

**INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL
MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING**

September 9, 2010

Room 172, WA State Natural Resources Building
Olympia, Washington

INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Christopher, Chair	Department of Transportation
Alison Halpern	Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board
Jon Jennings	Department of Ecology
Bob Koch	Franklin County
Lisa Macchio	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Tom McDowell	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pene Speaks	Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Anderson	Puget Sound Partnership
Mary Toohey	Washington State Department of Agriculture
Bill Tweit, Vice Chair	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dick Wallace	NW Power and Conservation Council
Lisa Younger	The Nature Conservancy
Vicki Yund	U.S. Customs and Border Protection

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

Eric Anderson
Kaleen Cottingham
Curt Gavigan
Steve McLellan
Allen Pleus
Brad White
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, facility safety information, introductions, and a review of the agenda. Chris reviewed the Council accomplishments that led to the current legislative recommendations.

2011 Invasive Species Legislation:

Wendy Brown reviewed current request legislation, including the request to extend the council. Over 500 stakeholders reviewed the request, and all stakeholder responses were in support of extending the Council to June 2017. Our request includes options for how the Council and funding could continue, the pros and cons of each option, and a request for an emergency funding account. There was opposition from two groups of stakeholders (i.e., boaters and ATV groups) for the emergency funding, because funds were directed to come from marine and off road vehicle taxes. Other stakeholders responded favorably to the emergency response fund proposal.

Kaleen Cottingham, director of the Recreation and Conservation office says the Governors budget will be released in mid-December. The Office of Financial Management is currently reviewing requests to see

how they work with the Governor's budget. In an ordinary budget year, these bills would likely pass right away. The Washington Invasive Species Council is one of the success stories. However with a \$3-4 million dollar shortfall in the general fund and a Governor who is trying to cut boards, this is a tough year. Passing the bills will require all agencies and constituents on the Council to push this bill. Kaleen believes that one likely scenario is that the work of the council is turned over to the agencies without a staff position. She recommends the Council discuss how work would continue without Council staff. The Council needs to have a pass-the-hat discussion.

Council Discussion

- What is needed from the agencies to support the continuation of the Council? Non-state agencies (tribes, The Nature Conservancy, and other private agencies) will carry the most weight with the Governor in giving support to the importance of the Council.
- Can the county noxious weed boards help? The State Noxious Weed Control Board plans to discuss how it can support the Council at its meeting next week.
- The Council has been a cost effective example of collaborative coordination between state, federal, and private organizations. The Council should discuss our work and our structured collaboration.
- We should lead with "pay now or pay later". Kaleen says the Governor asked that the phrase "pay now or pay later" be removed from the decision package, however that phrase could still be used in discussions.
- Decisions will be closely tied to budget; we should look at next steps if the Council is not funded.
- How can the Council be quick to respond to the Governor and Legislature? Fish and Wildlife and Ecology also have bills for invasive species, and Kaleen will work on coordinating these bills among the agencies. Wendy will work with Steve McLellan to update the Council on hearing dates.
- Even without funding, some agencies would send representatives to Council meetings, but they would likely only give the Council a year to see what positive changes are made during that timeline.
- We need to show how we leverage resources. The gulf oil spill is an example, it would be hard to prove our importance in collaborating among agencies until something bad happens and then it would be clear.
- Curt Gavigan says two agencies are looking at revenue sources for invasive species, but he cannot give much advice until those proposals are reviewed. They will be reviewing many competing concepts, so we need to look at how things are packaged and how they fit together. There will only be so much of the committee's time spent on invasive species this session. The governor has requested more information about user fees for revenue.
- Having several competing bills muddies the water and creates confusion. Some of those bills are still in draft. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wants additional revenue for response to aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. They also want to address policy gaps and provide some statutory language and want their authority in code restructured to give more clarity regarding invasive species. They are working with the Code Reviser's Office. The Office of Financial Management continues to support having all agency efforts rolled into a single package. Fish and Wildlife is close to merging their decision package with Ecology's, but it may get separated again at some point. They may be asked to combine theirs with the Recreation and Conservation Office's. These changes make it difficult to engage stakeholders. Once there is a concrete outreach plan, Wendy will distribute it to the Council.
- The conundrum is that in ordinary times the Council would be easily funded because it is good governing. These are not ordinary times however, and somehow we still need to soldier on. We really need to package this so everyone reviewing it "gets it" right away.

