

WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

June 12, 2014

Natural Resources Building, Room 172
Olympia, Washington

Washington Invasive Species Council Members Present:

Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Doug Daoust	U.S. Forest Service
Alison Halpern	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Mike Mackey	Chelan County
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington Department of Ecology
Pene Speaks, Vice Chair	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Pat Stevenson	Stillaguamish Tribe
Curtis Tanner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brad White	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Guests and Presenters:

Jim Marra	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Allen Pleus	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Aquatic Invasive Species Unit
Elizabeth Osborne	Washington Department of Commerce
Carl Klein	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jesse Schultz	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Michael V. Schwisow	Washington State Water Resources Association, Irrigation Districts
Diane Cooper	Taylor Shellfish
Shaun Seaman	Chelan County Public Utility District
Shawna Bautista	U.S. Forest Service

Recreation and Conservation Office Staff:

Wendy Brown	Washington Invasive Species Council, Recreation and Conservation Office
Wendy Loosle	Recreation and Conservation Office

Opening and Welcome

Pene Speaks, Vice Chair, opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. with welcome announcements, facility safety information, introductions, recording information, and a review of the agenda. Chair Tweit was unable to attend.

Mr. Daoust shared his plans to retire at the end of the calendar year, after 40 years with the United States Forest Service (Service). He recommended Shawna Bautista assume his place on the Council and will ask the Service to write a letter to the council, formally recommending that Ms. Bautista assume his place and provide a recommendation for another alternate. Ms. Bautista has 25 years of experience working with invasive species and the Service. Currently, she is the Invasive Plant Program Manager for state/private and national forest systems (two branches of the Service) working with grants and agreements. She is also the program manager for national forests and serves as the Pesticide Use Coordinator. Ms. Bautista is based out of Portland, Oregon.

Mr. Daoust also shared that the Invasive Plant Conference will be held at the University of Washington in September, with Daniel Simberloff as keynote speaker.

Hot Topic Reports

Item 1: WSDA Weigh Station Inspections for Invasive Species / Jim Marra

Mr. Marra was asked to give an update on Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) weigh station operations for invasive species inspections. He shared information about their current efforts managing Japanese beetle infestations and eradication programs after WSDA identified one population in Idaho that was cause for concern. Gypsy moth is also on the radar for inspection. WSDA is currently planning two particular weigh stations inspection events at Liberty Lake (on the Washington/Idaho border) and at Plymouth (on I-82 at the Oregon/Idaho border). Operations were held for two days in March and follow up is occurring this week, June 9-12. Partners in the operation include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services and Washington State Patrol.

Outcomes from the March inspections were instructive and somewhat alarming, as it was discovered that the majority of infestations are coming in from vans used by moving companies. Federal regulations indicate that household materials/articles are meant to be inspected and free of gypsy moth, but most carriers were either unaware of this requirement or non-compliant. WSDA plans to follow up and work with moving companies to enforce the federal regulations by providing protocol demonstrations in which drivers are shown examples of what the inspection teams are looking for.

The follow up inspections held this week include more data collection and the opening of carriers if the vessel's manifest indicates live plant material. Once the data from this inspection have been compiled, WSDA will share the results in a debriefing with the council. A recent example from plant nursery transports included hibiscus plants intended for Walmart nurseries in Oregon and Nevada, which WSDA found to be infested with invasive snail and ant species. WSDA was able to intercept some of the material and made contact with the vendors to instruct the shipment's return to Florida.

The ensuing discussion covered the challenges with communicating inspection requirements; although transporters must comply with each state's laws, the alignment between varying state regulations is unclear. Weigh station inspections are only effective for short durations, as word-of-mouth between transports can prevent timely and effective identification of invasive species.

Item 2: Interceptions of Mussel-Infested Boats 2014 / Carl Klein

Sgt. Klein reported on boats intercepted in high-risk areas thought to contain invasive species. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) intercepted five vessels, three of which required follow up. Conflicting information prevented follow up on the remaining two vessels from Oregon and

Idaho; however, both vessels had been out of the water for over a year and didn't require decontamination. These low risk vessels were hot-washed and released.

