

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

February 17, 2011

Room 172, WA State Natural Resources Building
Olympia, Washington

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Christopher, Chair	Department of Transportation
Bill Tweit, Vice Chair	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Clinton Campbell	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Doug Daoust	U.S. Forest Service
Alison Halpern	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Kathy Hamel	Department of Ecology
Mary Mahaffy	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Lisa Macchio	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Pene Speaks	Department of Natural Resources
Brett Thompson	U.S. Coast Guard
Dick Wallace	NW Power and Conservation Council
Brad White/Mary Toohey	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

Lisa DeBruckyere
Amy Ferriter
Gen Keesecker
Steve McLellan
Allen Pleus
Breanna Trygg
Ray Willard

STAFF:

Wendy Brown
Lori Lawrence
Rachel LeBaron Anderson

CONVENE AND WELCOME:

Chris Christopher opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. with welcome announcements and facility safety information, introductions, and a review of the agenda. Chris thanked the council for their legislative work.

HOT TOPICS:

Flathead Lake Zebra Mussels

Bill Tweit announced that current lab work and dive work at Flathead Lake have failed to show any evidence of zebra/quagga mussels. The previous samples were a false positive for zebra/quagga mussel. The regional coordination went very well. It was a good exercise and not time wasted. Montana felt supported, and agency staff were glad they made the announcement before an infestation was confirmed. They felt they were being proactive rather than reactive in reporting it at the first possibility.

NZMS Update

The next step in the response to NZMS in Capital Lake is to freeze the snails again during the next cold snap. GA is also planning to conduct lab tests on varying levels of salinity as a toxicity factor. They had 15% mortality last time; with more salt and better control of freshwater back washing, it may be effective.

PSP Work and Invasive Species

Kevin Anderson announced that Gerry O'Keefe is the new director of the Puget Sound Partnership. The 2011 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference is scheduled in October and will take place in Vancouver B.C. This conference is hosted by the Partnership and Environment Canada. The Partnership, WISC, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ministry of Environment submitted a proposal to host a one-day workshop in conjunction with the conference to develop a shared vision for managing invasive species in the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin.

Mary Toohey noted that there is an item on the Governor's agenda to work on Spartina with Canada, which would be a good topic at the Salish Sea conference. Lisa Macchio said conference organizers are asking for papers now and that this is a good opportunity to give a presentation on the work we do.

The Puget Sound Partnership is updating its action agenda. By June they will have adopted ecosystem recovery targets for 20 indicators and numerous threat reduction targets. None of the targets is currently related to invasive species. There will be opportunity for everyone to participate in the project and to give input. The Environmental Protection Agency could potentially provide up to \$190 million dollars over the next 5 years to implement action agenda projects. Funding is made available for competitive award in four categories. The Near Shore/Marine and Watershed categories have the best chance of providing invasives funding. Pene noted that climate change is not included in the Puget Sound Partnership action agenda. Kevin says the action agenda will address climate change.

The Partnership is also developing the framework and governance structure for a coordinated monitoring program in Puget Sound that would allow work groups to center around different topics such as stormwater and invasive species monitoring. There is room for council members to work on those workgroups. Ray Willard asked if there was any significance of the council's Baseline Assessment to the Puget Sound Partnership Science Panel. Kevin said he did not know, other than plans to link it to their work once it is finished.

Pacific Education Institute (PEI) Update

Breanna Trygg, from PEI, is working with teachers on professional development to get students working in the outdoors and gaining environmental expertise. They have grants from the Puget Sound Partnership and Russell Foundation to work with schools in four regions of the Puget Sound basin. One project involves over 200 students removing invasive species as part of their curriculum. This project will become a permanent part of the school curriculum. PEI is also working with Sea Grant to collect data on the feasibility of using native crayfish in the classroom. Native crayfish are more aggressive and have a slightly higher mortality rate than the invasive crayfish used in classroom science kits. The next step is to lay the groundwork for school districts that have skill centers (usually technical training) to add environmental programs. Sixty percent of students get FOSS kits as their main science curriculum. They are looking to add local environmental information to those kits and add live, native species. Currently FOSS kits have information about the Grand Canyon or other places. This summer, staff from PEI will give a presentation at the Agriculture Educators Conference to explain what is happening with invasive species in our state so that it goes into statewide curricula.

