatment measurements of mortality. Other tests include covering between 4 to 8 square meter plots with additional salt to see if it adds further effect.

Kathy Hamel noted that Ecology has expressed concern with the potential impacts on freshwater wetlands in the lake by the saltwater, but they feel the benefits of the drawdown outweigh the risks. Allen thanked Wendy Brown, the Council, and everyone involved for his or her work on this response. Kathy Hamel also thanked all involved parties for getting this done with so few resources.

Rob Fimbel is concerned about proper follow-up to using saltwater. There is risk that any population left will be more salt tolerant, and that those populations could spread. Allen commented that since the drawdown is a one-time occurrence there would be less affect on other populations, but that it would be a concern if treatments with salt were to be used repeatedly.

In a few weeks time, Allen will have results from the saltwater back flush. Other concerns the agency and partners are aware of and concerned about include emerging insects and bat colonies in the spring months.

Bill Tweit commented that an incident command structure is important. If it had not been for Wendy coordinating the response efforts, WDFW and partners may not have gotten to where they are now. Members discussed the idea of encouraging state agencies to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for other rapid response scenarios. Chris Christopher and staff will set up a meeting to explore this.

Bob Koch asked where the snails might have originated. Possibilities include people traveling from Longview, WA where other snails exist and letting their dogs out to run in both places or possibly from recent hydroplanes used in the lake.

Zebra Mussel Tabletop Exercise

Bill Tweit said the regional response group has been discussing a spring response exercise in Lake Roosevelt. Their momentum is slowing though, due to the recent Idaho preliminary response. It tested well and gave everyone a run through of what a working response would be. He feels it is still a good idea to have one in Washington, but the energy to move forward is not there.

The Alaska SeaLife Center is having a conference next week and would like the Council to give a presentation. Bill Tweit will attend to represent the Council and WDFW. Alaska will try to mirror efforts in other west coast states and Councils to create a better response to marine invasive species threats.

Kathy Hamel announced that the Department of Ecology has a permit for aquatic invasive animal pesticides that will soon be out for public comment. This will run similarly to noxious weed permits in allowing agencies who get the permits to contract out work. It will make chlorine, sodium chloride, and potassium chloride available. There will be a minimal fee for these permits (around \$400).

Public Comment:

Kevin Anderson, Puget Sound Partnership, commented on the response to the New Zealand Mud Snail. He wants to make sure there is funding and follow through from all the agencies involved. The Puget Sound Partnership is concerned. This is the first sighting of this species in the Puget Sound Basin, and they do not want it to spread. He wants a strong framework for responding to invasions. He also feels we need a strong Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between agencies.

Legislative Update:

State Weed Board: Alison reported on SB 6426 and its impacts to the State Weed Board. If the board was eliminated then staff would be moved within the Department of Agriculture to handle pest boards.

Biodiversity Council: SB 6554 to extend the Biodiversity Council did not pass, and the council is slated for elimination. Options for the continued work of the Council's responsibilities will go before the Natural Resources Cabinet for discussion. Some of the Council's responsibilities could go to the Natural Heritage Council.

HB 2940 : Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife would be responsible for implementing a management plan to eliminate or minimize damage caused by deleterious feral animals.

Other Legislative Updates

Agriculture: The Senate is requesting a 10 percent cut from the pest program and knotweed control.

Natural Heritage Program: The Natural Heritage Council had funding eliminated for the Natural Heritage database. However, the database would be available for use if the Natural Heritage Council was reimbursed for data used. Much of the database focuses on rare plants. They do not want to charge for access to this data, but it may be there only choice to keep the database alive. Kathy Hamel says that the loss of access to the database or the added fee for using it presents a hardship to the Department of Ecology because they consult the database before using pesticides. Rob Fimbel says another hardship is that many of the people charged would be people who initially provided the data.

Council Business Items:

Council Minutes

Bill Tweit moved to **APPROVE** the December 3, 2009 minutes with the amendment of adding last names for Council members with the same first name. Vicki Yund **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the December 3, 2009 minutes with the amendment of adding last names for Council members.