Item 3: Plans for 2014 Boat Inspections / Carl Klein

Mr. Klein outlined the 2014 fiscal year goals for boat inspections. Washington is unique in its focus beyond aquatic vessels, as it also inspects commercial and recreation vessels, pet stores, market places, and international shipping facilities. The current plan is to divide the \$90K received each year across coordinated enforcement efforts within the following seven regions:

- 1) **Spokane / Eastern Washington:** focus on the Port of Entry on I-90 / 92 and intends to intercept west-bound vessels.
- 2) **Okanogan County / North Central:** focus on reservoirs that draw out-of-state recreationists and snow-birders.
- 3) **Yakima / South Central:** focus on the high-use Port of Entry on I-82 and on U.S. Highway 395, with most traffic from southern U.S., the pet trade, and wide markets.
- 4) **King County:** focus on high-risk water bodies to ensure vessel decontamination.
- 5) **Vancouver:** focus on I-5 Port of Entry and the nexus with the Long Beach peninsula for tsunami debris and pet trade traffic.
- 6) **Olympia / West Central:** focus on high-risk boat launches where invasive species are known to occur, as well as on fisheries to intercept boaters.
- 7) **General marine-focused region for market places, fisheries, and coastal waters:** focus on marine areas, including but not limited to restaurants, live animals, and international shipping traffic.

As the state capital budget operates using master index codes, WDFW intends to rewrite the current index to include six codes that will ensure funds will be managed more effectively. WDFW anticipates meeting and exceeding their fiscal goals, as coordinated efforts are intended to better assess increasing levels of risk and enforce higher level inspections.

The council discussed the current operating budget and whether the annual funding is sufficient to cover costs. Mr. Klein indicated that more robust inspections would be possible with more full-time employees (FTEs) in lieu of mostly seasonal or temporary workers. Member Anderson commended WDFW for their defense efforts, and asked the council to consider revisiting this issue in the next budget cycle.

Communication across regions is important for rapid response, and Sgt. Klein informed the board that WDFW enforcement works with each region where issues are reported to prioritize responsibilities. Mr. Klein noted that he would send regional contact information to Pene Speaks for dissemination to council members.

Item 4: Red-Spotted Newt Report and Action / Jesse Schultz

A sighting of red-spotted or eastern newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*) was reported in Bellingham near the Nooksack River. This species is native to the eastern U.S., not known to occur in the west but common in the pet trade. Rapid response protocol was followed in an ideal manner, where the sighting was reported to Wendy Brown, who then contacted WDFW. On-site follow up was completed quickly by Western Washington University graduate students who retrieved the newt and surveyed the area. No further specimens were found.

Item 5: A New Discovery of New Zealand Mud Snail / Jesse Schultz

A new population of New Zealand mud snail (NZMS) was recently discovered by the Washington Department of Transportation on U.S. Highway 101 in Pacific County, near Bruceport Park in a roadside ditch. WSDOT immediately contacted WDFW to report the new population. Conditions in the ditch consisted of poor water quality and high/fluctuating temperatures, providing an example of the diverse habitat in which mud snails can thrive. Despite the new infestation, this example demonstrates that inter-agency communication regarding invasive species issues has improved.

The recent population discovery is further south than most known populations, and it's difficult to know how the species dispersed. Work conducted by WDOT is a potential factor, but they have been exemplary in creating decontamination protocols, as well as determining how to best remedy current situations and prevent other populations from spreading in the future. The council discussed large-scale improvement of decontamination protocols, ensuring that crews going out in the field are informed and educated. WSDOT conducts surveys for NZMS prior to beginning projects, and, for maintenance that requires a permit for hydraulic/in-water work, they will check for new and known infestations. It's also quite possible that further populations exist that have not been discovered yet.

Allen Pleus shared information about research at a Manchester fisheries facility on Kitsap Peninsula. New decontamination protocols are being implemented in which fish are not released from the raceways as they are found to be eating NZMS and the ingested species can survive the fish's digestive tract. The new research focuses on recirculating fresh Puget Sound water with an enhanced salinity rate to assess the impact on the NZMS. It was discovered that high-salinity flushing affected mortality only moderately and was not completely successful – even 60 parts per trillion may even be not enough to eradicate the species. The two-year study was conducted on assessing stomach contents of steelhead, now frozen and was sent out to other universities as a potential research project.

Item 6: Water Resources Reform & Development Act Language on Invasive Species / Wendy Brown

Ms. Brown informed the council that invasive species language was added to the federal [Water Resources Reform and Development Act](#). One highlight of the bill includes a study on how much the federal government spends on invasive species prevention and true costs, in order to know if they are spending enough to be effective. Although the language added specifically references quagga mussels, the focus covers general invasive species management.

For Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana there is a line item for watercraft inspection stations placed in high-prevention areas, implemented using \$20M annually in federal funds and a 50% cost-share to applicable states (actual funds coming to the states for implementation will be decided in appropriations committees in the near future).

Item 8: Presentation to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board / Wendy Brown

This item was presented out of order based on the discussions of Item 6.

