

# WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, DECEMBER 5, 2013

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Hearing Room D, John L. O'Brien Building  
Olympia, Washington

## **WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL (WISC) MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Clinton Campbell	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Doug Daoust	U.S. Forest Service
Rob Fimbel	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Alison Halpern	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Stacy Horton	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Kelly McLain	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Rob Pedersen	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington Department of Ecology
Pene Speaks, Vice Chair	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Pat Stevenson	Stillaguamish Tribe
Bill Tweit, Chair	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ray Willard	Washington State Department of Transportation
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection

## **GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:**

Raquel Crosier  
Mike Leech  
Allen Pleus  
Jesse Schultz  
Margaret Tudor

## **STAFF:**

Wendy Brown  
Cindy Gower  
Rachel LeBaron Anderson

## **Opening and Welcome**

Bill Tweit opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m. with welcome announcements, facility safety information, introductions, and a review of the agenda. He introduced Cindy Gower as the new administrative staff to the Council, as well as Kelly McLain sitting in for the Washington Department of Agriculture and Stacey Horton replacing Raquel Crosier for the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

## Hot Topics

### **Item 1: Zebra/Quagga Mussel Rapid Response Exercise (and Capitol Lake NZMS Control)**

**Allen Pleus**

The Pacific State Marine Fisheries Commission hosted a rapid response exercise with state and federal agency representatives from Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. The main focus of the exercise was to identify what is needed to put all permits in place to allow for immediate chemical treatment of an infested water body in our region. Representatives from the Washington Departments of Agriculture and Ecology, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and relevant Oregon state agencies were present to provide information about each agency's particular role in various permitting and consultation processes.

Allen also discussed the most recent draw down and freezing treatment done to kill New Zealand mud snails in Capitol Lake. As there was a 98% mortality rate the last time the lake was drained in 2009, the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) was encouraged to once again lower the water level of the lake to coincide with this most recent freezing spell in western Washington. The lake was lowered for approximately five days, during which time night-time temperatures were below freezing. WDFW staff measured snail mortality both pre and post draw down. At all sites where the snails were exposed to the cold temperatures (i.e., not underwater or covered with leaf litter), there was 100% mortality. Given that some of the lake bed remained under water and that organic detritus covered other parts of the lake bed, WDFW estimates that about 50% of the snail population in the lake was eliminated.

### **Item 2: Update on Fish and Wildlife Program Amendment Request:**

**Raquel Crosier**

Raquel Crosier reported that many Fish and Wildlife Program amendment recommendations were received and are being reviewed by NW Power and Conservation Council staff. Final recommendations will be released in March 2014. Many recommendations were received from regional partners regarding adding new definitions; providing for improved monitoring, research, and funding; enhancing invasive species prevention efforts; and promoting regulations. Bill Tweit stated that using BPA funding for prevention has a lot of support.

### **Item 3: Congressional Invasive Species Caucus Hearing:**

**Wendy Brown**

Council staff was invited to give a presentation at the October 2, 2013 hearing of the Congressional Invasive Species Caucus. However, due to the government shut down, the Caucus meeting was cancelled at the last minute. Wendy did present on invasive species issues in the west to Congressional staffers and met individually with several representatives. Bill Tweit asked if there is another opportunity to speak at a Caucus hearing. Wendy will make inquiries and get back to the Council.

### **Item 4: Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Amendments:**

**Wendy Brown**

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) (H.R.3080) and the Water Resource Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) (S.601) are the House and Senate versions of a bill that "streamlines the infrastructure project delivery process, fosters fiscal responsibility, and strengthens our water transportation networks to promote

America's competitiveness, prosperity, and economic growth." Included in the bill are amendments bringing additional financial resources to states for on-the-ground prevention activities and requiring a federal study on impacts of invasive species. Another amendment would establish a multiagency effort to slow the spread of Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins. The House and Senate are working in conference committees to hammer out the differences between H.R. 3080 and S.601.

## Council Business

### Action Item: Approval of September Minutes

Bill Tweit moved to APPROVE the Sept 2013 minutes. Vicki Yund SECONDED. The Council unanimously APPROVED the September 2013 minutes.

### Annual Report:

Wendy will send the 2013 Annual Report to the Legislature on or before December 15, 2013. She will also send out the final version to Council members and post it on the Web site.