- One funding option was a \$5 sticker for non-motorized crafts chosen because non-motorized crafts are vectors and it would clearly align us with Idaho and Oregon. This however was going to be a clear flashpoint so it is currently shelved. Adding funding will give us more respect from bordering states that see us as a liability. Chris asked for the Council's perspective on continuing without funding and without Council staff. The Council will discuss this later in the day.

Hot Topics:

New Zealand Mud Snail Update

The Council used funding from the U.S. Forest Service grant to survey all ponds, lakes, and streams within five miles of Capitol Lake. So far, no other populations of mud snail have been found. The information will be forwarded to the General Administration to plan the next response. General Administration is looking at another freeze this winter and may also do some site-specific tests to see what might work.

Mapping of Inspection Stations

Ray Willard shared a map of inspection station sites in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon along with a brief description of how western states are addressing the transport of invasive species. A permit is required for all watercraft entering Oregon. "Clean, Drain, and Dry" billboards are posted in Oregon and Idaho. There have also been radio advertisements funded in other states. In May, before Washington had their inspection stations set up, the State Patrol stopped a craft at a weigh station check and found quagga mussels onboard.

Council Discussion

- Was there an agreement at the borders between states? Currently Washington's check stations are random and non-permanent. Washington does not have adequate protection, since we do not check all boats. Oregon's stations are voluntary and only about 30% of drivers stop. Idaho has permanent stations that are manned during day-light hours, 7 days per week in the summer months.
- Could we have more cooperation with border states to protect the perimeters in a more effective and economical way?
- Major ports of entry are more important than internal checks, but we do need a second level of protection to keep invasive species from moving between local lakes.
- We should protect the perimeters of the source i.e. Lake Mead. It is a good idea to pool the resources of western states to police those sources and better watch boats leaving them.
- Have QZAP take a closer look and expand the regions shown in the current map to include Montana and others. A multi state/agency committee should look at the bigger picture. We need to consider "snowbirds" who winter by Lake Mead and drive back to Washington with their boats.

Decontamination Protocol Update

The decontamination workgroup met to create a protocol for state natural resource agencies. Workgroup members did not want to be too specific in prescribing decontamination methods, since each agency has their own way of implementing protocols. They created a table from the Department of Transportation's standpoint of maintenance work that could move invasive species and then asked that each agency come up with a similar table of their operations that might be a vector for invasive species. At the next meeting, we should have a table of operations, potential risks, and recommended BMPs from each agency.

Council Discussion

- This could apply to contractors as well as agency employees. There is another table just to address contractors and a separate table for highway construction.

- Some of the table is vague, perhaps the best management practices should not be included in the table, instead it should say that best management practices will be developed by a certain date. Manuals for decontamination only need to be held at the agency level.
- Some of the protocols could be shared between agencies to save work. Someone should write the decontamination protocol i.e. use a sprayer and a brush. It would be best to have the agencies borrow the information rather than rewrite it.
- Treat prevention in a way to make it still seem simple: “you just walked through garlic mustard, here is a brush, please use it before getting in your car,” a simple message to take basic steps. Even in dire economic times, this is something the Council can move forward.
- As we exchange information internally, we need to think about how to institutionalize this into a safety program. First aid trainings are a good example of an institutionalized program. There are constant changes and these trainings need to be ongoing to roll with the changes, and make sure everyone has the right decontamination and prevention manual.
- List the basics in a very simple way and provide it to Cabinet members to take back to their agencies. Let each agency decide how to fit it into their operations. Ecology’s document says, “when visiting a water body, check to see if it is a known infested spot and follow protocols, if there is no known contaminant, just takes these basic steps.”
- This is more complicated with felt soles for agency field workers, and budget issues with buying pressure washers. A lot will go in their plan that will not be reflected in the report back to the Cabinet. Cabinet response should list agencies and basics of what they will do. Federal inspection programs already have first aid basic trainings; this may be a place where invasive species trainings would fit in.