Ms. Brown gave an update to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board in June regarding the importance of invasive species management and the contributions of continued maintenance to SRFB funded projects. Often, the tendency is to prioritize knotweed due to its impacts on salmon habitat, and Ms. Brown was able to share information regarding other invasives that pose similar threats. She asked the council to identify other groups that should receive this information via future presentations to raise awareness.

Item 9: Nutria Survey at Capitol Lake / Wendy Brown

This item was presented out of order based on the discussions of Item 6.

Ms. Brown shared information about the recent surveys conducted by USDA Wildlife Services over two nights on Capitol Lake grounds. During the first round, only three nutria were identified, and subsequently only 9 were found. Survey staff found trails from the animals, but did not find evidence of any damage. The Washington Department of Enterprise Services (DES) decide to move ahead with their original control plan, assessing three options presented by Wildlife Services for nutria management: 1) selective shooting (the preferred option); 2) body-gripping trap (which is less preferable); and 3) live-cage traps. Ms. Brown will follow up on the option DES selects, and a public process will be announced.

Item 7: “WA Invasives” App Roll-Out and Use / Wendy Brown

This item was presented out of order based on the discussion of Item 6.

Ms. Brown shared information about the recently released “WA Invasives” mobile app, advertised with a press release, and posting on the council’s and State Parks’ Facebook pages and other agency websites. Users of the app have reported 20 sightings so far, which display on an interactive map once approved by the program’s administrators.

The primary goal of the app is to document new infestations and identification of new invasive species. The fifty priority species were uploaded as part of Phase I, with Phase II covering planned upgrades for noxious weeds and collection of usage data. While no funding exists for further advertisement, ideas for encouraging use are welcome. Some suggestions included sharing it at respective agency meetings or referencing the app as a tool in applicable trainings.

Item 10: U.S. Customs and Border Protection Trade Fair / Vicki Yund

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Seattle Field Office and the CBP Area Ports of Seattle and Blaine will host a [Trade Fair](#) on Wednesday, July 9, 2014 at Federal Center South, 4735 East Marginal Way S, Seattle, Washington from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Several government agencies will participate in the Trade Fair, which will provide stakeholders the opportunity to speak one-on-one with representatives from U.S. and Canadian agencies that regulate imports and exports. Participation is open to the public and free of cost.

Ms. Yund informed the council that a training at the fair, entitled “Working Together to Prevent Harmful Pest Introductions: Case Study - Wood-boring Pests,” may be of interest to the council.

Item 11: Western Regional Panel – Tunicate Workshop, Annual Panel Meeting / Kevin Anderson

Mr. Anderson provided an update on the USFWS Western Regional Panel (WRP) on Aquatic Nuisance Species. Regional partner agencies from areas such as Alaska, Hawaii, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, etc. are party to the panel, which began in 1997 and is one of six national panels. Last year in Portland, the coastal committee requested a workshop on threats to west coast, specifically revisiting the tunicate issue. The WRP is currently preparing this opportunity and intends to bring about 30-40 members together to discuss the environmental and economic risks associated, and adopt an action plan and next steps.

The WRP meets annually, with the [next meeting](#) scheduled to take place in Houston, TX on September 17-19, 2014. This year's meeting will be held jointly with the Gulf and South Atlantic Panel; members from the WDFW, Taylor Shellfish (WA), and Puget Sound Partnership plan to attend.

Item 12: U.S. Forest Service Policy on Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention / Doug Daoust

The U.S. Forest Service is able to cover most areas for the prevention and treatment of invasive plant species and has a strategic plan for handling aquatic invasive species. However, as the implementation team was identifying USFS gaps they determined that not having law enforcement as part of their team contributes to the inability to stop the storage and transport of aquatic invasives. The states of Oregon and Washington have law enforcement officials, and therefore the ability to regulate; but, since the public uses the waterways the USFS staff does not have the authority to stop vessels. The implementation team decided to collaborate with state law enforcement officials to give them the authority to stop boats on USFS waterways.

Although official letters have been sent to the tribes, the order mandating this authority for USFS has not yet been signed. Orders are temporary administrative actions or restrictions, such as emergency road closures; orders are not necessarily a law, but rather an enforceable rule that can also be a citable offense. USFS anticipates that the order will go into effect within the next few months, at which time they will organize with Oregon and Washington to coordinate with state laws. In the meantime, they are using a categorical exclusion which should be final in the next few weeks. Long-term planning includes an environmental assessment that evaluates the impact of the new rules.

Break 10:20 – 10:35 a.m.

