

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

May 27, 2010

Room 175, WA State Natural Resources Building
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
Lisa Macchio	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Tom McDowell	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pat Stevenson	Stillaguamish Tribe
Brett Thompson	U.S. Coast Guard
Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Bill Tweit, Vice Chair	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dick Wallace	NW Power and Conservation Council
Brad White	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

Eric Anderson
Phil Johnson
Allen Pleus

STAFF:

Wendy Brown
Gen Keesecker
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:

WDFW boat inspection plan, 2010

Officer Phil Johnson from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) says they will have 36 boat inspection stations planned in Washington between May and September. Some will be planned events and some will be surprise inspections on highways. At some inspection stations, they have one boat passing every minute, and it takes full staff to cover these areas. Over Memorial Day weekend there will be several inspection locations. They hope to double inspection efforts from last year. Inspections focus specifically on invasive vegetation and vessels from out of state. WDFW also does boating safety inspections. Highway stations will focus on aquatic invasive species (AIS), and at boat ramps, they will have dual inspections for AIS and boat safety.

Eric Anderson says WDFW is proposing an update to the Washington Administrative Code to create stricter rules designating Washington as a high-risk place for AIS, especially for zebra and quagga mussels. With that designation, all boats entering the state would need documentation that their boat has been cleaned and flushed. If they enter without it, they could be cited for not having documentation. They would then have to be decontaminated before being launched. Eric also recommends that the current AIS statute be amended to remove the sunset date and to revise the fees, mirroring legislation passed in Idaho and Oregon recently. Their bills required \$10.00 stickers on state vessels. WDFW would add this along with carbon monoxide stickers currently in place. They would also like to have reciprocity agreements with other states to ensure that a sticker from one state would cover boaters in all three states. Idaho has twenty-four check stations this year, running seven days a week. In Idaho, they are only using one lane of stations to avoid blocking lanes for commercial inspections. WDFW is looking for Canadian cooperation since state borders are not natural borders. They have two portable decontamination units for the main stations and hot water sprayers.

Chris Christopher asked if WDFW could give the Council a map of the state with inspection areas highlighted. WDFW will provide a map with all thirty-seven stations. This map will be made available through the Council web site. Eric Anderson will meet with Chris to discuss the potential to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between State Patrol, WDFW, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to use rest stations as inspection stations.

Chris noted that the Council will discuss supporting Eric's recommended legislative changes. Eric says it would be helpful to get all three states working together. The 100th Meridian is seeking a grant to create a standardized form for all states to make inspections easier on boaters.

New Zealand Mud snail update

Allen Pleus provided the Council with an update on the New Zealand mud snails in Capitol Lake. Results of the salt water back flush showed only 12% mortality. Allen is working with the Department of General Administration (GA) on prevention aspects prior to summer events such as the duck dash by the rotary club. The duck dash will continue since there are no snails in the river yet, but all equipment will be decontaminated that day. Another rotary event is Golf Island during Lakefair. This situation is also containable, and equipment will be decontaminated.

Hydroplane races and dragon boat races will not happen on the lake this year. Display boards will be up during Lakefair. A permanent fence has been added to Heritage Park, but it is low and people are climbing and crossing it. The Council hopes to collaborate with the Department of Ecology to study whether the snails have spread. A more informed response plan will come out of this effort.

The Governor discontinued the CLAMP workgroup. They had \$50,000 left in their account that will now be used for invasive species. Spending will need to be planned very carefully. The only other change is that GA has a new director. Wendy Brown says she has met with the new director to explain and describe the New Zealand mud snail issue.

Poison Hemlock Incident

Alison Halpern says poison hemlock gained notoriety because a Pierce county woman thought it was a food item and died April 1, 2010 of poisoning. There have been four other, but non-fatal, encounters this year. Alison did a press release on the dangers of poison hemlock. There has been a lot of news surrounding other incidents, but the death was the first since 1999. Unfortunately, in the news release, the county weed boards were not listed as contacts. They will be getting more information out to the public soon.

NW Power and Conservation Council Economic Analysis of Zebra/Quagga Mussel Impact

As a new member to the Council, Dick Wallace provided the Council with an overview of the NWPCC activities. Dick was appointed to his position on the NWPCC a few years ago. He has worked for Ecology, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), the Monitoring Forum, and the Biodiversity Council. The NWPCC is currently conducting an analysis of potential economic impacts in the Columbia River from a zebra or quagga mussel invasion there. Results of that work will be available in July.