Bill Tweit asked if PEI had enough funding to sustain their current work. Breanna said some funds will depend on the Legislature, but the direction of their funding is going well and they are getting good at leveraging funds. Bill asked if the Washington Invasive Species Council is giving them enough support as they pursue grants. Breanna said the council could help with in-kind funding and give them support with the Legislature. Allen Pleus likes the idea of using skills centers and would like to see native crayfish

used for the kits at the skills centers. Chris thanked PEI for all of their hard work and said we will continue to find ways to be of assistance.

Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians Resolution

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) passed a resolution to support continued state efforts to control and prevent aquatic invasive species and to pursue partnerships, cooperatives, and other funding opportunities that will allow them and tribal members to become more directly involved in these efforts. At a recent meeting, the Colville Tribe requested an invasive species contact at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Wendy will draft a letter to ATNI opening further communication. The council suggested a regional letter from the Washington, Idaho, and Oregon invasive species councils.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A

PARTNER LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Alison Halpern gave an update on the weed bills currently before the Legislature. This year the Weed Board may be eliminated and the program transferred to the Department of Agriculture. There are some concerns over bills that would list agricultural plants as class "C" weeds except where commercially grown. A substitute bill allows the Board to educate on weeds of concern even if they are not on a current list. Oregon is concerned about giant reed being grown commercially for bio-fuel. Giant reed is already quite invasive in California and can do great damage to irrigation systems and rivers.

Bill Tweit and Kathy Hamel discussed the joint Ecology and Fish and Wildlife bill (SB 5036, HB 1395). The bill currently is only for fresh water algae. There is a desire among Senate Committee members to include marine invasive algae in the bill language.

There is a bill to remove copper-based paint as a tool for anti-fouling. The purpose is to reduce the amount of copper in the marine environment and use non-toxic alternatives that will prevent the spread of invasive species. Senator Ranker, who previously advocated for removing copper from brake pads, sponsors this bill. Zinc-based paint may work as an anti-foulant. Ecology is looking for alternatives that create a very hard, non-toxic, non-porous surface, making it hard for species to attach. Higher numbers of tunicates are found on unpainted surfaces.

2011 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Steve McLellan gave an update on the council's extension bill (SB 5090, HB 1413). Most recently, in the House, the extension bill passed unanimously in the General Government Appropriations and Oversight Committee to the House Rules Committee. There appears to be a lot of support for the council.

The boards and commissions bill, HB 1371, has not had any amendments posted. Other than that, we are waiting for budget information. We assumed many federal dollars in the fiscal note for the council. There is concern that our 'pass the hat' strategy might not be sustainable.

Brett Thompson says the Final Rule for ballast water will come out in April. There is a regulation bottleneck between the Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security for final approval. There may have been changes made to the rule since it was last out for public comment.

As directed under a court order, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is developing a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit that covers the application of aquatic pesticides for a number of uses including the chemical control of invasive plants and animals. In Washington, the EPA permit will cover aquatic pesticide activities on federal facilities and tribal lands. NPDES permits issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology cover aquatic pesticide uses in Washington on state and private lands. In states where EPA has delegated Clean Water Act authority to the state, these states (most states) must develop their version of a general NPDES permit to cover aquatic pesticide uses. The current deadline for the permits is April 11, 2011. EPA was planning to have issued its

general permit by the end of 2010, but as of March 16, 2011, still has not issued its permit. Many states were planning to use the EPA general permit as a template to help them develop their own permits. Some state authorities asked EPA to petition the court to extend the deadline to permit issuance. As a result, EPA has asked the court to extend the deadline for the general permits for six months. A decision is pending. In the meantime, a bill has been introduced in Congress that would amend FIFRA (Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act) to exempt aquatic pesticide applications from needing NPDES permit coverage. Many western states are supportive of amending the law (but not Oregon and Washington). Applicators treating without permit coverage after April 11, 2011 (unless the court grants a stay) could be subject to third party lawsuits if they do not have permit coverage or if Congress does not amend FIFRA. Washington already has permits in place and state laws that support aquatic pesticide permitting, so Washington is covered regardless of court or Congressional decisions.