Briefings

Item 13: Northwest Power and Conservation Council Fish and Wildlife Program / Elizabeth Osborn

Elizabeth Osborn, an energy policy analyst with the Washington Department of Commerce, presented information on the recently-released public review draft of the [Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program](#). This program is the largest regional fish and wildlife recovery program in the nation, and it includes actions to improve ecosystem function, protect wild salmon and steelhead, eradicate invasive species, and restore fish runs to areas where fish passage has been blocked by dams. The NPCC amends the Fish and Wildlife Program every five years.

Ms. Osborn provided an overview of the layout and content of the review draft, which can be viewed [here](#). She focused on the ecosystem function strategies, specifically sub-strategy three covering non-native and invasive species. This strategy addresses the prevention of the introduction of non-native and invasive species in the Columbia River Basin and the suppression or eradication of non-native and invasive species.

The public hearing schedule continues through June and early July, with the next hearing being held in Spokane, WA on June 16. [Public comment](#) may be submitted via email or regular mail through the extended deadline, July 25. Stacy Horton of the NPCC is available to answer all questions: shorton@nwcouncil.org.

Member Mackey asked whether the identified priorities will be suggested to the Bonneville Power Administration if the draft is adopted and what, if any, subsequent actions are taken. Ms. Osborn committed to following up on this inquiry and will provide information to the council. Mr. Seaman

indicated that public utility districts typically do not address issues such as these; however, due to the effects on power companies they are often engaged in planning and coordinated efforts.

Item 14: Japanese Tsunami Marine Debris Report / Allen Pleus

Mr. Pleus delivered information on the significant Japanese Tsunami marine debris (JTMD) discovered on the west coast in the past several months. There have been thirty recoveries on the west coast this year since April, ten of which occurred in Washington.

A recent recovery on the Quinault Indian Reservation involved a 31' skiff. The recovery team was not able to locate a positive ID on the vessel, but it was painted with Japanese characters. Protocol calls for excavating the boat, where it is ideally taken off the beach to minimize the surf distribution impact. On the surface of the vessel there were few coastal organisms of concern, but on the inside they found a blue bat star indigenous to Japan. Tube worms were also covering the inside of the boat, and a variety of scallops, oysters, and mussels were recovered that are yet to be identified. These specimens were packaged and shipped to taxonomists for identification and cataloguing.

Another debris sighting was reported near Kalaloch Lodge in Forks, WA. This vessel was relatively less infested, but it carried algae called *codium fragile*, commonly known as "Dead Man's Fingers." Five additional boats were recovered over Memorial Day weekend, with the largest being about 38' long.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) helped to facilitate a meeting in mid-May joined by the states of Hawaii and Alaska, to discuss recommendations to deal with JTMD. States are encouraged to remain vigilant as it is expected that debris will continue to wash up on western shores, primarily during the spring pulses.

A meeting is scheduled for June 30 to discuss state planning, findings, and next steps regarding the recommendations from the NOAA JTMD meeting held in May. As the response has been slow recently, i.e. relatively low activity levels on the shores, states are in the process of deciding if JTMD is still an emergency response issue, as proclaimed by earlier by the U.S. government. Discussions will cover questions regarding state/federal coordination, as well as potentially revising the state response plan (currently set forth by a memorandum of understanding) based on current work and needs. The Japanese government gifted funds to the U.S. to address debris issues, and Washington has not yet used the funds allocated to local response. A discussion regarding how to best use these funds, such as publishing a regional report, action and strategy plans, staff support and training, etc. will also be on the agenda.

Currently, the response protocol is not seamless and can create potential delays while groups secure the proper permissions for removing debris from protected or private areas, as well as working with the Japanese consulate to identify owners (e.g. for boat debris). Mr. Pleus committed to developing recommendations for a way that the council can contribute; he is currently working with Oregon State University taxonomists to develop a plan that will rely on graduate students for two years to compile, synthesize, and report on findings rather than utilize a contractor.

Vice Chair Speaks stated that the council should discuss these issues further, requesting whether the council should put forth a unified recommendation or proposal to remain vigilance in monitoring for invasive species introduction through JTMD. Mr. Pleus confirmed that long-term risk assessment and monitoring for species establishment will be part of the proposed work plan, and it will also include a proposal to the Legislature regarding the budget.

Discussions and Decisions

Item 17: Council Business / Pene Speaks

No additions or corrections were requested for the previous meetings minutes from March.

Action Item: Approval of March Minutes

Kevin Anderson moved to APPROVE the March 2013 minutes. Doug Daoust SECONDED. The Council unanimously APPROVED the March 2013 minutes.

Item 18: Washington Dreissenid Mussel Rapid Response Plan / Wendy Brown

Wendy Brown provided a high-level overview of Washington's Dreissenid Mussel Rapid Response Plan, specific to the state's issues, roles, and responsibilities when addressing non-native and invasive species.

