

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

September 19, 2013

Room 172, WA State Natural Resources Building
Olympia, Washington

WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL (WISC) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Clinton Campbell	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Chris Christopher	Washington State Department of Transportation
Raquel Crosier	Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Randy Kline	WA State Parks and Recreation Commission
Mike Mackey	Chelan County Noxious Weed Control Board
Rob Pederson	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Lizbeth Seebacher	Washington Department of Ecology
Pene Speaks, Vice Chair	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Curtis Tanner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bill Tweit, Chair	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
LT Eric Young	U.S. Coast Guard
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

Paul Bucich
Mike Leech
Kate O’Laughlin
Kit Paulsen
Allen Pleus
Ray Willard

STAFF:

Wendy Brown
Rachel LeBaron Anderson

CONVENE AND THE COUNCIL WELCOME:

Bill Tweit opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. with welcome announcements, facility safety information, introductions, and a review of the agenda.

HOT TOPICS:

Eelgrass Tour in Willapa and Padilla Bays

Lizbeth Seebacher met with a group of shellfish growers and agency staff to look at Japanese eelgrass (*Zostera japonica*) on tide flats in Willapa and Padilla Bay. At Willapa Bay, the *Z. japonica* was denser, and mixed in with native eelgrass species. There are questions about whether the Japanese eelgrass is facilitating the growth of the native eelgrass. At Padilla Bay, the Japanese eelgrass is not as dense and is in a mosaic distribution.

Wendy Brown says that at Willapa Bay ten years ago when they were eradicating *Spartina*, there was not as much *Z. japonica*, both in its distribution and density. She was surprised at how invasive the species has become. This is currently a Class C weed, but it may change so that it is only a weed on commercial shellfish beds.

PNW IPC Citizen Science

Lizbeth Seebacher reported that the PNW Invasive Plant Council (IPC) citizen science project is ending, and the project coordinator is currently writing up the final report. PNW IPC collaborated with eight agencies in Washington and trained 140 citizen scientists for surveys of 30 target species. To date, 106 surveys have been returned, with more expected to follow. Some infestations found were small enough to be removed by the volunteers during the survey. The information gathered during this project will go out to county noxious weed boards, the Council, and on some web sites. They are trying to get more funding with a National Forest Foundation grant. Curtis Tanner will follow up with them to ensure they are getting support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

New Zealand Mud Snails

Wendy Brown announced that a new infestation of New Zealand mud snail was found in the Chehalis River in July. There is more information about it coming soon.

BPA Response Letter

Earlier this year, Wendy Brown contacted BPA on behalf of the Council requesting that they incorporate more invasive species prevention measures into their restoration grant contracts. BPA responded with full support of our request and has made the following changes to their process:

- Updated milestones used in fish and wildlife mitigation contracts to address invasive species – relating to cleaning watercraft and equipment per recommended protocols and using BMPs to stabilize soils and prevent spread of noxious weeds.
- For habitat work that receives Endangered Species Act coverage, project sponsors are required to sign off on new invasive species prevention and control measures.
- Inclusion of the same language that was adopted by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board as a project evaluation criterion.

SEPA Checklist Update

The draft SEPA checklist is out for public comment, and the Council has the opportunity to comment on the fact that invasive species are not included on the environmental checklist. We are already on the record saying that the gap exists, but also remember that invasive species considerations are provided for in the checklist guidance document.

NWPCC Amendment Process

The deadline for the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Fish and Wildlife Program amendment process was September 17, 2013. Wendy sent in recommendations from the Council, and they were submitted on time. The Council removed items about protocols since the Council has heard back from BPA. The Council has support from the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, who each included our exact recommendations in their respective letters.

IEAB Invasive Mussels Update

The Independent Economic Advisory Board of the NW Power and Conservation Council updated the risk assessment of a zebra and quagga mussel invasion in the Columbia River Basin. Key findings of the assessment were that the regional prevention effort is well coordinated and planned but that prevention efforts would be improved with better detection capability and more inspections (e.g., longer hours, year around). The assessment highlighted some local programs that work well in terms of education, but also suggested that state programs are instrumental to educating the public. They further suggested that a

listing of quagga mussels as injurious under the Lacey Act is needed. The NW Power and Conservation Council wants to push for an emergency listing of quagga mussels under the Lacey Act, making the case that this is a national emergency. The Council would be willing to provide a letter of support for such a listing.

2013-2014 Crayfish Permit

Allen Pleus has been working to replace invasive crayfish with native crayfish in school science kits. One problem, however, has been the supply of the native (signal) crayfish. Our states' harvest of the signal crayfish starts in March, and schools need them in September. They are cold blooded and do not move around as much in winter, so they are much more difficult to catch at the time. Some school districts have created holding tanks with oxygenation systems and are using the same ones repeatedly, but doing so incurs greater costs. Supply houses will not hold crayfish over several months because there is not enough profit margin. There has been a discussion of establishing a grant program to assist. Department of Fish and Wildlife wants this to stay a privatized business. An ESD half-day teacher training on proper management of kit creatures was suggested.