Oregon is looking to approve lottery funds for spending on invasive species management. Doug Daoust shared more information about the plan to grow giant reed for biofuel. Wendy Brown said a farmer was growing giant reed in Prosser, Washington for paper and pulp making. Lisa Younger thinks that crop was eliminated in January. There is also a farmer growing it in Walla Walla, without any irrigation, for paper pulp. It is unclear whether the giant reed is storing water in its rhizomes or sending roots down to the water table. Giant reed is woody (less grass-like), grows fast, and grows up to 25 feet tall. It looks like something in science fiction. Each reed is as large as a sapling.

Discussion

- It absorbs a lot of water, which is significant in a part of the state where water rights are important. It is a crop and works with existing water rights.
- This situation represents a pathway that is not currently being addressed – invasive species grown for biofuels or biomass.
- There may need to be more outreach to the Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Committee (EFSEC) to look at this issue before approving new power plants and siting decisions. The council could write a letter to them.
- Perhaps the EFSEC can add invasive species into the NEPA and SEPA part of their site evaluations. We should ask them to keep invasive species concerns on their radar. We can start with a simple phone call to reach out.
- The council needs to look broader than biofuel since invasive species are grown for paper crops.

BREAK

REGIONAL UPDATE- FROM OREGON AND IDAHO

Chris Christopher introduced Lisa DeBruckere from Oregon and Amy Ferriter from Idaho. Lisa gave updates on legislation in Oregon.

- The firewood bill that calls for treating wood before transporting passed unanimously through committee. However, the bill does not affect wood moved for biomass.
- Banning felt-soled shoes did not pass out of committee, most likely because there was lack of science to support it. However, industry has made the shift to making waders without felt.
- There is a new bill that would remove sticker fees on boats, but they do not expect it to pass.
- There is another bill regarding funding for county weed boards, but it has large fiscal impact and is not likely to pass.

Oregon thanked Washington and Idaho for support with the firewood outreach project. The collaboration has been phenomenal. There are billboards in all three states. A graduate student is currently evaluating the change in awareness among the general public as a result of the campaign. They are creating a master database in their state for tracking invasive species (iMAP Invasive Species) that they hope most folks will switch to so that everyone is using just one database. They are planning a summit on invasive species as part of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region conference in July in Portland. They are also going to have a good discussion about the number of noxious weed lists in the region and look at centralizing and

prioritizing the lists. Oregon has also evaluated how much money is spent on invasive species throughout their state at both federal and local levels and then plan to look at where they think their state can be more strategic in spending that money.

The Oregon Council is drafting a strategic plan for invasive species for the state of Oregon. They will be formatting it to look similar to Washington's and Idaho's plans so they may be combined into a regional strategic plan at some point in the future. Chris likes the idea of a regional strategic plan. He asked about the lottery fund bill. Lisa thinks it will pass. Chris asked about the inspection maps. Lisa says they got some funding for their boat inspection program, but because of their state constitution, these stops are only voluntary. They also have a cap on their funds, so they need to get the legislation changed to remove the one-year caps on spending. They feel their southern border is most vulnerable since Washington and Idaho are doing a good job in their states. The map we created will help them get the most bang for their buck.

Bill Tweit provided information about the Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians resolution regarding invasive species and suggested a regional response from the Oregon, Idaho, and Washington invasive species councils. Lisa feels her council would be supportive. She believes our councils have a great opportunity to affect change in all three states by coming together in support. Amy feels the same for Idaho.