The foundation of the plan is based on the standardized Incident Command System (ICS), which coordinates operation with other rapid response plans at the local, state, and federal levels. The plan is intended to serve as a guidance document that will assist with planning and provide an outline for rapid response efforts to dreissenid mussel infestations in Washington. Although it can be used as a stand-alone guide for Washington State, it complements the existing Columbia River Basin Rapid Response Plan (CRB RRP) drafted in 2008.

Similar to the CRB RRP, Washington's plan outlines ten response objectives, outlining the agencies involved and their authorities. Depending on where the infestation is initially discovered, there are six Washington State natural resource agencies listed with roles and responsibilities outlined: Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Patrol, Department of Ecology, Department of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources, and the Invasive Species Council. The plan also documents the processes for ensuring that the proper permits and protocols are in place in order to allow rapid response.

Recommendations for pesticide registration designate the WSDA as responsible for registering new and emerging products, while Washington maintains a current list of impaired water bodies. Washington should refer to the WSDA listed of permissible pesticide use in water bodies. Work still needs to be done to refine and maintain the list of Section 3 pesticides that would most likely be used to control infestations. Additionally, this involves ensuring that Washington's Pesticide Discharge Management Plan is updated, includes the types of pesticides and control options that would likely occur upon an introduction of invasive mussels, and that appropriate funding is in place to support this work.

Other recommendations for response protocols outline steps for identifying positive or inconclusive detections and how initial responses will be carried out according to the ICS, who is involved and when, and the steps for reporting the incident, including notification, spread prevention, and initiating control of the infestation.

The council discussed the format of the plan, and potential clarifications to alleviate potential confusion such as listing the recommendations as proposed actions that should be taken, reformatting text to highlight who is an initial responder (in some cases, it appears that the main responsibility falls on the WDFW, but other agencies may act first depending on the situation), and clearly defining the state's secondary role in actions taken on tribal lands (here it was suggested that the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission be included as a coordinating body). Other suggestions included aligning the regulations

pertaining to chemical use on state versus federal lands, to ensure that various plans are coordinated and action can be taken quickly.

The draft plan is currently available for immediate use, but is still open for review and adjustment as needed. The council discussed ways to share this with their respective agencies and those partners, stakeholders, or communities that would benefit from the information. Ms. Brown intends to work with the council's executive committee to draft a letter of introduction that frames the purpose and intent of the plan.

Lunch 12:05 – 12:15

Item 19: Strategic Plan Update / Wendy Brown and Pene Speaks

The strategic plan guiding the Washington Invasive Species Council was last updated six years ago in 2008. During the last council meeting, Ms. Brown agreed to prepare objectives as proposed by the executive committee for the purpose of updating the strategic plan. A walk-through of the objectives included a handout that compared side-by-side objectives with 2008 plan for easy identification of changes. Further work includes gathering input from the new Industry Advisory Panel to the council.

The council discussed potential changes to the objectives, adding or removing elements that will clarify the purpose and intent of each one. Suggestions for added objectives included addressing the purpose of the council and potential legislative impacts, performance measures, and communication planning.

Ms. Brown shared several examples of other states' rapid response plans for the council to consider and requested feedback on the preferred format for Washington's plan. Various elements of the other state plans were mentioned, e.g. California's clear definitions and clarity, Oregon's specificity and measurable goals, and Idaho's compatibility with Washington's current format. It was recommended that an implementation report be added and released on a scheduled basis, as well as balancing the goals and actions of the plan with strategic short- and long-term strategic direction. Additionally, selecting a format that highlights successes and clear succinct goals will be easily shared with the Legislature is a priority.

Next, Ms. Brown requested direction on the actions listed under Objectives 1 and 2, in order to update, add, or remove actions as needed. Vice Chair Speaks recommended preparing a more thorough draft for review and recommendations for the council to consider at the next meeting; the council may also discuss how to engage the public for comment at that time. The discussion also covered which details should be included in the shorter, biennial work plan as well as identifying shared goals and alignment with other federal, state, tribal, and local entities.

Public Comments

There were no public comments at this meeting.

Next Steps

Ms. Brown will prepare an updated draft of the Strategic Plan based on suggestion from the council at today's meeting and bring recommendations to the next meeting.

Ms. Brown will assist the Industry Advisory Panel to ensure they select a delegate to be on the council and prepare updates for the next meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Next meeting:

September 11, 2014

Room 172 Natural Resources Building, Olympia, WA

Minutes approved by:

Bill Tweit, Chair

Date