## 2013 Weed Board Hearing Update

### Alison Halpern

Alison summarized the Noxious Weed Board decisions on the 2013 proposed changes to the noxious weed list:

- **Lesser celandine, *Ficaria verna*, 2014 Class B noxious weed.** Lesser celandine is an invasive perennial that is naturalizing over a broad geographic range in the U.S. and is spreading in Washington. Originally introduced as an ornamental, the species and its cultivars may still be sold today. Its early emergence and flowering give it an advantage over other ephemeral plants as it competes with our native understory plant communities. There is a limited window of time the plant is above ground for control before it dies back in the summer. Currently, lesser celandine is listed as a noxious weed and quarantined in Oregon and in other states. As a Class B noxious weed, lesser celandine is designated for control by the WSNWCB in Snohomish, Skamania, Stevens, and Pend Oreille counties, and other county weed boards do have the option of requiring landowners to control it at the local level.
- **Non-native cattail species and hybrids, including *Typha angustifolia*, *Typha domingensis*, *Typha x glauca*, 2014 Class C noxious weed.** Non-native *Typha* species and hybrids are capable of displacing native plants, hybridizing with our native *Typha latifolia*, altering marsh habitat, and invading managed aquatic systems. Non-native *Typha* species and hybrids have become invasive in other parts of the country and currently have a limited distribution in Washington, although recorded occurrences are increasing. Control of known populations, while they are still small and more manageable, will help prevent these invasive species from dominating valuable wetland habitat. This Class C listing increases awareness of the invasiveness of these species and hybrids and gives county weed control boards the option of mandatory, local control.
- **Russian olive, *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, 2014 Class C noxious weed.** Russian olive is a shrub to small tree with painful, thorny stems, fragrant yellow flowers and olive-like fruit. It spreads along waterways and has naturalized along many of our major rivers in the interior western U.S. It can crowd out

important native riparian plant communities that provide valuable wildlife habitat. Listed as a noxious weed in many other states, Russian olive is growing and spreading in eastern Washington. As a Class C noxious weed, county noxious weed control boards have the option of selecting Russian olive for mandatory control at the local level and can provide education and management information on proper control methods to protect agricultural lands and native plant communities.

- **Reclassification of velvetleaf, *Abutilon theophrasti*, from a Class A to a Class B noxious weed**, to be designated everywhere except Yakima and Franklin Counties.
- **Reclassification of buffalobur, *Solanum rostratum*, from a Class A to a Class C noxious weed.**
- **Reclassification of yellow-flowered hawkweed species into 2 subgenera.** In an effort to simplify the non-native yellow-flowered hawkweeds (*Hieracium* species) on the noxious weed list, the Weed Board consolidated the 11 separate listings (10 species and one separate listing for all other non-native hawkweeds) into two Class B listings by subgenus - *Pilosella* and *Hieracium*.

#### **Proposals not adopted to the 2014 noxious weed list:**

- **Giant reed, *Arundo donax*, proposed as a Class B noxious weed.** Giant reed, also commonly called *Arundo*, is a tall perennial, rhizomatous grass that generally grows 20 feet or taller. In riparian areas it can be highly invasive, forming dense monocultures, causing a number of negative impacts including lower biodiversity and excess water consumption and posing a significant fire risk. Giant reed is also being tested as a potential biofuel crop and other uses due to its high biomass yield. The WSNWCB chose not to list giant reed at this time, since the Washington State Department of Agriculture has already begun rule-making to regulate giant reed through the plant quarantine list.
- **Proposal to reinstate 2012 listing language of Japanese eelgrass, *Zostera japonica*, (i.e. a Class C noxious weed on commercially managed shellfish beds only).** The board considered but did not adopt the proposal to reinstate the 2012 listing language of Japanese eelgrass (*Zostera japonica*) as a Class C noxious weed on commercially managed shellfish beds only. Since the proposal was not adopted, Japanese eelgrass remains a Class C noxious weed everywhere for 2014.

## **PEI Update**

### **Margaret Tudor**

Margaret Tudor reported on the joint efforts of the Pacific Education Institute (PEI) and council in 2013. The main focus this past year was on examining the species used in school science kits – actually determining what species are used in the kits – and developing best management practices for proper disposal of the specimens. The council's work with PEI also has led to the creation of a new partnership among the council, the Northwest Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform (LASER), and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Working with these organizations, the council held three, all-day workshops this year. The first two workshops, held in March, included science curriculum directors from across the state to introduce the subject of invasive species in science kits and train them on a newly-created invasive species lesson for the classroom. The second workshop occurred in September and brought science kit center managers and science directors together from across the state to determine ways to stop the release of science kit specimens. Some new

policies and practices that followed the meeting include requiring all science kit specimens to be returned to kit centers alive or dead, finding some native substitutes, and preparing materials on proper disposal for teachers.