Amy Ferriter reported that Idaho's invasive species program has firm funding and authority in place, but a resolution of support for their council is currently in the Legislature. They are on their third year of inspection stations. Their boat sticker revenue has come in short, but they have been able to use a deficiency warrant to cover the shortfall. This year they are spending less, they will only have 16 stations instead of 20. Each station is now costing \$400 per day; initially they cost \$900 per day. They are going to be open March through September and should intercept many boats from the Great Lakes before they enter Washington. They will be doing less outreach this year to save money, but will spend more on veliger sampling. All inspectors at stations will have hand-held data recorders this year, and they will provide boaters who pass through regularly with a special passport. The passport will enable inspectors to populate their forms automatically and allow for a quick process. They are training all port of entry personnel so that there will be inspections on large boats, but also closing their Lewiston station. They will be watching closely for boats from Lake Mead heading for Priest Lake.

Chris asked how they found savings at the inspection stations. Amy said they hired a private contractor initially and had to pay for all of his gear within 30 days. There were also upfront costs for signage. This year there are no private contractors. They are working with local government, sheriffs, conservation districts, etc. The sheriffs carry guns and have 100% compliance. It is cheaper and gives local government ownership over the issue. One county sheriff has put together an invasive species posse to do patrols – the first invasive species posse in the country. Kathy asked if they have any milfoil funding back in their budget. Amy thinks that they will. Chris asked Dick from a general power prospective did he think the cost would be reasonable insurance. No one has approached the Power Council directly for funding. The states could initiate those conversations with Bonneville, but there may be fewer funds available this year.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Action Item: Approval of December Minutes

Bill Tweit moved to **APPROVE** the December 2, 2010 minutes. Doug Daoust **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the December 2, 2010 minutes with corrections.

LUNCH

COUNCIL WORK PLAN FOR 2011

Chris Christopher reviewed the parts of the 2010 work plan the council is still working on and potential work priorities for 2011. Chris reviewed the top five policy recommendations as voted on by the council at the December 2010 meeting. Chris asked for feedback from the council.

Discussion:

- The council wants to add a 2011 goal of working with Oregon and Idaho further and to work with the Puget Sound Partnership on keeping invasive species in the action agenda.
- There should be future legislation regarding the transport of firewood.
- Continue to look at legislation for funding the council.
- Assess funding for projects in our state like inspection stations. We should follow Idaho's example and become better funded and better prepared.
- All member agencies should add the WISC website link to their own websites and to social media updates.
- Continued work in using smart phones for citizen science capabilities.
- We have 27 remaining invasive species fact sheets to add to the web – college students and interns could work on these projects.
- Continue to support PEI in expanding their efforts.
- Track agencies performance toward council goals and then look at how to remove their barriers.
- In Oregon, they go around the table at the council meetings and each agency says what they are working on so they can collaborate on projects and avoid having two agencies do the same work. That is an important thing to add to meeting agendas. Oregon has two-day meetings, typically, each agency has a one-page report to present at each meeting, and their meetings are quarterly.
- We need to look at climate change and what we can do to prepare, there is not anyone currently studying climate change and invasive species in our state. Many are studying native species.

FIREWOOD PROJECT UPDATE

Gen Keesecker presented the Don't Move Firewood outreach project. This is a tri-state project with Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, with the goal to inform the public about the risks of moving firewood. The grant award was \$450,000. Gen started by identifying the target audience, including recreational vehicle (RV) owners, firewood producers, state parks, and others. Several modes of outreach were used in this project, including billboards, backlit poster displays at rest areas, and materials such as playing cards and Frisbees for campers. One thousand five hundred posters were distributed in federal, state, local, and private campgrounds throughout the state. Four thousand Frisbees were distributed at state parks. An educational video will be added to the firewood page on the council website, and a message about firewood is on the www.recreation.gov website.

Gen shared some preliminary results from the surveys that were conducted by Portland State University as part of this project:

- Sixty-five percent of parks purchase local wood.
- Most campers get firewood from non-local places.
- RV campers tend to bring firewood from home.
- Most campers feel invasive species are a big danger to the Pacific Northwest.