There are still concerns about what happens to crayfish after they are used in the class. Some teachers do not want to euthanize, some keep them in the classroom, and some return them to the school district. The next issue seems to be with butterflies. Teachers do not want to kill butterflies. In addition, there are so many instructional papers in the kits that teachers do not read them. USDA issues permits for interstate movement of butterflies and other plant pests, and such permits include conditions pertaining to release or other disposition. Wendy will follow up on the issue.

Okanagan County Issue

Pene Speaks shared information about a call Wendy received from the Okanogan County Weed Board in the midst of fire season. The call was regarding firefighting equipment moving around in an area where a known Class A noxious weed population is located and mostly likely spreading beyond that known area. The Council was asked if agencies can track the route of these vehicles and equipment and avoid the spread of seeds. It is difficult in a fire situation especially during many small fires, when you have local, state, and federal fire fighters responding. Their first goal is to suppress the fire. Sometimes the trucks are dispatched directly to another fire. The Council worked with the Department of Natural Resources to identify which vehicles were present and the routes in which they worked. DNR then responded to Okanogan County and provided as much information as possible.

Pene has since followed up with DNR managers to raise awareness of this issue during and after fire reviews. Albert Castle, DNR Division Manager, has sent out recommendations to wash cars wherever feasible. If the Department of Natural Resources was able to give weed boards maps of noxious weed distribution, it would help in response. It may cost a little more money, but is much cheaper than handling the weeds. Mike Mackey will provide Pene with some contact information.

An Outreach Success Story

Pene Speaks says the "Clean Drain and Dry" campaign is showing up in the enforcement community. She was out in her boat at Swantown marina in Budd Bay and the harbor patrol inspected her boat as she came in. The harbor patrol checked her safety equipment and then warned her to clean her boat before moving it to another body of water. Hurray!

Border Response to Zebra/Quagga Mussels on Vessels

Vicki Yund says that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has no authority for responding to vessels infested with zebra or quagga mussels at the border. This started an internal discussion, and they found they could coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, who does have authority to respond. Working together, they created a new Standard Operating Procedure on inspecting and decontaminating boats and

then trained staff. Next spring they are planning a short awareness-training course. They may also be able to expand their efforts into the Great Lakes states.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Action Item: Approval of June Minutes

Pene Speaks moved to **APPROVE** the June 20, 2013 minutes. Mike Mackey **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the June 20, 2013 minutes.

NZMS PREVENTION CHECK-IN

Kit Paulsen, Paul Bucich, and Kate O'Laughlin of King County and John Herman of Snohomish County provided an update to the Council on New Zealand mud snails in King County and how the infestations are being addressed. There is a newly discovered mud snail infestation at Makeler Creek. It was reported using a smart phone application developed in Bellevue. There is a need for detailed specifications statewide for addressing mud snails and other invasive species during construction.

The City of Bellevue and King County have been leaders in survey and education on the mud snails in that area. They mailed information to every homeowner on the water and wrote articles and announcements to raise awareness. They examined salmon project areas and capital project areas. They also questioned whether snails could live in storm drains (is there enough standing water). They installed a hot water wash facility at their maintenance facility and have educated all field staff about the problem and decontamination procedures that area available. All King County science vehicles carry decontamination kits now. Boots are now put the freezer overnight to kill everything, and staff have been supplied boot warmers for in the morning.

John Herman of Snohomish County said their county is new to the issue and currently have few procedures in place. They do have a staff person surveying for presence or absence of mud snails, and so far, have found none. However, two months ago at Clear Creek, just south of their county, mud snails were found. They have been educating themselves on the scale of the problem and looking at what to do. They are looking at adding decontamination facilities and where to place them to make them accessible. They do not have enough resources to make this county wide yet. They are looking at how to add standards for contractors and how to have trainings. They are looking to the state and other jurisdictions for help in getting started.

Paul mentioned that there is a way to do DNA testing of the water to identify snails and is planning to run a pilot study. Samples will be sent to the University of Idaho for analysis. They are looking for a way to easily identify where snails exist and better differentiate between native and invasive snails. It only costs \$40 to run these tests, so this may become a cheap and fast option.

Bill Tweit feels this is a great report card of what is working and what is not working out in the field. Bill asked if it is time to implement a statewide training conference, possibly a two-day conference with one day for training field personnel with afternoon demos of how to decontaminate, and we could give out certificates for the training so that they are now "qualified" for permit purposes.