There was great work accomplished in these two days to educate educators about invasive species and their pathways of spread. A survey that followed the September workshop illustrated significant changes in thinking and actions on invasive species. For example, some responses to the question *"Has your thinking about invasive species and science kits in Washington shifted as a result of this workshop?"* were:

- I used to think: If it is native, it was okay to release.
- I used to think: It was okay to release butterflies and dump soils back into a garden.
- But now I know: Any live materials used in a classroom should not ever be released.
- But now I know: It is better to have a no-release policy.

Some responses to the question, *"What is the one step you have taken as a result of this workshop?"* were:

- I've updated our Web site with information about all the live materials we use, including care and disposal information. I've also reminded all teachers of the disposal guidelines in e-mails.
- We have asked for and received a donated refrigerator and freezer so we can euthanize living organisms as required.
- We now have a policy to return all living materials for proper disposal.
- I have communicated proper disposal techniques at our science coordinators meeting, which represents 25 school districts.

Regarding next steps working with the council in 2014, PEI proposed some policy ideas for council consideration. These recommendations included passing a law or policy within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction requiring teachers to sign a personal commitment to dispose live species responsibly after use, creating school board policy to be adopted by school districts for the re-handling of live species, and supporting LASER Alliance Directors and their science kit center managers to improve their system to procure, propagate and dispose of species

Lisa Younger asked how many kit centers are currently in place. Margaret Tudor stated that are forty centers across the state, but they are interested in coordinating plans to create even more. Clinton Campbell stated that PEI is on the right path with the idea to put freezers in science classrooms for teachers to directly dispose of specimens after they are used. Doug Daoust reminded the council of the recent comic strip (Stone Soup) that addressed the spread of invasive crayfish from school science kits and suggested that we include that in the actual kits. Bill Tweit recommended that we assist with the school board policy idea, rather than going straight to the RCW route. Council members agreed.

## **2014 Proposed AIS Legislation**

### **Allen Pleus**

Allen discussed the current status of the proposed WDFW bill on aquatic invasive animal species, reporting that the Governor's Office removed all funding mechanisms from the legislation. However, none of the policy initiatives or authorities in the bill were changed. It would be helpful to come up with a funding packet for the Legislature, in case one is requested. Bill Tweit stated that we should continue as much outreach as possible, gathering local government comments and turn our focus toward the legislation. Allen Pleus stated that the

only negative complaints received from stakeholders were on the small watercraft permits. Lisa Younger reported a positive response to this bill, but that the fiscal impact raised concern from several groups.

## **New Zealand Mud Snail and Tsunami Debris Discoveries**

**Jesse Schultz**

New Zealand Mud Snails. Two new infestations of New Zealand mud snail have been discovered – one in Blue Slough on the Chehalis River and the other in the lower Snohomish River. WDFW is working to develop a template to respond to new detections, make everyone aware, and get stakeholders input. The Chehalis River and lower Snohomish River sites are at a level-two decontamination status, which will be enforced on these sites. Outreach materials, including signs, will be posted at public access sites within the infested areas to educate people on cleaning their gear and equipment before leaving the site. WDFW is organizing meetings with stakeholders to address further actions.

Tsunami Debris. The Shoalwater Bay Tribe reported a boat found on their property in Willapa Bay on November 9, 2013. The Washington State Patrol recovered the boat on November 13, 2013, and WDFW sampled the biota on the boat the following day. The boat had no barnacle growth, but many other species were found. Whelk snails and Jingle oyster shells were identified. Kevin Anderson asked if we should be worried about these species in our waters. Jesse Schultz stated yes, and Allen Pleus said that any new species could also have diseases and parasites attached to them.