Gen will share the final report when it is completed. She will distribute the remaining outreach materials in the next couple of months and will order additional playing cards and billboards. OR is developing a smart phone application that lists locations of where to buy local and treated firewood. Tags available for firewood may state where it is from. Kevin asked what "treated" means. Treatment is kiln dried, heat treated (could be hot water, 175 degrees for 70 minutes), or fumigated. The firewood industry locally is not organized so it is difficult to tag and certify local wood as treated. We could add regulations, which cost money, or we can use outreach. This will be ongoing work. Chris asked how far is considered local. Gen says within 50 miles. In Oregon, it is 50 miles or between climate zones. Some firewood comes from other countries but it has to be treated to cross the border.

BALLAST WATER RULES AND FEE IDEA

Allen Pleus discussed Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's proposal for 2012 legislation on ballast water and aquatic invasive species (AIS) management. WDFW's mission is to prevent AIS from entering Washington State. They consider the ballast water on all vessels to be a risk, but are working on understanding which vessels pose the highest risk. The scope of ballast water risk includes viruses, bacteria, plankton, and more. WDFW staff recently checked a ship that had not exchanged ballast water and testing showed 85% coastal organisms. After the exchange they found only 2% coastal organisms. Tacoma has the highest number of vessels that discharge ballast water. Allen charted the risk at the ports throughout the state and looked at cubic meters of ballast water dumped per ship. Ports can choose to stop doing business with a ship if it does not follow the ballast water rules, but they do not have state law behind them to enforce exchange. Most ballast water dumped in our ports is coming from China and Japan. GMAP shows we have 90% compliance with state ballast laws (exchanging and reporting). Recently, a ship was sent back out to exchange ballast water and reported a cost of \$200,000 for doing the exchange. The penalty from WDFW would have only been \$27,500, but they complied anyway.

Allen reviewed AIS management, and how it has been funded since 2000. He graphed where boats entering Washington came from to gauge current risk. He graphed all AIS funding since 1998. Allen recommends ballast water and hull fouling be added to the council's priorities. WDFW cannot maintain the program under current funding, so they may have to look at charging user fees. Lisa Macchio sees ballast water and biofuel as emerging priorities for the council, beyond just looking at priority species. Our job as a council is to assist agencies in doing their invasive species work, and we need to support WDFW's ballast water program. Allen feels having direction come from the council to the Ballast Water Workgroup would carry a more powerful message since it comes from many agencies. Dick says it is one thing to voice general support, but it is another to review that coordination is happening and to see if WDFW is working with the Coast Guard and other federal agencies. It would be hard for the council to get behind one funding source; we could encourage them to look at other funding sources without endorsing one source. We would encourage them to coordinate their work with other agencies. Allen is asking the council to create a sub-group to work specifically on aquatic invasive species issues.

OTHER PROJECT UPDATES

Decontamination Protocol

Ray and Wendy are still working on the protocol, it should be complete in the next couple of months. Some agencies will use their own protocol and some will use the council's.

Baseline Assessment

We received great comments from council members. The main comment was that the assessment compiled information very well but did not elaborate enough on gaps, so the consultant added to the gaps section. They are doing final edits, and the final report will be complete in a couple of weeks.

Information Clearinghouse

Lori and Wendy are currently working with DIS on the clearinghouse design and showed the council their progress. Pene asked if an iMap database could be added. We will get more information from Oregon.

Invasive Animal Species Field Guide

The Invasive Animal Species Field Guide is finished. Two hundred copies were printed, many of which will be distributed to the weed coordinators.

NEXT STEPS

Chris Christopher said that the executive committee will meet soon to prepare various drafts for the May meeting.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m. Chris thanked everyone for attending.

Next meeting:
May 12, 2011
Natural Resources Building
Room 172, Olympia, WA

Invasive Species Approval:

Chris Christopher, Chair

Date