Break

Lake Roosevelt Table Top Exercise

Q-ZAP, coordinated by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is organizing a September 21-22, 2010 tabletop exercise in Spokane. A hypothetical invasive species situation will be presented, and the group will plan a response for the region. This is a public function and anyone interested may attend. Two staff from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will attend – Eric Anderson and Allen Pleus. The first morning they will go through the incident command structure. Wendy will be attending, and Bob Koch may also attend.

European Fire Ants in Seattle

Early this summer, a Seattle resident was walking through the Arboretum and was stung on the ankle. She was certain that it was an ant, re-created the situation, and made it into power point. Agency staff collected many ants in the area, which were identified as European fire ants. This species has been established in Maine since the civil war so they are not new in the U.S. It is estimated that the ants have been established in the Arboretum for five years. They are well established so eradicating them is not an option. The primary concern is that the ants do not spread, especially as the Department of Transportation bridgework is going through that area. The City of Seattle will have the main responsibility at this point. The ants have been found on Lake Washington’s shoreline. They are unusual because they like swampy areas and do not make mounds. We do not know if the ants are displacing other creatures, including ground nesting birds. Fire ants do not have special features to make them easy to distinguish them from other ants.

EPA Funding for Puget Sound

The Environmental Protection Agency has been providing money for Puget Sound recovery for a number of years and just released a new request for proposals. There is revenue provided to lead entities to do

this work – \$3 million per category each year for 6 years. It specifically mentions ballast water and emergency response. Each agency could be involved, please contact your Puget Sound caucus representatives to look into how invasive species will be addressed. Money will be awarded in February. The next Caucus meeting is September 13, 2010, at which time they will decide which agencies can enter requests for proposals.

Public Comment

N/A

Council Business Items

Bill moved to **APPROVE** the May 27, 2010 minutes. Kevin **SECONDED**. The Council unanimously **APPROVED** the May 27, 2010 minutes.

Staff Changes

With Gen Keesecker's absence, we have Lori Lawrence's help again. The Recreation and Conservation Office and Puget Sound Partnership have formed a consortium, and Kevin Anderson will spend 50% of his time on council work now.

Looking Forward:

Prioritizing Key Recommendations and Implementation Workgroups

Chris asked the Council to circle their individual top five priorities. The yellow highlighted items are currently in some form of legislation already. This is a good example of the type of product the Council can create to give a broad base of the priorities of all of these major organizations. Chris asked the Council to look at each of their top five priorities from a statewide significance.

Invasive Species Funding Options

Chris showed a handout of the current options and asked for Council input.

Council Discussion

- The option without staff is not reasonable, nothing would get done.
- Agencies would be told to provide staff without funding.
- Biodiversity Council did not make it, even when the Natural Heritage Program wanted to take on the work. The Cabinet did not support them. A few strategies will be implemented within agencies, but there is no longer a driving force.
- There is no point in going forward without staffing or funding. Wendy's job could not be replaced in another way, the Web site would not be properly maintained, and in this information age, if not kept up, would be lost. Biodiversity has not been able to hand off their website currently. It is important to emphasize the economic impact of invasive species in our state.
- A plan B might be to transition the Invasive Species Council into a Puget Sound Council, have it funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, then once things bounce back it can transition back into having a statewide view. We don't know if EPA grant funds could be used in this way.
- Can the National Invasive Species Council help? We have asked in the past, but will take another look at this possibility. Regardless we need to have a Council staff person.
- We need to be ready to answer what the importance of the Council is, and, at that point, it is important to have our federal members speak up.

- This Council will only work if it includes federal members, and without a structured and supported council, federal agencies will not continue to be involved. Federal agencies would like to continue in the Council because so many of the priority species are issues for them.
- If we cannot do the work without staff, then we should not have a Council. Having staff is critical to getting grant money to the Council. Has that been captured in our request? Does it show how much is getting done with one FTE (full time employee)?
- The biggest difference between the Washington Invasive Species Council and the Biodiversity Council is the economic risk. Economically if we do not fix the problem, it is much easier to quantify the invasive economic effects. Having staff that is more independent from an individual agency has been helpful in giving diplomacy when dealing with the various agencies.
- Agencies will cooperate no matter what – it is not that they are not doing the work and collaborating, just not at a level where we are keeping people from reinventing the wheel and therefore making them work more cost effectively. It is difficult to quantify how much money we are saving by not having each agency do its own invasive species program. We can use the Noxious Weed Board as an example, if the Washington Invasive Species Council did not exist, a lot more funding than what the Weed Board gets would be necessary to respond to invasive species. We must attempt to quantify the savings. Numbers speak.