## **BREAK**

## **Phase 2 Baseline Assessment and App Development**

**Mike Leech**

Baseline Assessment: Mike reviewed the draft Phase 2 Baseline Assessment. The assessment report includes sections on terms, data, executive summary, purpose of the assessment, introduction to the species, and limitations of the report and maps. One of the big challenges identified by this and the previous baseline project is that organizations and agencies are collecting noxious weed and other invasive species data in different ways, which made pulling together the data and making them comparable an enormous workload. It is important to remember that what this project represents is a snap shot of the species as they currently exist. How can we encourage the Council to assist on collecting data? This can be done by providing a mechanism to be used by different agencies and help standardize the collection of data. Ray Willard asked if the Phase 2 project is similar to the Phase 1 project. Mike Leech stated yes, there are many consistencies, but it looks a bit different graphically and covers more species.

Mobile App. The IOS or Android version of the app is now available for beta testing. There are currently six people beta testing and providing feedback. Mike Leech walked through the process for reporting species with the app. Kevin Anderson suggested adding pull down menus to better identify each species. Mike Leech agreed a limited drop down menus would be a good addition. The app will live on an Amazon server and enable Wendy and other reviewers to accept or reject submissions. Stacy asked if this app can be used statewide and with fish. Mike Leech answered that it could absolutely be used for all species.

Rob Fimbel asked how the Council will be using this application. Mike Leech stated that it provides the public with a more accessible way to report sightings and will also be used to update the baseline assessment. Rob also asked if someone comes across something they cannot identify is there an 'unknown' species category. Mike Leech said yes. Kevin Anderson suggested that we might be creating a problem as we do not have the capacity to respond to most things. Wendy added that we already encourage public reporting of invasive species through the hotline and on-line reporting form. Bill Tweit suggested that we start by rolling the app out to agency field staff to use during the course of their regular field work.

## LUNCH

### Council Survey Results

Wendy Brown

A Council survey was sent out earlier this year to evaluate the way the council operates and to ensure the work of the Council is headed in the right direction. Here are the basic results:

- *Does the Invasive Special Council have too many, too few or about the right number of agencies and organizations participating?* 77% reported about the right number, 18% reported slightly too many and 6% reported slightly too few.
- *Are there other agencies or organizations that should be participating?* Some people suggested that more tribal and industry representative could be beneficial.
- *The quarterly meetings should help direct the functions of the Council. Do you think they serve that purpose?* 93% reported yes, that the quarterly meetings effectively direct the functions of the Council and allow enough time for everything the Council needs to accomplish.
- *The Council web site and WISE site should give information about the work of the Council and invasive species in general. How well do you think they serve that purpose?* The results were 54% very well, 23% extremely well, 15% moderately well, and 8% slightly well.
- *Is the current work of the Council clearly tied to the strategic plan?* 69% reported yes, 23% reported don't know and 8% reported no.
- *Over the past several years, prevention has been the main focus of the Council. Is that still the appropriate focus?* 100% reported yes.
- *Are there other major projects or policy initiatives that the Council should take on that they are not currently doing?* The results were 38% no opinion, 31% yes and 31% no.
- *How well does the Council track progress made on actions we decide to undertake?* The results were 46% moderately well, 31% very well, 15% slightly well and 8% extremely well.

In summary, we discussed that:

- There is a need for more continuity between meetings and better measuring of progress made on implementing our strategic objectives.
- Prevention continues to be the correct focus for our work.
- There is room for improvement on tracking progress made on actions we undertake.
- We should consider hosting an invasive species summit to discuss regional and state successes, gaps, and next steps.
- We should consider providing a framework for prioritizing species investments at the federal and state level.
- We should do more to participate in advocacy that serves our mission, even where it may impact one of our member agencies.

Doug Daoust asked what they mean by continuity in meetings and if this could be done by hot topic updates. If something comes up, Wendy should email the Council, rather than waiting until the next board meeting. Clinton Campbell commented that if we take these results on whether the Council is on right track and should continue doing what have been doing, he says the answer is yes in a big way.

Bill Tweit agreed the Council has many successes, but there are challenges ahead. He sees more work coming our way if the WDFW legislation passes and the Council becomes directly involved in invasive species rule-making. He is wondering how well equipped we are for both future additions to the council and future roles. In terms of our sheer size, we already have trouble fitting in to meeting rooms, but that is not reason enough to not try to expand our membership. Future members and increased roles will bring an increased workload for council members and staff. We need to be prepared.