Council Policy - Executive Roles and Responsibilities: Vicki Yund asked who would issue letters of support to partner organizations, as referenced in this policy, after the Executive Committee approves them. Staff would draft letters for the Chairs approval and signature. Rob wanted clarification on what role if any the Executive Committee would have on contract amendments. Wendy confirmed that all amendments would be approved by the Executive Committee.

Bill Tweit moved to **APPROVE** the Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities. Pene Speaks **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities.

Executive Committee:

Chris Christopher said the Executive Committee had met twice since the last Council meeting, and meeting minutes were sent to the Council to summarize all agenda items and discussion points. The committee discussed New Zealand mud snail response, executive roles, future of the Council, and the option of adding members to the Council. The Committee recommends inviting the Puget Sound Partnership and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council on the Invasive Species Council. Chris asked the Council for their thoughts on these recommendations.

Brett Thompson asked Kevin Anderson to provide some background about the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) and their role in invasive species issues. Kevin noted that the PSP protects Puget Sound habitat, and works to fight invasive species. They created a plan for managing the Puget Sound Basin. They are using the Invasive Species Council's strategic plan to make changes in the Sound and on ballast water. They are looking for funding to prevent invasive species and are working to protect current ecosystems.

Bill Tweit provided some background information about the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. It was created by Congress through the National Power Act. It is a four-state body with two Governor-appointed members from each state. One of the Power Council's primary responsibilities is advising Bonneville Power Administration on power rates and on impacts to fish and wildlife populations. They are extremely concerned with invasive species potential impacts to power rates and ecosystems, especially effects from zebra and quagga mussels.

Bob Koch asked about adding another board member to represent Eastern Washington. Chris Christopher says the Council is not opposed to this suggestion and asked for feedback from other members. If travel or schedules allow, Bob Koch will bring Vick Reeve from the Franklin County weed board to the next Council meeting. Vick is a retired farmer with an agriculture and weed background. Bob feels this would be an important addition because eastern Washington is not well represented on the Council. It was noted that because of funding sources, the Council has focused on the Puget Sound and needs to make sure they are not missing important eastern Washington issues.

Bill Tweit agrees that the Council needs to ensure that they are just as effective on the east side, but travel costs from the eastside are sometimes an issue. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council may help bring that balance since they are Columbia Basin based. Mary Mahaffy feels it is important to make sure the Council covers issues across the whole state, but Council grant monies have been focused on Puget Sound and that has affected some of the discussions and projects.

Chris Christopher thinks there may also be a need to add public industry representation to the Council. Rob Fimbel feels that would elevate our acceptance by the public. Vicki Yund was concerned with adding a large number of people before it the Council's future is known.

To get around the obstacle of travel expenses Brett Thompson suggested that the Council have eastern Washington members join by conference phone instead of traveling, but other members felt all day phone meetings are challenging via phone. Mary Mahaffy asked about meeting with cameras, phones and computers instead of in person. All of the Recreation and Conservation Boards are currently considering that method. Mary Mahaffy says it is important to have an east side meeting even with higher travel costs because it makes the Council accessible to the eastern Washington public.

Bill Tweit noted that having people asking or expressing interest in joining the Council will help the legislature see reason to continue the Council. Vicki feels the Council is vital to connecting with federal contacts on a regular basis, rather than an ad hoc basis. Mary Mahaffy shares Council education and outreach materials with all wildlife refuge staff that are involved with land management.

Lisa Macchio feels if the Puget Sound Partnership had been in place when the Council was formed then they would have been included in the list of state agencies legislatively mandated to be represented on the Council. She also suggested that the Council consider more membership from tribes, especially Columbia River-based tribes.

Bill Tweit moved to **APPROVE** the addition of a new Council member from the Puget Sound Partnership and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council to the Washington Invasive Species Council. Bob Koch **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the new Council member agencies.

Workgroup Updates/Key Recommendations Discussion:

Priority Species

Alison Halpern says the Priority workgroup has met twice since the last Council meeting and has done the following work:

- Selected a handful of species to re-run through the assessment tool. For most species, information has not changed so the workgroup targeted species with new information or new locations: Asian carp, NZ mud snail, and others.
- Proposed several new species to add to the list – flowering rush, *Undaria*, *Sargassum*, etc.
- They combined the two milfoils species – variable leaf and Eurasian.
- They referred the top 15 priority species to the Education and Outreach work group to identify outreach gaps.