Lunch

Working Lunch/Website Review:

A “Resources” tab has been added to the home page of the Invasive Species Council Website and will eventually become the Information Clearinghouse. Some resources have been listed there as a placeholder. Under the ‘Priority Species’ tab, if you click on a species it will open into its own page, which includes information and options specific to that species, along with the Council recommendations and the rapid response plan for that species. On the ‘About the Council’ page, the list of workgroups has been removed. Instead, the Council recommendations have been listed. Council projects will each have their own page.

Invasive Species in the Classroom:

Dr. Margaret Tudor from the Pacific Education Institute is working with the Invasive Species Council to incorporate invasive species lessons into K-12 classrooms. The goals are for teachers to receive education on invasive species and make sure that live specimens used in classrooms are not invasive. Oregon recently taught a course on Alien Invasive plants. This will be part of Project Learning Tree to bring it to high school, middle school, and elementary school classrooms. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction can provide funding for service learning, which means students will get involved in stewardship. This is a statewide program, but the focus is on Puget Sound and the North Olympic Peninsula this year. They have Washington State Junior Academy of Sciences, Pacific Education Institute workshops, and Puget Sound Partnership GreenSTEM (Green Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) projects. Julien Olden at University of Washington is currently doing a classroom study to see if signal crayfish (a native crayfish) is a good substitute for non-native crayfish specimens in classrooms. Margaret is also looking into which species are used in classroom critter kits. She requests the Council assistance in going through the critter kit lists.

Project Updates:

Information Clearinghouse

This project is moving forward. The Council has hired a contractor for content development and the Department of Information Services for web site design. There is a handout in the meeting packet showing an idea of how the clearinghouse will be structured. The structure will look something like the boat.wa.gov website. Wendy outlined how the different categories would work. The Clearinghouse will

be able to work as a stand-alone web site. Wendy is looking for a good image of what we are trying to protect in Washington. Another challenge will be to come up with a name for the Information Clearinghouse.

Don't Move Firewood Outreach

Gen Keesecker is continuing to work on this project from Idaho. Billboards have gone up throughout the state, and this information and outreach items have been sent to state campgrounds. This has become a border issue with Vancouver, B.C. They offer bug-killed trees that have been chopped down as free firewood. They have signs saying burn it here, but people are still taking the firewood with them over the border to Washington.

Chris Christopher was in an airport in Bozeman, MT a few weeks ago and looking out at the landscape and thousands of acres of trees and he realized that half were dead, and as he flew over, he saw thousands of dead acres. It is pine beetle damage. The next danger is fire. Colorado has the same issue.

Workgroups

The Council will table the workgroups who have completed their work and continue with the executive committee and the emergency response workgroup, until we know if the Council will continue. We will also continue the public utility district education and outreach work.

Performance Measures

The Council was asked by the Governor's office to have an invasive species performance measure. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has one on ballast water compliance and the Department of Agriculture has one on Spartina. The Council will plan to investigate if these 3 performance measures are enough. Are they the right measures? How is the state as a whole being successful on invasive species? In the flowchart handout we see the measures on how well the Council is doing to close gaps, to respond rapidly to invasive species and on education and outreach and how many people are getting involved in working to report or remove invasive species. The Environmental Protection Agency has accountability measurements they have to report on every year. However, when they have very broad goals such as 'clean up the waters,' they become very difficult to measure.

Next Steps

Chris says he is planning to have an executive committee meeting to look at additional ways to connect to stakeholders.

Adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 p.m. Chris thanked everyone for attending.

Next meeting:

December 2, 2010

Natural Resources Building

Room 172, Olympia, Washington

Invasive Species Approval:

Chris Christopher, Chair

Date