Decontamination protocol update

Wendy Brown provided the Council with a handout covering what was presented to the Natural Resources Cabinet. The Council requested that all agencies in the Natural Resources Cabinet adopt decontamination protocols. The Cabinet members agreed, but want the Council to create a protocol for all the agencies rather than having individual plans. The decontamination protocol should be in place by the end of the year. Wendy noted that Ecology has already completed the aquatic piece, and a Council work group will work on the terrestrial piece.

Wendy Brown wants people to have basic awareness of how to prevent the spread of invasive species from one site to another. Bill Tweit is concerned about heavy-duty tractor work of contractors hired by WDFW and thinks all agencies managing land have similar issues. Chris Christopher says the protocol will be the umbrella document and some agencies may have more detailed protocols. Bill Tweit expressed concern about how to make an effective protocol for all agencies, when each agency has very specific needs. Chris reassured him that the Council will have an opportunity to review the protocol before it is brought back to the Natural Resources Cabinet for review. During this time, many of Bill's concerns can be addressed. Lisa Macchio thinks a list of items that are considered high priority for inclusion in the protocol should be recommended for awareness and education to create an "a-ha" before each agency adopts the protocol. Alison agreed to work on the terrestrial piece and would like to include the county weed coordinators in the process. Mowing equipment has already spread garlic mustard. Parks have been cooperative with signage near infestations. Lisa Macchio says the Seattle Public Utilities District has a Standard Operating Procedure that the Council could use as a model. The U.S. Military Department also has protocols for tagging equipment for aquatic and terrestrial use. Ray Willard asked if staff checked with the U.S. Forest Service. Doug Daoust commented that the USFS has decontamination protocols, but only among a few areas. Chris says the first goal is to get the policy adopted among the state natural resources agencies. If Council partners want to join the effort later, that would be terrific.

Allen Pleus says he has studied different decontaminations for effectiveness. Each species has slightly different needs. Chris said that at this point the first step is to raise awareness and get pointed in the right direction then move on to the details. Chris hopes to have a draft protocol at the next Council meeting. Bill Tweit noted that each protocol would undoubtedly evolve over time, as new infestations occur. The Council may have a longer-term role in disseminating updated information. One component is the protocol, the other is checks and controls within each agency. The Council may want to add institutional recommendations also. Stopping the spread should be as institutionalized as workplace safety. The Council may suggest framework changes to create accountability and internal measures. Bill Brookeson would like information sent to a distribution list of volunteers throughout the state, and he is willing to pass the word to groups that he works with. Doug says the Council could set the goal for all agencies. Lisa Macchio recommended a page on the Council web site to cover this information.

Public Comment:

Fritzi Cohen voiced concern regarding erosion with Spartina eradication. She passed around a postcard of what her property looked like before Spartina treatment. She is hoping that when considering eradication people will look at what may happen after the eradication. She says other areas are no longer using poison but have grants for mechanical removal. She noted that those grants required studies on effects to wildlife. She wants to make sure we are paying attention to the effects on the ocean from global warming and reduced carbon sequestration from a lack of vegetation. She wants to know as a property owner on the

bay what her recourse will be if erosion occurs after Spartina treatments. She shared an article about the value of “weeds” in urban environments. Fritzi says there is a new 2009 EPA label for Imazapyr, because marine tests were not previously done on Imazapyr.

Keith Stavrum brought a stack of photographs to show to the Council, showing mechanical versus spray control. Mowing is working on his property. On the property next to his where spraying occurs there is still a lot of Spartina growing. His business runs tests each year to ensure quality of their oysters. Currently poison sprayed next door is showing up in their oysters at 10 times the legal amounts. Federal law says that after spraying, oysters cannot be sold for one year. He learned at a recent conference that Spartina removal is affecting shore birds. Chris asked what Keith wants from the Council. Keith wants the Council to be aware of potential consequences when it discusses using chemicals, especially Imazapyr. Chris replied that the Council does not guide any of those processes and noted that Keith’s public comment is not related to any of the Council projects at this time.