Alison reminded the Council that the list represents Council priorities and is not a list of all of the invasive species threatening the state, which would reach numbers in the hundreds.

Oregon has quarantined English ivy and is moving toward quarantining butterfly bush. Alison noted that English ivy makes a good poster species. Mary Toohey felt that early detection for English ivy would have happened in the 1930's and since the list of priority species is also used to request funding for control work, ivy may not be useful.

Rob feels land management agencies will want to look at the species with most ecological impact. However, agriculture groups will look at economic impacts. Alison wants to keep the purpose of the list in place; the Council can refer people to weed lists, and aquatic invasive species plant and animal lists for more information so that this list is not looked at for all of the answers.

Lisa Macchio wants to make sure the public understands the reasoning for why the Council is choosing a subset of the many invasive species threatening the state. Chris Christopher feels this is covered on the Council website, but it can be looked at for improvement and further clarification. Wendy said that staff might be able to separate the priority species information currently available on the website into user pages (page for boaters, ranchers, etc). She also noted that the California Invasive Plant Council is also interested in using this assessment tool to rank their species of concern. This is mentioned in the annual report and shown on the Council website.

Policy

Wendy Brown reported for the policy workgroup because there is no assigned lead at this time. The policy workgroup was assigned with the task of coming up with recommendations on the first 15 species. Wendy reviewed the handout provided in Council member packets to display the results of the policy workgroup discussions. Council members further discussed the draft recommendations listed in this handout.

Wendy continued to review the handout focusing on marine species. Kevin Anderson commented that many new algae have been found in the Puget Sound and Hood Canal. Mary Mahaffy says having specific agencies assigned to handle invasive algae is very important. Lisa Macchio asked if we should recommend specific agencies to be responsible. The algae recommendation would require legislative action. Many Council members feel aquatic and terrestrial species should be separated when making recommendations. Chris Christopher commented that recommendations should be by species type to be effective. Bill Tweit agreed. Wendy will edit the policy workgroup handout to incorporate suggested changes.

Education and Outreach

Mary Mahaffy said the Education and Outreach work group has met twice since the last Council meeting.

- They have met with Kristin Cooley of PSP and Kate Little of WA SeaGrant and with the Pacific Education Institute (PEI).
- They assessed current educational and outreach methods funded by the Council. Anything that directs people to the Council website and increases awareness is good. Calls to the reporting number have slowed.
- The workgroup identified the need to target specific groups. Targeted pages on the web for boaters and ranchers will help.
- Mary reminded members of the newly received grant money for the “Don’t move Firewood” education campaign.
- The workgroup needs help from agencies to complete fact sheets on all of the priority species, with particular emphasis on pathways. Variable leaf milfoil is now only in two counties, if we educate on pathways it will prevent spread. Wendy asked if lakes with milfoil are posted so that people know to check their gear. Kathy Hamel was not sure. Staff will follow-up on this issue. Council members suggested that the workgroup and partner increase education at nearby lakes as well.
- Bill Tweit would like to have a Nutria page on the WDFW web site that lists agency goals and recommendations for control.
- We need more education on how the pet industry can contribute to the problem of invasive species.
- Kevin Anderson noted the importance of targeting the appropriate user groups for each priority species.

Emergency Funding & Response

Ray Willard reported that much of the workgroups discussions overlap with what the policy group is working on. The workgroup strived to explain how the state’s response plan works in a flow chart. Their focus was to identify any gaps by asking questions for each of the priority species. For example, are their permits in place, are monitoring efforts underway?

Lisa Macchio commented that the flowchart presented in the handout was hard to understand. Clinton noted that the flowchart shows the U.S. Department of Agriculture model for rapid response. It has been used for gypsy moth since the 1970’s and has been effective every time. Pene says there is almost too much information on the flow chart making it harder to understand. It should explain that everything happens simultaneously and in relation to each other.