AIS PREVENTION IN TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Ray Willard reported on the 520 project and how it was paused for an invasive species review. This review will be done for all projects now. No populations of invasive species, such as New Zealand mud snails, were detected during the 520 project. They have trained more WSDOT staff and have ensured they are able to do full decontamination in the field. Any time they have work in the water for maintenance the sites are inspected first. They have also reviewed all water crossings in the Lake Washington drainage area. Ray shared a PowerPoint reviewing current WSDOT field operations. They have created a simple pressure washer design that is working. From a roadside maintenance standpoint, they feel covered, so they are focusing more on public works and private contracts now. This mud snail issue in our state is really a warm up for the mussel issue.

BREAK

SCOTCH BROOM WORKING GROUP AND NEED FOR AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Jill Silver of the 10,000 Years Institute and Ray Willard presented their current work on Scotch broom. Prevention and disposal are still issues. Jill wants to make a request for Council assistance today. There have been private citizens petitioning for better control by state weed boards. Jill has formed a Scotch broom working group, which consists of tribes, counties, NGOs, and state parks working together to look for practical solutions. They are considering having a Scotch broom symposium and would like to work with the Council and state weed board. There are discussions on using Scotch broom for biomass and local job creation and conducting a state economic impact analysis.

Oregon State did an economic analysis of weed species in 2000 and is updating it this year. This creates a platform for legislators and the public to understand the numbers and see that prevention is cheaper than control. Wendy will forward a link to the Council with information about Jill's work and Oregon's studies. Jill also asked each agency to consider how they could help. Jill would like to have the Council ask the Legislative to fund an economic analysis of the cost of letting these species go versus the cost of preventing them. There are still problems with nurseries selling butterfly bush, English laurel, paulownia (princess tree), and ivy. Oregon was able to stop nurseries from selling butterfly bush.

2014 PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Allen shared the current draft proposed legislation, a copy of the PowerPoint presentation given at stakeholder meetings, and fiscal notes. This new draft will go to OFM by October 1, 2013 for approval by the Governor. Most of the previous comments were incorporated into the second draft. Allen reviewed some of the changes made between the drafts. Watercraft stickers currently fund the Aquatic Invasive Species program in WDFW. That covers the cost of 3.25 FTEs, with a small amount of money going to the Washington State Patrol for inspections at port of entries. The proposed draft would continue current funding sources, as well as add new fees and general funds. The total new revenue proposed is \$3.5 million, bringing the total program budget with previous funding to just under \$4 million per year. Of this total, \$1 million would be used to create a grant for local aquatic invasive species needs. Most jurisdictions would not think that was sufficient for what funding is needed, but it is a start. The Council needs to be cautious about not creating barriers to outdoor recreation; the Council just wants a more responsible approach. The bigger goal is to better manage invasive species instead of our current piece meal approach in the state. Wendy Brown asked if WDFW has calculated what they will get with the increased budget – how many more boat inspections or infestations controlled? Allen says they are trying to keep broad flexibility at this point so it can be utilized for what is most important at the time.

LUNCH

BASELINE ASSESSMENT AND APP UPDATE

Mike Leech shared a PowerPoint explaining his work on the baseline assessment and the smart phone/tablet invasive species reporting application (app). On the baseline project, they have a draft species report and maps for the 18 species used in the project. They have received feedback from surveys and previous outreach efforts and are using that guidance to fill in missing data. They have added the designation/class of each species to the map. They also identified the different management activities at the county level on the map. They hope to have a draft out this month and the report done by the end of the calendar year.

Mike reviewed progress made to date on the reporting app. Curtis Tanner suggested that the Council show unverified data on the map too, in a different color, with a disclaimer so people can see their posts have been entered on the map. In addition, there is an "other" option for reporting species not on the pick list. Mike will meet with Greg Tudor of RCO to discuss data management. If you cannot take a picture of the species, it is suggested that the person take a picture of the location. Perhaps instead of showing the

unconfirmed data on the map, show a grey point with no data showing so that people can see that something has been added to the map. The confirmation message should confirm that the information was entered in the app. It would be good to have the reporter also get the results of the review. Having a grayed out spot where it was entered on the map until it is reviewed is helpful. Mike said this app could also be reconfigured relatively easily to show the map on the WISC website for people without smart phones.

They will be doing beta testing for both IOS and android app versions once the servers are set up and the app is turned over to RCO. Mike will send out information for people who are interested in being part of beta testing.

COUNCIL SURVEY RESULTS

Wendy Brown will present these at the next meeting. Bill Tweit says the Council will have this earlier in the next meeting to prioritize it.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no public comment today. Public comments will continue to be at the end of the agenda so the public can respond to what the Council has discussed.

NEXT STEPS

Bill Tweit and Wendy Brown reviewed the 2014 meeting dates, which are:

- March 13
- June 12
- September 11
- December 4

There will be an executive meeting between now and December 2013 to sort out some priorities. It was suggested that the December 5, 2013 meeting be made into a mini-retreat to discuss Council goals and plans. It might be useful to have one meeting like this every year.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m. Bill Tweit thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting is December 5, 2013. Location is to be decided.

Invasive Species Approval:

Bill Tweit, Chair

Date