Council Business Items:

Kevin moved to **APPROVE** the February 25, 2010 minutes with a noted change on page 4 to remove an extra word. Doug **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the February 25, 2010 minutes, with the change on page 4 to remove an extra word.

Gen Keesecker announced she is leaving her staff position on the Council and that this will be her last meeting. Her husband received a graduate research fellowship for landscape ecology and entomology through University of Idaho, so they will be moving. Chris Christopher spoke on behalf of the Council. They appreciate all of her work during the last several years and her ability to do so many projects. Bill Tweit says a lot of our public face is due to Gen’s work. Kathy Hamel asked what would happen with the hiring freeze. Wendy Brown noted that she is working with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) HR manager to discuss replacements and staff support. Bill Brookreson noted that people beyond the Council would miss her too.

Key Recommendations Discussion:

Staff passed out a handout to guide discussion on the Council’s draft key recommendations. Wendy Brown informed the Council that workgroups have been working on key recommendation for the first 15 species. The handout contains policy, emergency response, and education recommendations for each of the species. Wendy reviewed the draft document with the Council.

Also passed out was a newly revised checklist to display emergency response information for each of the 15 species. This version replaces the flow chart presented at the last meeting. Changes made are reflective of Council comments and feedback.

- Lisa Macchio loves the new checklists.
- Dick Wallace wants us to add the ‘why should I care’ component to the checklists. He recommended one sentence describing what each species threatens. Wendy Brown said more details would be added to the back page of each species.
- Clinton Campbell likes that these checklists create transparency in government.

The checklists will be displayed on the website. Next, the Emergency Response Work group will create action plans for each species. The plans will cover what to do if a species is found, who will address it, and how the Council and other agencies should respond.

Wendy Brown shared the draft Council funding strategy. RCO will put two bills forward next session, one for the extension of the Council and the second for an invasive species emergency response fund.

Working Lunch/Website Review:

Gen Keesecker reviewed the latest changes to the Council web-site, and shared a map that outlined a summary of invasive species reports received from citizens.

Baseline Assessment Update:

Jennifer Knauer gave a presentation on the status of the baseline assessment project. Cascadia Consulting and Jones & Jones are about 65% through the project. They started with an online survey, and did extensive phone call follow-up. They identified which data files currently exist for the first 15 species, whether each species exists in Washington, whether programs are addressing them, and where to find the trend lines associated with each species. They will estimate which landscapes are most vulnerable. Five of the 15 priority species have not been found in Washington. This baseline will be used to refine future programs and recommendations. The information has been added to a Microsoft Access database. Jennifer reviewed the files currently collected. The database will be turned over to the Invasive Species Council at the completion of the project. Jennifer will email the URL to the data site to Wendy Brown to forward to the Council for review. They are recording information and transporting GIS coordinates that seem accurate into shape files, when the information seems questionable they just record that it exists. They will also do a gap analysis when the project is complete. They will summarize their findings. By fall, they will have a preliminary draft report ready for review and the final report by December.

Key Recommendations Discussion continued:

There was a lot of discussion among agency representatives on details and wording of key recommendations. Lisa Macchio recommended more of the Council work be completed within workgroups since the Council staff time will be cut when Gen Keesecker leaves.

Legislative Report

Wendy shared the draft outline for the Council's required legislative report. In the Council's enabling legislation it states that the Council must report to the Legislature with a recommendation about the extension or modification of the Council. The outline includes content about why the Council's work is important, the alternatives to having a Council, and priority species key recommendations. Chris asked Council members to review each section and give feedback to staff. Lisa suggested that staff write about the amount of federal funds the Council has leveraged. Having a Council allows the state more opportunity for grants. The Council will gather letters of support to include in the report. Members emphasized the need to clearly state the 'pay now or pay later' message. Members also recommended a section describing the economic costs and risks associated with invasive species. Another important point to mention in the report is that Oregon and Idaho do not have sunset dates for their invasive species councils.

Deadlines for letters of support from each agency will be due sometime this summer. Letters from local user groups are key to presenting the Council's case to legislators. Staff will contact attendees of the Council Workday events for support as well.

Adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m. Chris Christopher thanked everyone for attending.

Next meeting:

September 9, 2010

Natural Resources Building

Room 172, Olympia, WA

Invasive Species Approval:

Chris Christopher, Chair

Date