Bill suggested that the workgroup add meaning to the colors, marking invasive species with policy gaps in red. Chris feels we should not change a process that is working, but we should change the chart to make it understandable when people are viewing it. Lisa Macchio says the Council needs to institutionalize this information into the teams and agencies following it, and that the workgroup needs to simplify the tool to make that happen. The Council also needs to be aware of the invasive species threat up front in order to use this model.

Mary Toohey is concerned that this works so well with Gypsy moth because it is an annual cycle and the agencies monitoring it are familiar with the pest. What do agencies do when they do not know as much about the species? Lisa Macchio reiterated that the graphic should give an instant message.

Next steps are to go through the 15 priority species to make sure all the rapid response questions are answered and then find a way to graph the information so it is understandable. The workgroup will prioritize which ones are done first.

Website Review:

Gen Keesecker gave an overview of recent changes to the website including the priorities grid and factsheets. Council members felt this was very valuable and recommended that staff provide a web update at each meeting.

Future of Council/Meeting with Governor's Staff:

The Council sunset date is December 2011. Recent discussions are showing some support for pursuing the extension of the Council. Chris introduced Kaleen Cottingham, RCO director. Kaleen said the Council must begin legislative work by August in order to promote the Council. Recent New Zealand Mud snail coordination work has been good advertising for the Council. It is important to get the Natural Resource Cabinet on the Council's side. Kaleen will support the Council in their pursuit to continue with funding, and she is working with John Mankowski and Bob Nichols, Governor's policy staff, already on this issue. Kaleen would like the Council to have dedicated funding for emergencies, perhaps by tapping into the Governor's emergency fund, but this fund is usually only tapped for natural disasters. Pene commented that invasive species infestations are a natural disaster.

The Council provides a direct benefit to the state and needs a funding source for addressing future threats. An important item the Council will need to show the Legislature when asking for extension is support from other agencies and stakeholders. The report that the Council produces this fall can show this. Kaleen noted that the Governor's office is impressed with the grant money the Council has obtained.

Council agencies should be unanimous in the decision to continue if staff is to move forward with this. Bill replied that WDFW absolutely thinks the Council should continue. The problems are real and need a coordinated approach. Mary Mahaffy says the Council is helpful in state and federal coordinating and that would not happen without the Council. In the next report to the Legislature, Mary Mahaffy wants staff to focus on what has been accomplished since the formation of the Council.

Clinton would like staff to point out how long Oregon's invasive species council has been working on statewide invasive species issues. They have been working at this for a while longer than the Washington Council and the need for them to continue is still there. This makes the case for the continued need for the Council here. We have not been around as long. There is much more to do.

Kaleen suggested that the Council should show what could happen if they do not continue – duplication of work and spiraling of problems. Ray asked if it would make a difference if the Council was to meet less often. Kaleen says the cost of the meetings is a very small portion of the budget; the biggest cost is paying for staff. The Natural Resource Cabinet needs to endorse this Council. Letters from federal agencies and from stakeholders would be helpful. Budgets are due in August with agency request legislation due about a month later. The extension legislation will be easy to draft because the only adjustment needed is for the date. Kaleen warned that the Governor has not extended any boards or commissions in the current budget. If the Council is extended to continue, it could happen without funding or staff. The Council needs a plan if that happens. Bill says the agencies would have to pony up staff or money in order to be successful.

Chris asked the Council members to tell him or Wendy if they have any concerns with the Council continuing. Kaleen says she had a conversation with Senator Hargrove, and he was so excited about money he recently received for knotweed eradication that she feels he is the one to take on this bill. Bob Koch says we should get some of the eastside legislators excited too. Kaleen thanked the Council for all of their work. The Council thanked her in return for the support.

Next Steps

Chris says by the next meeting the workgroups should have more specific and clear recommendations to present to the Council for approval. Staff and workgroups will also start working in earnest on moving

forward with the Strategy, and will use Executive Committee meetings as much as possible to make this happen.

Adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 2:50p.m. Chris thanked everyone for attending.

Next meeting:

May 27, 2010

Natural Resources Building

Room 175, Olympia, WA

Invasive Species Approval:

Chris Christopher, Chair

Date