Kevin Anderson stated that we could create sub-committee groups. Bill Tweit stated that we have had little success in getting participants. Doug Daoust asked how many seats are available to government agencies. Bill Tweit stated the Legislature only requires certain agencies to be on the council and then it is up to our discretion who else to include. Other organizations have expressed an interest in being on the council. The Council should put more thought into an industrial advisory panel. The panel could contain broad industry representation – people from different sectors impacted by invasive species – and provide feedback on the agenda and other issues of importance to them. Kevin Anderson commented that perhaps an advisory group makes sense to come up with an outline for council consideration. Wendy suggested the possibility of one seat on the council in which an industry person would serve for one year and then another person would serve the next year and so on. Stacy Horton stated that perhaps we could reach out to our own stakeholders to get information out.

## **Strategic Plan Implementation**

Wendy Brown

Wendy began the discussion reminding the Council of our purpose as stated in our enabling legislation, which is provide policy-level direction, planning, and coordination for combating harmful invasive species

throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others that may be potentially harmful. She also reminded members about our strategic goals, as stated in the 2008 strategy:

- Foster cooperation, coordination, and communication among government agencies, stakeholders, land-managing agencies, private landowners, and tribes.
- Prevent the introduction and establishment of invasive species and reduce their adverse impacts on WA's environment, economy, and human health.
- Refine and coordinate statewide capacity to identify, report, and respond to both newly discovered and existing infestations.
- Assist those who manage invasive species through containment, control, and eradication efforts.
- Support the restoration and rehabilitation of key ecosystems adversely affected by invasive species.

Regarding the top 5 recommendations – those we were to do within the first three years of creating our strategy – Wendy concluded that the Council has either completed or initiated work on all five recommendations. The baseline assessment is almost finished for Puget Sound, though it needs to be extended at some point to the rest of the state. The web-based clearinghouse turned into the WISE web site which is done, and there has been a lot of outreach conducted both generally and through several specific pathway campaigns. The Council has also increased communication, our capability to respond and coordination with partners.

Bill Tweit mentioned that the top five are what the original Council said we would do first. Alison Halpern commented that it appears the recommendations were set and came out before the economy crashed. Looking at the baseline assessment, it has affected the work to be accomplished with budget cuts. She would be interested in revisiting long time goals. It makes sense to look at what has not been done, why it hasn't been done, and what can actually be done.

Wendy continued discussing each strategic goal and the recommendations under them that have been completed, initiated, or not yet started.

In the discussion that followed, Clinton Campbell mentioned that the strategy is intended to follow a 20-year timeline and should not be looked at as a negative if certain recommendations have not yet been started. In regard to Recommendation #5, to enhance our capacity for rapid response, ideas were put out there with noble intents based on the our resources at the time. Since then, certain things have risen to the top and others have gone down the priority list. Concerning Recommendations #11 and #16, risk analysis, this is a very specialized topic that the council is not equipped to take on. It may be one to take off the list. Alison asked if we are voting on anything today. Bill Tweit stated that we are just discussing what we have accomplished and how we want to proceed forward. Alison commented that she would like more time to evaluate. She needs more time to prioritize, compare and see what our focus is or what it should be and then reflect back at the next meeting.

Pene Sparks commented that when you have things in writing, you have a much better understanding and knowing about what we can get done. If we were writing this plan now and prioritizing future actions, what would the focus be on? Wendy stated that a lot what the council has done on prevention was not identified

as a top priority in the strategy. Our focus has shifted from response to prevention, and we have achieved a lot in that regard.

Doug Daoust agreed with others that we have too many recommendations and that it's a good time to refocus. He thinks we should drop the recommendations that are really not feasible and only focus on a few items. Lisa also pointed out that, looking at the members currently on the council, only Rob Fimbel was on the council back when the strategy was created. The report serves a great purpose, but it reflects too broadly.

Bill Tweit stated now that we have our 5-year report, we need to decide what to do next. If we put a fourth column with what successes we have had under each recommendation, then it would be easier to decide what our 5-year goals should have.

Wendy will send out the implementation table with a fourth column added for council members to fill in. After review we will see what we should drop, what we should plan for the next years, and prioritize for 2014. Kevin Anderson asked if that includes Wendy's recommendations. Bill Tweit replied yes.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There was no public comment today.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Bill Tweit reminded council members that the next meeting is on March 13, 2014, in Room 175 of the Natural Resources Building. The Executive Committee will meet before the next meeting to review input from this meeting and provide recommendations on industry representation on the council and future strategic planning.

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

**Next meeting:**  
**March 13, 2013**  
**Natural Resources Building**  
**Room 175, Olympia, WA**

Minutes approved by:

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Bill Tweit, Chair

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Date